



**ITEM ID:** 2025-100-0

**TRANSMITTAL DATE:** January 17, 2025

**MEETING DATE:** January 24, 2025

**TO:** Board of Directors

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

**SUBJECT:** Third Party Agreement - Ventura-Santa Barbara Initial Commuter Rail Service Start-Up Costs

### **Issue**

In 2022, as the impact of the pandemic on passenger service frequencies waned, SBCAG and VCTC approached staff of the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) regarding available options for resuming morning train service between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. As LOSSAN lacked available equipment and faced overall challenges with state funding, VCTC and SBCAG reached out to SCRRA as a potential operator.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board authorize the Chief Executive Officer to execute an agreement with Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) to provide all startup costs to Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) to develop and implement the initial service plan for the proposed Ventura-Santa Barbara (VEN-SBA/GOL) intercounty commuter trains in 2025.

### **Strategic Commitment**

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitment(s) of:

- **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.

## **Background**

Originally, a Pacific Surfliner early morning train in 2018 was supported by SBCAG's Measure A funds as a commuter rail service to offer alternate transport to a multimodal corridor U.S. 101 Highway HOV project. However, the morning train service was cut by LOSSAN due to the pandemic-related drop in ridership, poor service reliability, and lack of available resources, including rolling stock equipment and train crews.

The Authority anticipates negotiating the right to utilize LOSSAN's available track access (i.e., a roundtrip "slot") on the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right of way between LA Union Station and Santa Barbara/Goleta (LAUS-SBA/GOL) to operate the commuter train on UPRR tracks between Ventura (Moorpark Station) and Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara and Goleta stations) counties.

Implementation of the initial Metrolink commuter rail service plan requires approval and execution of a multiparty agreement to pay the costs incurred by the Authority to develop and implement this initial service plan.

## **Discussion**

VCTC, LOSSAN, SBCAG and the Authority have been meeting intermittently during 2023 and 2024 to develop a proposed operational framework for the initial service plan commuter trains between Ventura and Santa Barbara/Goleta.

A service plan concept initially developed by the Authority was used to prepare a draft cost proposal for initial service between Moorpark and Goleta. For Authority staff to continue and complete the development of the initial service plan, a third-party agreement needs to be executed by Authority, VCTC and SBCAG to reimburse for costs to be incurred by the Authority.

The cost estimates have been developed by the Authority staff and have been presented to VCTC and SBCAG for their review and consideration. These cost estimates, as concurred by SBCAG and VCTC, have been incorporated into a Third-Party Agreement between the parties. Provided are the costs and deliverables in the Third-Party Agreement that have been segregated into three (3) phases to be performed by the Authority to develop and implement the initial service plan.

## **Budget Impact**

There will be no impact to the Authority budget. Pursuant to the terms of the Third-Party Agreement, all costs incurred by the Authority for the development and implementation of the Ventura-Santa Barbara commuter train initial service plan will be paid by VCTC and SBCAG.

SBCAG and VCTC agree to compensate SCRRRA for Initial Service Plan Activities through advance payments for costs incurred by Authority in the amount not-to-exceed \$449,890. The initial \$155,500 payment shall be paid by SBCAG and VCTC (with each of SBCAG and VCTC

paying 50% of such amount) to the Authority upon execution of this Third-Party Agreement and prior to starting any Phase I tasks. The remainder of the funds will be received by the Authority prior to starting Phase II-III tasks. Service will not commence until full amount of annual cost is received.

### **Next Steps**

Upon Board approval, the CEO or his designee will execute the Third-Party Agreement. As the Authority has already been actively involved with VCTC and SBCAG, Authority staff will begin to perform the various Phase I tasks stated in the Third-Party Agreement. Prior to starting Phase I tasks the Authority must receive payment in the amount of \$155,500 and prior to starting Phase II-III the Authority must receive payment in the amount of \$294,390. The Authority will provide updates to the Board including the status of the current and any future (Phase II and III) tasks to implement the initial service plan for a service start date in October 2025.

Prepared by: Monica Coria, Senior Manager, Railroad and Real Estate Services

Approved by: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

### **Attachment(s)**

[Presentation - Santa Barbara Service Third Party Agreement](#)