

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Ventura – Santa Barbara Rail Study

MEETING DATE: June 4, 2008

AGENDA ITEM: 4

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive presentation on the Ventura – Santa Barbara Rail Study prepared under the direction of the Southern California Association of Governments.

STAFF CONTACT: Michael Powers

DISCUSSION:

The Ventura – Santa Barbara Rail Study was undertaken by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) at the request of the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and SBCAG to review travel options including increased rail service during commuter-friendly hours between western Ventura County and Goleta. An Executive Summary of the report is attached.

The study concludes that in order to increase the level of passenger rail service along the corridor significant track and signal improvements, capacity enhancements and equipment purchases would be needed. Moreover, these improvements, such as new rail sidings, will take both time and significant financial resources. However, within the context of these limitations, three rail service options and one enhanced bus service option were identified for evaluation.

The three travel options include: incremental increases in State-funded Amtrak intercity Pacific Surfliner train services; expansion of Metrolink commuter operations to Santa Barbara/Goleta; a new, dedicated Ventura-Santa Barbara rail operation; and expansion of the Vista Coastal Express bus service.

Member Agencies

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

All of the options are discussed extensively in terms of operational issues, financial issues, and institutional issues. The best two alternatives for near-term congestion relief appear to be the addition of incremental Pacific Surfliner trains working in tandem with increased Coastal Express bus services. Specifically, a re-timed earlier departure of the first northbound train from Los Angeles to Ventura to Santa Barbara will make this rail service more “commuter friendly” and enable workers who live in western Ventura County to get to their jobs on the South Coast of Santa Barbara County. This adjustment could also help test the potential viability of the commuter rail market with little or no local cost.

SCAG Project Manager Robert Huddy and Consultant Sharon Greene will attend the meeting to present the study, discuss their recommendations, and respond to questions.

COMMITTEE REVIEW: None

ATTACHMENTS:

Executive Summary, Ventura – Santa Barbara Rail Study, Final Report, March 2008. Prepared for the Southern California Association of Governments by Sharon Greene and Associates. Full report available upon request.

Ventura | Santa Barbara Rail Study

Final Report

March 2008



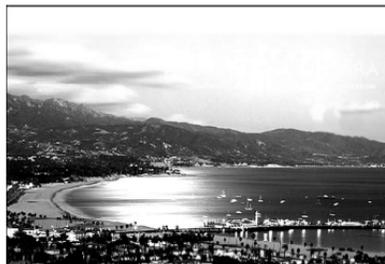
Prepared for |
Southern California
Association of
Governments



Prepared by |
Sharon Greene +
Associates



sharon greene +
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ES 1 Executive Summary

The Ventura / Santa Barbara Rail Study was initiated by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in response to the interest by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) in addressing the need for commuter-friendly intercity passenger rail service between western Ventura County and southern Santa Barbara County. Highway 101, which parallels the Union Pacific Rail line has been subject of significant highway congestion associated with peak commuter hour traffic between the two counties. A multi-modal approach to addressing this congestion problem has been used by the two transportation agencies in addressing this congestion problem.

Interest in implementing a commuter-friendly intercity passenger rail service raised a number of operational, financial, and institutional issues that this study has identified and analyzed. This analysis will assist SCAG, VCTC, SBCAG, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and other key stakeholders in determining if such a service is feasible and financially viable, and in identifying potential courses of action to facilitate possible implementation of interregional rail services that address both intercity and commuter travel needs between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. The study addressed the following key objectives:

- **Evaluate the results of previous studies conducted related to developing commuter rail and intercity services between Ventura County and Santa Barbara counties using the Union Pacific Railroad Coast Line:** Based on the information provided in prior documents, this study summarized the potential service delivery options, ridership, capital and operating costs, and institutional and financial issues considered in prior studies as well as options considered for addressing these issues.
- **Evaluate the financial impacts of commuter-friendly interregional rail options upon the stakeholder agencies:** Drawing from the information provided in prior documents and the issues identified through interviews with key stakeholders, this study assessed the viability of potential alternatives for implementing interregional rail service between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties relative to the operational, financial and institutional issues of concern to the stakeholders.
- **Work with the key stakeholders to identify options to initiate peak hour rail services between the two counties which may be achieved within the financial resources of the stakeholders, and institutional and operational needs:** In coordination with the key stakeholders, this study developed and recommended mechanisms to assure responsive and successful implementation of public investments and services in the corridor in cooperation with the Union Pacific. Working with the key stakeholders, the objective was to address how the proposed services and the public investments necessary could be coordinated, funded and managed to assure effective public benefits are achieved and maintained.

ES 2 Development of Alternatives

The Union Pacific Railroad Coast Line (Coast Line) corridor has been the focus of an extensive number of planning studies and inventory work over the last ten years. These studies have analyzed various services and infrastructure improvements that focused on improving passenger service reliability and frequency. Sections 3 and 4 of this report provide a summary and analysis of the following studies: *101-in-Motion Study*; *LOSSAN North Corridor Strategic Plan*; *Metrolink Commuter Rail Strategic Assessment, 2004/2005 Ventura County Congestion Management Plan*, and the *California 20-Year Rail Plan*.

Based on the results of these studies, it was determined that in order to increase the level of passenger rail service along the corridor significant track and signal improvements, capacity enhancements and equipment purchases would be needed. However, these improvements and acquisitions will take both time and financial resources, neither of which is currently available in any large quantity. As a result of this limitation, three rail service options and one bus service option were identified to provide improved passenger service in the early morning and late afternoon peak commute periods between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

Service Option 1: Incremental increases in Pacific Surfliner services

This option would provide incremental increases to the Pacific Surfliner service consistent with the overall build out service plan presented in the LOSSAN North Corridor Strategic Plan, beginning with a train that makes an earlier morning departure northbound from Los Angeles. Amtrak service does not typically cater to commuter services, however along the LOSSAN Corridor, it is difficult to differentiate commuter and intercity passengers. This service would build off the existing relationship between Amtrak and Metrolink to provide an earlier “intercity” travel option for passengers in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. This same service would be performed in afternoon, where the southbound Pacific Surfliner could be initially rescheduled to provide both an intercity and commuter option between Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. As new intercity rail service is added by Caltrans, service should be added at a commuter friendly time to address this important market.

Service Option 2: Expansion of existing Metrolink service to Santa Barbara

This option would require the incorporation of Santa Barbara County into the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Joint Powers Board. This then assumes Metrolink service, either originating in Ventura County or provided as an extension of the Ventura County Line, would extend to Santa Barbara County.

Service Option 3: Dedicated Ventura-Santa Barbara Commuter Rail Service

Dedicated commuter rail service was presented as a possible option in both the 101-in-Motion Study and the LOSSAN North Corridor Strategic Plan. A new commuter

rail service would be provided between the communities of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties separate from existing Metrolink or Pacific Surfliner services. This option would require new negotiations and contracts with the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and new dedicated commuter rail support facilities (i.e. stations and maintenance facility).

Service Option 4: Expansion of Coastal Express Bus Service

Expansion of the existing Coastal Express Bus service is another option for providing additional capacity for transit service during the early morning and late afternoon. This option would utilize the new carpool lanes along US Highway 101 once construction was completed. While this is a viable option, operations currently and during construction would be impacted by the traffic congestion along this segment of the highway.

ES 3 Recommended Alternative

Concurrent with the review of previous studies, a series of one-on-one interviews was conducted by phone and in-person with staff from key stakeholder agencies including SCAG, VCTC, SBCAG, Metrolink, Caltrans Division of Rail, and Amtrak. The purpose of the interviews was to identify specific issues and concerns related to three major aspects of implementing interregional rail service between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties: 1) Operational; 2) Financial; and 3) Institutional. The key issues for these categories are summarized below and are described in greater detail in Section 4. Additionally, Appendix A provides a Key Issues Checklist to make sure that all issues and concerns related to initiating interregional commuter service between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties are brought forward, examined, and, to the extent possible, either resolved, and/or advanced for future consideration/possible resolution.

Operational Issues

- *Ability to maintain on-time performance for peak period southbound Metrolink services, while minimizing interference with UPRR trains to ensure quality freight service:* Any new service or service expansion along the corridor needs to allow for the continuation of the existing service in a manner that maintains or improves the level of quality and on-time performance that currently exists. Typically this is accomplished by providing additional infrastructure at identified “choke” points along the corridor, where services may interact with each other.
- *Ability to provide a reliable and attractive peak period service to the Ventura and Santa Barbara communities:* There is a need to ensure that the new service can maintain a certain level of reliability and on-time performance while interacting with the existing services. To make it successful, the new service can not take second priority in order to allow for maintaining the quality of the existing service. All trains will need to be operated in a manner that can provide reliable service.
- *Providing the service as a cost-effective solution to traffic congestion:* Capital improvements to the corridor are necessary to maintain the service quality and

on-time performance of all trains. To make the new service feasible, the improvements must be practical and affordable within existing or imminent sources of funding. In addition, operating and maintenance costs must be within the financial capacity of the involved agencies that will be called upon to provide funding to support the proposed service.

Financial Issues

- Limitations on the financial capacity of the key participants to fund the potential capital and on-going operations and maintenance costs associated with full commuter rail-based service delivery alternatives: At the present time, neither Ventura nor Santa Barbara counties have a dedicated source of funding for a full commuter rail-based service. While an extension of the Santa Barbara County Measure D transit sales tax is proposed, the level of funding potentially available for a regional transit improvement such as full commuter rail service may be limited in the early stages of the program.
- Potential impact of diverting existing funds from existing interregional bus transit services: At the present time, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties jointly fund interregional express bus service. In the absence of a new source of dedicated funding, initiation of new commuter rail service would divert the existing limited State Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding away from all the existing bus services throughout Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. This is due to the fact that rail funding comes off the top of TDA before funds are apportioned for other purposes.
- Potential to initiate interregional service between the two counties at limited additional capital and operating cost by adjusting existing intercity train service schedules and by leveraging funding programmed for enhancement of existing and proposed intercity rail service: If the existing intercity train schedule can be adjusted to allow for an earlier morning arrival in Santa Barbara and afternoon departure to Ventura, service could potentially be initiated at no additional capital or operating cost. This could provide a low cost approach to initiate service and to utilize the funding available at the local level to leverage investment by the State, in the form of Interregional (State Transportation Improvement Program) STIP funds and Proposition 1B State intercity rail bond funds.

Institutional Issues

- Limitations on the financial capacity of the key participants raise concerns on the part of SCRRA/MetroLink about expanding membership and/or contracting for commuter rail service with agencies having limited financial resources: SCRRA requires that member agencies have the ability to dedicate and contribute funding for service initiation, operation, and for on-going preventive capital maintenance. Lack of such financial capacity could impact SCRRA's willingness to expand membership and/or to provide contract service.
- Concern about potential loss of and/or diminution of control over service decisions if absorbed into a larger joint powers agency such as SCRRA: As a potential new member or contract agency with SCRRA, SBCAG could potentially experience reduced autonomy over future service decisions.

- Need for an effective advocate to deal with the Union Pacific Railroad: If service was initiated as an interregional service provided by Amtrak using existing approved time slots for intercity service, the key stakeholders could together to provide effective advocacy with regard to the UPRR.

The service options identified from the review of previous studies were then compared to the key issues of concern raised by the stakeholder agencies. Based on these issues, the service options were screened to identify a financially feasible and cost-effective approach that could potentially be implemented to initiate interregional service between the two counties. Table ES-1 summarizes the results of the screening. The screening results combined with further discussions among the project stakeholders, identified Service Option 1: Incremental increases in Pacific Surfliner service as the preferred option.

Table ES-1: Screening Of Potential Options For Initiating/Improving Interregional Peak Passenger Service Between Ventura And Santa Barbara Counties

Option	Description	Operational Feasibility	Financial Feasibility	Institutional Feasibility
Service Option 1	Incremental increases in Pacific Surfliner services	Moderate: Could be initiated with limited impact on other existing rail services and expanded as extended and new intercity rail sidings are implemented	High: Could be initiated at limited capital and operating cost by adjusting existing schedules and expanded as extended and new sidings are funded through the 2006 STIP Augmentation and Prop 1B	Moderate: Would require support from Caltrans, Amtrak, and UPRR
Service Option 2	Expansion of existing Metrolink service to Santa Barbara County	Low: Additional rolling stock and capacity enhancements needed to preserve on-time performance of existing rail services	Low: Requires dedicated funding not currently in place to fund capital and operating costs	Low: In the absence of dedicated funding, unlikely to be supported by SCRRRA, UPRR, and other key stakeholders
Service Option 3	Dedicated Ventura-Santa Barbara commuter rail service	Low: Additional rolling stock and capacity enhancements needed to preserve on-time performance of existing rail services and to obtain approval by the UPRR	Low: Requires dedicated funding not currently in place to fund capital and operating costs	Low: In the absence of dedicated funding, unlikely to be supported by UPRR and other key stakeholders
Service Option 4	Expansion of Coastal Express Bus service	Low: In short term, operation is constrained by Highway 101 congestion. High: Once 101 HOV lane is added	High: While potentially lower cost than dedicated commuter rail service, would require additional funding for operating costs	Moderate: While supported in both counties, not viewed as a substitute for rail service by rail advocates

ES 4 Issues and Options

Based on further analysis and continued communication with the project stakeholders, Service Option 1 - Incremental increases in Pacific Surfliner service was further refined to reflect two alternatives.

- **Alternative 1: Reschedule the existing Amtrak 799 and 798 to an earlier departure time and later arrival time at Los Angeles Union Station.** This alternative reflects the lowest cost and earliest possible implementation scenario to address the desire for earlier morning and later afternoon rail service between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. Shifting the scheduled departure from Los Angeles to around 6:30 am would provide passengers with the ability to arrive in Ventura around 7:50 am, Santa Barbara around 8:30 am and in Goleta around 8:45 am. In the afternoon, departure from Goleta and Santa Barbara would occur around 5:15 pm and 5:30 pm respectively with arrival in Los Angeles around 7:30 pm.
- **Alternative 2: Add a new intercity train between Los Angeles and Goleta, with arrival in Santa Barbara at approximately 8:30 am.** This alternative was carried forward as a viable alternative if the suggested rescheduling of Alternative 1 could not be implemented. This alternative would result in higher operating and maintenance and capital costs and would likely take longer to implement.

It is also important to note that both alternatives are supported by the City of Santa Barbara's On-TRAC proposal. Specifically, the alternatives address two of the City's November 15, 2007 action steps proposed to guide On-TRAC representative involvement regarding increasing transit service and establishing commuter rail between Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties: 1) focus current efforts on establishing new or rescheduled Amtrak Service; and 2) foster the coordination of regional interests in establishing Amtrak as a reasonable early start commuter service.

Table ES-2 summarizes the opportunities and challenges associated with each alternative for the following categories: scheduling, rolling stock, infrastructure improvements, operating costs, ridership, financial and institutional. Major findings from this analysis include the following:

Alternative 1: Reschedule Existing Amtrak 799 and 798

- **Schedule:** Although the revised schedule would allow arrival in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Goleta around 7:50 am, 8:30 am and 8:45 am respectively, it would also result in Amtrak losing the Coast Daylight time slot and agreed Rail-2-Rail time slot with Metrolink. However, since negotiations with the UPRR would be needed to modify the current schedule, preserving the timeslot for the Coast Daylight could be included in this negotiation. Additionally, due to limited double tracking and sidings within the corridor, this alternative could result in on-time performance concerns for SCRRA, Caltrans and Amtrak.
- **Rolling Stock:** No additional trainsets required.

- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Service could be initiated with currently proposed siding improvements at Strathern and Leesdale, which would provide benefits to both Metrolink and the proposed intercity service. Estimated costs for the Strathern project is \$1.0 million (2006 dollars) based on VCTC project estimates and *LOSSAN North Strategic Business Plan*. Also, an additional platform would be required at the Van Nuys Station to accommodate passenger train meets. Cost estimates for this improvement have not yet been developed.
- **Operating Costs:** No increase would be required in operating costs since new crews are not required with schedule change. However, maintenance costs could increase due to a potential change in the equipment maintenance schedule. Further analysis would be required to identify this potential cost impact.
- **Ridership:** Schedule change has the potential to gain new ridership between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties but may also result in a reduction in ridership from Rail-2-Rail train service (Los Angeles to Oxnard).
- **Financial:** An increase in the State's operating subsidy could result if ridership decreases on the rescheduled Amtrak 799 and 798. This increase could require a financial contribution from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.
- **Institutional:** Implementation of the schedule change requires agreement from Caltrans, Amtrak, SCRRA and Union Pacific.

Alternative 2: Add a New Intercity Trip

- **Schedule:** A new trip would retain the Coast Daylight time slot and agreed Rail-2-Rail time slot with Metrolink. Additionally, it would allow the initiation of an additional northbound Surfliner service, which is consistent with the *LOSSAN North Strategic Plan*. However, due to limited double tracking and sidings within the corridor, this alternative could result in on-time performance concerns for SCRRA, Caltrans and Amtrak.
- **Rolling Stock:** Additional trainsets will be required. Table ES-3 provides a summary of order of magnitude costs estimates for a variety of acquisition scenarios.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Service could be initiated with currently proposed siding improvements at Strathern and Leesdale, which would provide benefits to both Metrolink and the proposed intercity service. Estimated costs for the Strathern project is \$1.0 million (2006 dollars) based on VCTC project estimates and *LOSSAN North Strategic Business Plan*. Another improvement that would be required to implement this alternative is an additional platform at the Van Nuys Station to accommodate passenger train meets. Cost estimates for this improvement have not yet been developed. Also, an analysis would be required to assure there is adequate overnight storage capacity at Amtrak's Redondo maintenance facility.
- **Operating Costs:** A new trip would require additional O&M and crew costs. The estimated increase in annual O&M costs for this service expansion is estimated to be approximately \$3.3 million.
- **Ridership:** Ridership levels on the existing Amtrak 799 and 798 trains would be maintained. Additional ridership may occur from the new morning and afternoon

trips. However, ridership levels on the morning segment between Los Angeles and Ventura may be low.

- **Financial:** A funding source would be needed for the lease or purchase of equipment needed for the new service. Additionally, an increase in the State's operating subsidy could result if ridership decreases on the rescheduled Amtrak 799 and 798. This increase could require a financial contribution from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.
- **Institutional:** Implementation of the new trips requires agreement from Caltrans, Amtrak, SCRRA and the UPRR. Additionally, it could require cost-sharing agreements between Caltrans, SBCAG, and VCTC for the potential capital costs and operating costs and UPRR may require additional infrastructure to be provided to implement the service.

Table ES-2: Screening Of Potential Options For Initiating/Improving Interregional Peak Period Passenger Service Between Ventura And Santa Barbara Counties

Scheduling			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
1	Reschedule Amtrak 799 and 798 to earlier departure time and later arrival time at Los Angeles Union Station	Allows for an earlier arrival into Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Goleta around 7:50 am, 8:30am, and 8:45 am respectively.	Amtrak would lose Coast Daylight time slot and agreed Rail-2-Rail time slot with Metrolink. For the Coast Daylight timeslot, since negotiations with the UPRR would be needed to modify the current schedule, preserving the timeslot for the Coast Daylight could be included in this negotiation.
			Schedule would have to be coordinated to minimize delays associated with new train meets.
			Limited double track and siding capacity could reduce opportunity for schedule recovery. Concerns about on-time performance would be of particular concern to SCRRA, Caltrans, and Amtrak, with respect to the reliability of existing commuter and intercity rail services.
2	Add new intercity train between Los Angeles and Goleta, with arrival in Santa Barbara at approximately 8:30 am	Allows for an earlier arrival into Santa Barbara around 8:30am.	Schedule would have to be coordinated to minimize delays associated with new train meets.
		Retains Coast Daylight time slot and agreed Rail-2-Rail time slot with Metrolink.	Limited double track and siding capacity could reduce opportunity for schedule recovery. Concerns about on-time performance would be of particular concern to SCRRA, Caltrans, and Amtrak, with respect to the reliability of existing commuter and intercity rail services.
		Provides for initiation of an additional northbound Surfliner service, consistent with the LOSSAN North Strategic Plan.	
Rolling Stock			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
1	Reschedule Amtrak 799 and 798 to earlier departure time and later arrival time at Los Angeles Union Station	No additional trainsets required.	Possible change in equipment maintenance schedule.
		No costs incurred for leasing or acquisition of rolling stock.	

Rolling Stock			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
2	Add new intercity train between Los Angeles and Goleta, with arrival in Santa Barbara at approximately 8:30 am	Provides for an additional trainset that increases flexibility for corridor-wide service enhancements.	Requires an additional trainset.
	2a. Lease equipment from Metrolink	If excess equipment is available from Metrolink's new equipment order, would make efficient interim use of equipment. New Metrolink equipment scheduled to arrive within the next couple of years.	Availability and duration of lease uncertain. Would require identification of new source of rolling stock at lease termination.
		Short term cost would be lower than cost of purchasing new equipment	All lease options require funding to pay for leasing of rolling stock
	2b. Locate and refurbish existing equipment for lease or acquisition	Short term cost would be lower than cost of purchasing new equipment.	Would require locating a source of existing equipment that could be refurbished.
		Not dependent on Metrolink or Amtrak equipment acquisition.	Availability and duration of lease uncertain. Would require identification of new source of rolling stock at lease termination.
		Provides an additional trainset and increases flexibility for corridor-wide service enhancements.	All lease options require funding to pay for leasing of rolling stock.
			Older equipment will require more extensive maintenance schedules due to wear and tear of equipment.
	2c. Secure new intercity trainset from pending State rolling stock acquisition	Long term solution and commitment for equipment.	Service is perceived as a lower priority compared to other proposed service expansion plans statewide.
		Could potentially secure a federal loan for vehicle acquisition through the Federal Railroad Administration Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (FRA RRIF) Program. See Appendix B for more information.	Higher cost than leasing other equipment.
		Shorter timeframe for securing equipment.	Higher initial capital cost if purchased.

Rolling Stock			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
	2d. Lease/purchase DMU equipment	Potential for lower annual O&M costs.	Vehicle maintenance could require modifications or upgrades to existing maintenance facilities to accommodate an additional technology with different servicing requirements. Alternatively, provisions for maintenance could be contracted to a private company and conducted in a separate facility.
		Leasing could potentially be arranged through a vehicle leasing pool, with negotiated financing.	Minimizes operational flexibility and interchangeability with existing equipment.
		Could potentially secure a federal loan for vehicle acquisition through the Federal Railroad Administration Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (FRA RRIF) Program. See Appendix B for more information.	
Infrastructure			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
1	Reschedule Amtrak 799 and 798 to earlier departure time and later arrival time at Los Angeles Union Station	Service could be initiated with currently proposed siding improvements at Strathern and completion of the siding improvements at Leesdale, thus providing both Metrolink and intercity service benefits.	An additional platform would be required at the Van Nuys Station to accommodate passenger train meets.
2	Add new intercity train between Los Angeles and Goleta, with arrival in Santa Barbara at approximately 8:30 am	Service could be initiated with currently proposed siding improvements at Strathern and completion of the siding improvements at Leesdale, thus providing both Metrolink and intercity service benefits.	An additional platform would be required at the Van Nuys Station to accommodate passenger train meets.
			Would have to assure adequate overnight storage capacity at Amtrak Redondo maintenance facility.

Operating Costs			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
1	Reschedule Amtrak 799 and 798 to earlier departure time and later arrival time at Los Angeles Union Station	No new equipment or crews required for service.	Could potentially increase operating costs due to potential change in equipment maintenance schedule.
2	Add new intercity train between Los Angeles and Goleta, with arrival in Santa Barbara at approximately 8:30 am		Additional O&M and crew costs would be required for operation and maintenance of the additional service.
Ridership			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
1	Reschedule Amtrak 799 and 798 to earlier departure time and later arrival time at Los Angeles Union Station	Potential to gain new ridership between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.	Potential to reduce ridership from Rail-2-Rail train service (Los Angeles to Oxnard).
2	Add new intercity train between Los Angeles and Goleta, with arrival in Santa Barbara at approximately 8:30 am	Maintains ridership on existing train 799 and 798 and adds new ridership from additional morning and afternoon service.	Low ridership may occur between Los Angeles and Ventura for the new morning service.
		Additional afternoon train from Santa Barbara to Los Angeles expected to attract additional ridership by broadening travel options available for all travel including recreational travel.	

Financial			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
1	Reschedule Amtrak 799 and 798 to earlier departure time and later arrival time at Los Angeles Union Station	Capital and operating costs for rescheduling existing service would be lower than the cost of adding an additional round trip.	Could potentially increase operating costs due to potential change in equipment maintenance schedule.
		Siding improvements of joint commuter and intercity rail benefit (such as the Leesdale Siding) could potentially be partially funded with the approximately \$1 million in FTA funding authorization to SBCAG.	If the schedule change results in a decrease in ridership on Amtrak 799 and 798, could potentially increase the operating subsidy required.
		<p>Could potentially qualify for State or federal funding to provide supplementary capacity and additional mode choice options during Highway 101 construction. As an example, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) received State funding for operation of an additional train as mitigation for Highway 203 construction impacts. The funding was provided through Caltrans in the form of highway construction mitigation funds, supplemented by State Intercity Rail funds made available through a replacement of midday Amtrak feeder bus service with the additional train. See Appendix B for more information.</p> <p>An early example of federal funding is provided by TriRail commuter rail service in Florida, which was initiated using FHWA highway funds as mitigation for I-95 construction impacts.</p>	

Financial			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
2	Add new intercity train between Los Angeles and Goleta, with arrival in Santa Barbara at approximately 8:30 am	<p>Could potentially secure a federal loan for capital improvements and/or vehicle acquisition through the Federal Railroad Administration Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (FRA RRIF) Program. Such funds could potentially be used to leverage local or State funds, with loan payments made by either local agencies or the State. In November 2007, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) became the first passenger rail service to receive a RRIF loan. VRE was awarded a \$72.5 million loan for new rolling stock to replace its old railcars. The State of Virginia is providing an additional \$20 million in funding. See Appendix B for more information</p>	<p>Capital and operating costs for an additional trainset and an additional round trip would be significantly higher than the cost of rescheduling existing service.</p>
		<p>Siding improvements of joint commuter and intercity rail benefit (such as the Leesdale Siding) could potentially be partially funded with the approximately \$1 million in FTA funding authorization to SBCAG.</p>	<p>Would require funding source for lease or purchase of additional rolling stock.</p>
		<p>Could potentially qualify for State or federal funding provide supplementary capacity and additional mode choice options during Highway 101 construction. As an example, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) received State funding for operation of an additional train as mitigation for Highway 203 construction impacts, with funding provided from State Intercity Rail funds made available through a reduction in Amtrak feeder bus service. See Appendix B for more information.</p> <p>An early example of federal funding is provided by TriRail commuter rail service in Florida, which was initiated using FHWA highway funds as mitigation for I-95 construction impacts.</p>	<p>The State operating subsidy for the additional round trip could require financial contribution from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.</p>

Institutional			
Alternative		Opportunities	Challenges
1	Reschedule Amtrak 799 and 798 to earlier departure time and later arrival time at Los Angeles Union Station	Intercity service can be provided through Amtrak's existing trackage/access rights, subject to UP terms and conditions.	Requires negotiation with UP for a new time slot.
			Requires agreement from Caltrans, Amtrak, and SCRRA to reschedule existing service.
2	Add new intercity train between Los Angeles and Goleta, with arrival in Santa Barbara at approximately 8:30 am	Intercity service can be provided through Amtrak's existing trackage/access rights, subject to UP terms and conditions.	Requires negotiation with UP for a new time slot.
			UP may require additional infrastructure to be provided to implement the service.
			Requires agreement from Caltrans, Amtrak, and SCRRA, and support from SBCAG to add service.
			Could require negotiation of cost-sharing agreements between Caltrans, SBCAG, and VCTC for potential capital costs and operating costs.

Potential Benefits

The following potential benefits were identified related to the preferred service option:

- Would address commuter-friendly service between Ventura and Santa Barbara to serve the high existing and projected traffic between the two counties.
- Would provide alternative mode to serve the highly bi-directional travel volumes on Highway 101 between Los Angeles and Ventura, particularly during the morning and evening hours. Travel demand model analysis conducted for the 101 Corridor Study for LA Metro and Caltrans indicated that between 1997 and 2010 and 1997 and 2025, reverse trips from elsewhere in L.A. County to the West San Fernando Valley, from L.A. County to Ventura County and from Eastern Ventura County to Western Ventura County are all forecast to increase. This trend is also reflected in traffic counts, indicating that there is currently heavy bi-directional travel in the corridor that is projected to increase. The existing and projected volumes demonstrate that there is a potential ridership market that could be better served by having the LA departure moved to 5:30 am.
- Would provide a more convenient arrival time in Santa Barbara and Goleta to allow for a full business and recreational day, and to serve the student and visitor market going to University of California Santa Barbara. Current service arrives at 10:30 am and leaves at 4:40 pm. The proposed revised schedule would provide visitors the opportunity to spend a full 8 hours in Santa Barbara. Additionally, faculty, staff and students could arrive at Goleta at around 8:45 am and leave around 5:15 pm.
- If the service were to be extended beyond Goleta, would provide a better schedule for business and recreational travel to San Luis Obispo.

Projected Ridership Issues

Determining realistic ridership estimates for passenger rail service between Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara will require a review of the output from both the intercity and regional demand models and the production of new forecasts. Recognizing the need to accommodate the output from the regional model is critical for determining the actual benefit of new Amtrak service in this corridor. For most of its length, the Pacific Surfliner is unique for passenger rail services in the western United States in that it caters to both commuter and intercity passengers. This mix of services is further encouraged through the use of the Rail-2-Rail program, which allows Amtrak passengers to ride Metrolink trains and Metrolink monthly pass holders to ride Amtrak. It should also be acknowledged that neither ridership model takes into account the benefits of the Rail-2-Rail program, which is an important component in determining the effectiveness of additional morning and evening service north of Los Angeles. This being the case it is not realistic to assume the intercity model alone provides an accurate representation of the projected ridership demand for the Pacific Surfliner. Based on the existing intercity and commuter forecasts prepared as part of the LOSSAN North Strategic Plan and the 101-in-Motion Study, the potential ridership was estimated to range from less than 100 intercity riders per day to over 3,000 commuter riders per day by 2030.

Travel between Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara is becoming increasingly more congested and the concept of “peak direction” is no longer as clear as it once

was, as there is now extensive bi-directional travel at all times of the day. A statement that is supported by the traffic demand forecasts that was conducted for the 101-in-Motion Study of travel along US Route 101 over the next 5 to 15 years, in which traditional “reverse trips” are all forecast to increase.

This being said, it is not unreasonable to project that an additional early morning and evening Pacific Surfliner train would in fact attract ridership. An additional train or adjustment in the existing schedule to accommodate the time slots proposed would allow for better arrival and departure times into Ventura and Santa Barbara that provide a longer day for leisure travelers; more convenient travel times for college students, employees, and visitors; and an alternative mode of transportation to the automobile during some of the most congested periods of time along the roadways.

A more detailed analysis however that focuses exclusively on ridership and incorporates both the regional and intercity forecasts should be conducted to provide justification to this assumption.

Equipment Issues

Finally, as discussed above, one of the critical issues involved with implementing Alternative 2: Adding a New Intercity Train to Santa Barbara, is the availability of locomotives and passenger cars. Based on a review of existing fleets across California and the western United States, it was determined that there are no available trainsets for implementing a new service. This lack of available trainsets supports the need for the State of California to expedite the acquisition of new trainsets. As a potential near term alternative to address this issue, a nationwide survey of potentially available trainsets was conducted to identify options for acquiring equipment within the next two years. The survey resulted in the identification of six potential used equipment sources and one source which could provide new equipment. The used equipment ranges in age from 7 years old to over 40 years old. In most cases the used equipment would require some level of refurbishment in order to make the vehicles operational.

Table ES-3 provides an order of magnitude estimate on the costs and time to acquire trainsets from the seven sources.

Table ES-3: Potential Equipment Availability and Costs

Equipment	Owner	Type	Est. Quantity	Location	Status	Est. Cost or Rehabilitation	Est. Timeline	Type of Agreement
First generation Amfleet I	Amtrak	Coach	40-50	Bear, DE	Require brake system rebuilding and interior cosmetic restoration	\$3-4million (\$500K per car @ 6-8 cars)	1-2 years	Lease/ Purchase
First generation "Genesis" P-40	Amtrak	Locomotive	25 +/-	Beech Grove, IN	Operational - may not pass current air quality and clean air standards for locomotives	\$3-4.5 million (\$1.5 mil per loco @ 2-3 locos)	< 1 year	Purchase
Bombardier Comet I-B	NJ Transit	Cab/Coach	70	In Service (NJ)	Built 1968, will need interior refurbishment and A/B overhaul	\$25K-75K + Rehab per car	6 mo - 1 year	Purchase
Bombardier Comet I	NJ Transit	Cab/Coach	30	In Service (NJ)	Built 1971, will need interior refurbishment and possible A/B overhaul	\$25K-90K + Rehab per car	6 mo - 1 year	Purchase
Colorado Rail Car	Colorado Rail	DMU	TBD	Built in Evergreen CO	New design to standards outlined by Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties - new construction	\$5M Bi-level Cab, \$4M Bi-level Coach	1.5 - 2 years	Lease/ Purchase
Gallery Cars	Virginia Rail Express	Coach	15+/-	In Service (VA)	Former Metra Gallery Cars, 1960 vintage, recently refurbished	\$25-75K per car	< 1 year	Purchase
Kawasaki Bi-Levels	Virginia Rail Express	Cab/Coach	10 coaches/ 3 cab	In Service (VA)	Relatively good condition - equipment purchased new about 7 years ago.	\$9-12 million (\$1.5 mil per car @ 6-8 cars)	< 1 year	Purchase

ES 5 Proposed Next Steps/Recommendations

Based on the results of this analysis, the study team and project partners have identified the following next steps and recommendations for moving forward with the Scenario 1 Option - Incremental Increases in Pacific Surfliner Service. Similar to the previous analyses, the recommendations are provided for the following categories: scheduling, rolling stock, infrastructure, operating costs, ridership, financial and institutional. It is important to note that due to the need for multiple stakeholder involvement on the majority of issues there is overlap between the institutional category and all other categories.

Scheduling

- Meet with Metrolink and Caltrans to identify opportunities to minimize train delay and optimize northbound arrival times in Santa Barbara;
- Coordinate with LOSSAN and Coast Rail Coordinating Council on overall service and to assure that schedule adjustments do not adversely affect existing intercity service and/or limit the potential for a new Coast Daylight train; and

- Work with Caltrans and Amtrak to assure that the schedule adjustments facilitate improved peak period intercity service and advance the objectives on the City of Santa Barbara OnTRAC proposal.

Rolling Stock

- Work with agencies throughout the LOSSAN Corridor in support of efforts to expedite acquisition of trainsets to meet current needs, facilitate introduction of enhanced intercity service to Santa Barbara, and to support other existing and new services statewide; and
- Provide sufficient cars and locomotive capacity to provide redundancy for emergencies and new services across California.

Infrastructure

- Identify top tier projects based on the LOSSAN North project list that would facilitate the modification and expansion of intercity service to Santa Barbara, including Leesdale and Strathern (in TIP) sidings, additional sidings in Santa Barbara segment (is already STIP funding for design), and initiate identification of the next tier of projects.

Operating Costs

- Work with Caltrans and Amtrak to insure that introduction of improved intercity service to Santa Barbara can be accomplished with minimal increase in the operating subsidy paid by the State.

Ridership

- Work with Amtrak, Caltrans, and the regional agencies to improve the ability to forecast peak period short-haul intercity ridership.

Financial

- VCTC and SBCAG should work with Caltrans together to assemble financial resources required for implementation of the proposed service.
- Research and potentially apply with Caltrans for US DOT's recently announced Federal-State \$30 million capital grant program designed to support state efforts to improve intercity passenger rail service. The Federal Railroad Administration is administering the program and will begin accepting applications on March 18, 2008. The program is designed to provide funding for projects that demonstrate an on-time performance standard of 80 percent or greater, reduce travel time, increase service frequency, or enhance service quality for intercity rail passengers. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to: upgrading existing track to permit higher maximum operating speeds, adding or lengthening passing tracks to increase rail line capacity, improving track switches and signaling systems to advance reliability and safety, and purchasing new passenger rail cars to enhance the travel experience.

Institutional

- Implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between VCTC and SBCAG regarding implementation of enhanced service between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties;
- Meet with Metrolink and Caltrans on opportunities to minimize train delay and optimize northbound arrival times in Santa Barbara and to identify opportunities to modify service;
- Coordinate with the California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency (BTH), Caltrans, California Transportation Commission and Amtrak to urge the acquisition of adequate fleet to meet current needs, facilitate introduction of enhanced intercity service to Santa Barbara, and to support other existing and new services statewide;
- Support voter sentiment demonstrated by the passage of Proposition 1B to increase the number of cars for intercity service.
- Coordinate with LOSSAN and Coast Rail Coordinating Council on overall service and to assure that schedule adjustments do not adversely affect existing intercity service and the potential for a new Coast Daylight train;
- Coordinate with SCRRA to assure that intercity schedule adjustments do not adversely affect Metrolink commuter service; and
- Work with Caltrans and Amtrak to assure that the schedule adjustments facilitate improved peak period intercity service and advance the objectives of the City of Santa Barbara's OnTRAC proposal.