



**ITEM ID:** 2024-245-0

**TRANSMITTAL DATE:** July 19, 2024

**MEETING DATE:** July 26, 2024

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

**SUBJECT:** July Legislative Update

**Issue**

Staff provides a regular monthly update on current legislative affairs.

**Recommendation**

Receive and file.

**Strategic Commitment**

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitments of:

- **Connecting and Leveraging Partnerships:** We will forge new and enhanced relationships with our public and private partners to integrate and coordinate connecting services, providing residents throughout Southern California with better, seamless, sustainable alternatives to driving. This commitment is met by sharing news, information and the Authority’s legislative priorities with elected officials.
- **Advancing Key Regional Goals:** We will grow the role of regional rail in addressing climate change, air quality, and other pressing issues by advancing toward zero emissions, making rail a compelling alternative to single-occupant automobiles and advancing equity-focused opportunities for all communities throughout Southern California. This commitment is met by encouraging federal, state and local support for Authority priorities.

## **Background**

Staff continues to engage with community, local, state, and federal stakeholders concerning Metrolink service and relevant policy initiatives.

## **Discussion**

### **Local**

The community relations team will host a virtual listening session with identified Community Based Organizations (CBO's) in Metrolink's service area. Over 700 organizations will receive an invitation to participate in this meeting. The CBO listening session is scheduled for July 25, 2024. Our goal is to work with CBOs in the region to determine their needs and preferences for Metrolink service and how we may collaborate and better serve their constituencies. The information we receive from this session will be incorporated into an outreach plan currently under development to implement this year that will foster greater collaboration and service to CBOs that will lead to sustained, enhanced ridership growth.

Metrolink attended meetings of the Riverside County Transportation Now groups in June to share information about Metrolink service with stakeholders and elected officials in western Riverside County. The Transportation Now groups are grassroots organizations comprised of community groups and elected officials that support and are interested in public transportation in Riverside County. Metrolink will continue to provide updates to similar transportation groups in Riverside County and throughout our region to enhance exposure and dialogue with these groups, increasing awareness of Metrolink's expanded service and flexible fare products.

Additionally, the community relations team continues to outreach and communicate with all station cities to share updates on Metrolink service. Recently government and community relations staff reached out to all station cities staff to request each city to post information regarding Metrolink in their city newsletters as well as providing us an opportunity to speak briefly at their council meetings and, where possible, post information on electronic sign boards owned and operated by station cities. The information includes Metrolink's discounted fare programs. Staff will monitor the leveraged outreach and provide updates to the Board.

### **State**

On June 23, the Governor and State Legislature reached an agreement on the FY24-25 state budget. SB 108/ AB 108, the Budget Act of 2024, preserves in full the \$5.1 billion in transit funding provided by last year's SB 125. Hearings and floor votes will commence on June 25 and the Governor is expected to sign final legislation before the new fiscal year begins July 1. It is also expected that the first tranche of SB 125 funding, which has been frozen since April 29 as part of a statewide pause on discretionary spending, will be released.

### **Federal**

Metrolink was represented at the Mobility 21 Washington trip by Darren Kettle. Mr. Kettle and other coalition members met with Transportation & Infrastructure Committee chairman Sam Graves, Representatives Judy Chu and Ken Calvert, and Deputy Assistant to the President for Infrastructure Implementation Samantha Silverberg, among other individuals. Topics

discussed included the 2028 Games and our pending Metrolink grant applications.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) released a summary of its findings and recommendations related to the East Palestine, Ohio train derailment in 2023. The summary of findings will be followed by a full report by the NTSB expected to be released in July. Representatives Troy Nehls (R-TX) and Seth Moulton (D-MA) are initiating work on rail safety legislation that would incorporate recommendations of the NTSB as well as input from rail operators and industry stakeholders around the country to create a balanced approach to enhance safety and to mitigate against future such derailments. Metrolink is actively involved through its industry associations and federal advocacy team to monitor and provide appropriate input to any draft legislation that may be introduced and considered in Congress. Staff will keep the Board advised.

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Approved by: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

**Attachment(s)**

[Appendix A - July 2024 Bill Matrix](#)