



**ITEM ID:** 2025-300-0

**TRANSMITTAL DATE:** September 19, 2025

**MEETING DATE:** September 26, 2025

**TO:** Board of Directors

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

**SUBJECT:** September 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**

#### *Meetings and Events with Local Elected Offices*

Throughout August, Metrolink's Community Relations team continued its work to strengthen partnerships with local stakeholders, support community engagement, and address safety and accessibility concerns with local elected offices in the region.

On August 13, representatives from Metrolink's Community Relations, Safety, and Maintenance of Way teams met with staff from Los Angeles County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath's office to discuss issues of homelessness along the right-of-way (ROW) and how, collectively, we can work together to address the needs of this community. The meeting also included discussion of safety enhancements along the ROW, with particular emphasis on improvements at the Sun Valley station.

On August 19, Metrolink's Community Relations and Planning teams met with staff from Los Angeles City Councilmember Imelda Padilla's office to discuss the Sun Valley station. The discussion focused on ways to improve station visibility, address safety concerns, and identify strategies to increase ridership at the station.

In addition to these meetings, Metrolink staff and executive leadership, including CEO Darren Kettle, joined regional partners and local elected officials for a ribbon cutting ceremony on August 12 to celebrate recent improvements at the Moreno Valley/March Field Station.

#### *Participation in Community Events*

Metrolink staff participated in several regional events throughout the month to raise awareness of Metrolink services and corporate partnership opportunities. These events offer the opportunity to engage and connect with local elected officials, nonprofit organizations and businesses in our service area.

On August 21, staff participated in the California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Convention at the Pomona Fairplex. At the exhibitor booth, information on Metrolink service was shared in addition to details on our Corporate Partner Program. The information highlighted opportunities for companies and organizations to provide transit benefits to their employees.

On August 28, staff attended the Valley Industry Commerce Association (VICA) Local Officeholders Luncheon. The event featured local elected officials representing the City of Los Angeles and other Valley cities.

### **State**

#### *Metrolink Participates in Senate Hearing on LOSSAN Corridor*

On July 10, Paul Hubler, Metrolink's Chief Strategy Officer, testified before the California State Senate Subcommittee on LOSSAN Rail Corridor Resiliency at a hearing titled Transforming

Passenger Rail in Southern California: Progress, Challenges and the Path Forward. Speaking alongside representatives from the San Diego Association of Governments and the Legislative Analyst's Office, Hubler reported early results from Metrolink's October 2024 schedule. He touted the 24% increase in boardings year-over-year and the record-breaking weekend boardings in March. Paul also stressed the critical need for sustained state funding—particularly from Cap-and-Trade programs like TIRCP, LCTOP, and SB 125—to support both operations and capital projects, positioning Metrolink as a key player in meeting California's climate and mobility goals.

#### Letter Distributed Outlining Regional Cap & Trade Priorities

Metrolink joined its member agencies LA Metro, OCTA, SBCTA, RCTC, and VCTC in signing a letter distributed to state legislative leaders listing a series of recommendations for how best to reauthorize cap-and-trade. If the Legislature provides long-term, guaranteed minimum funding to high-speed rail, as suggested by the Governor's "cap-and-invest" proposal, the letter signatories ask that a proportionate share of that funding be directed to Southern California. Additionally, the signatories recommend the legislature maintain or increase the share of cap-and-trade funding directed towards the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). Finally, the signatories urge that any reauthorization provide a flexible dedicated funding source for regional rail agency operations, a critical tool for meeting the State's climate goals.

#### **Federal**

On Wednesday, August 7, CEO Darren Kettle welcomed Congressman David Rouzer (R-NC) aboard the San Bernardino Line for a ride from Rancho Cucamonga to Los Angeles Union Station. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, and member of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman Rouzer is integrally involved with shaping policy and funding priorities for the next multiyear surface transportation authorization law.

Congressman Rouzer's visit provided a unique opportunity to experience the Metrolink system firsthand and discuss future Metrolink connectivity with Brightline West high speed rail service from Las Vegas to Southern California at Rancho Cucamonga. Mr. Kettle and Congressman Rouzer were also able to discuss planning and infrastructure for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games intended to help Metrolink offer service during the Games.

#### *Appropriations Bills Advance*

Congress made progress on several appropriations bills needed to fund the government in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 before adjourning for the August recess. The Senate Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations subcommittee advanced legislation on July 24 that would fund the US Department of Transportation. Senators proposed maintaining funding consistent with authorization levels outlined in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Senate appropriators also included \$68 million for surface, commuter and public transportation systems to support mobility needs for the 2028 Games and \$78 million for supplemental public transportation services in U.S. host cities during the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The Senate FY26 THUD bill now awaits a vote by the full Senate.

Meanwhile, the House Appropriations Committee approved a draft FY26 THUD bill on July 10.

While lawmakers approved cuts to programs that support Amtrak and electric vehicle charging, the competitive grants and formula funds Metrolink utilizes were left mostly untouched. House Appropriators did move \$500 million from the Fed-State Partnership

competitive grant program to CRISI, which supports intercity and freight rail projects. As a next step, the full House will need to approve THUD and meet in conference with the Senate to reconcile bills by the end of the fiscal year on September 30 or pass a Continuing Resolution if additional time is needed.

*Big Beautiful Bill Includes Funding for Major Events Security Needs*

The “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” signed into law on July 4, included \$1 billion in federal funding to pay for security and planning for the Olympics, plus \$625 million for World Cup security. The funding will be distributed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) or additional details on grant distribution are not yet available.

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**Attachment(s)**

[Appendix A - September 2025 Bill Matrix](#)