



**ITEM ID:** 2023-377-0

**TRANSMITTAL DATE:** December 1, 2023

**MEETING DATE:** December 8, 2023

**TO:** Board of Directors

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

**SUBJECT:** December 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 relating to Metrolink service and relevant policy initiatives.

## **Discussion**

### **Local**

Staff continues efforts to engage with elected offices to provide information relating to Metrolink service and maintenance facilities. CEO Darren Kettle has met individually with Los Angeles City Councilmembers Eunisses Hernandez and John Lee to address issues pertinent to Metrolink service in their districts including, respectively, the Central Maintenance Facility in CD 1 and needed platform improvements at the Northridge station in CD 12. Meetings are presently being organized with Assemblymember Eloise Gomez-Reyes, who represents the San Bernardino/Colton area, and Los Angeles City Councilmember Imelda Padilla to inform these elected officials of Metrolink activities in their districts and to share the beneficial impacts on their constituent communities. These and other future meetings with elected officials will help strengthen ties between Metrolink and the communities it serves.

Community relations has distributed an infographic (Attachment A) describing Metrolink's current offerings of discounted and flexible fare products to elected official offices systemwide and has requested that they share the information on their social media and other communications platforms. The infographic has also been shared on the Nextdoor community website.

### **State**

CEO Darren Kettle hosted a tour in Fullerton on November 27 with members of the State Senate Subcommittee on LOSSAN Rail Corridor Resiliency, local elected officials and LOSSAN staff. Subcommittee Members Senators Catherine Blakespear, Josh Newman, Tom Umberg, Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva, Metrolink Vice-Chair Doug Chaffee, and City of Fullerton Mayor Fred Jung toured the Fullerton Station and the right-of-way at the Orangethorpe Avenue crossing. The group discussed ongoing and planned activities at this important section of the network, including operations, track, signal and crossing maintenance, maintenance-of-way, SCORE program, and state of good repair, as well as the Fullerton Interlocker project. On December 4, Senator Catherine Blakespear and Senator Ben Allen, also a Member of the subcommittee, will tour the Burbank-Downtown station and the Burbank Junction Speed Improvements Project to allowing higher speeds and more frequent and safer operations at the junction. A hearing of the LOSSAN Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Blakespear, is scheduled for December 11. Established earlier this year, the subcommittee is studying how to improve infrastructure and service along the 351-mile rail line.

### **Federal**

Staff is tracking the Transportation Assistance for Olympic Cities Act introduced last summer in the House and Senate. The legislation would direct USDOT to prioritize competitive grant applications for Olympic-related projects, instruct USDOT to expediate federal review of Olympic-related projects and provide other reasonable planning assistance, and allow USDOT to fund temporary facilities, equipment, and maintenance projects for the Games. Similar legislation was passed by Congress to support the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. Metrolink is also preparing a letter to the Biden Administration that addresses specific rolling stock, system maintenance and infrastructure, and operations needs in order to provide

regional passenger rail service sufficient to meet the anticipated demand of the Games. Metrolink is asking the Administration to provide a request for funding to Metrolink to secure these needs in each fiscal year budget it submits to Congress from FY 2025 through 2028. Staff will share a copy of the letter with the Board when transmitted to the President.

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Approved by: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

**Attachment(s)**

[Attachment A - Discount Infographic  
Presentation - December Legislative Update](#)