



ITEM ID: 2025-215-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: April 21, 2025

MEETING DATE: April 25, 2025

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Donald Filippi, Chief Operating Officer
Tom Schamber, Interim Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: Ratification of Emergency Actions Related to the Stabilization of San Clemente Tracks

Issue

On April 14, 2025, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors authorized emergency actions to stabilize sections of track on the Orange Subdivision near San Clemente threatened by coastal erosion and landslides in San Clemente. Urgent action is needed to protect Metrolink infrastructure and to ensure the safety of our passengers, employees and our assets. The corridor is also used for intercity passenger and freight rail operations. Staff requests Board ratification of actions necessary to address the emergency expeditiously.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board ratify certain actions of the CEO necessary to address a declared emergency due to continued coastal erosion along the Orange Subdivision near San Clemente that poses an imminent risk to passenger service, life, and property in these areas. These actions include:

1. The negotiation of a Cooperative Agreement with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA); and
2. Adoption of an amendment to the FY25 Budget of \$9,984,000 to recognize funding and expenditures associated with this emergency; and
3. Authorization to enter into one or more non-competitive procurements in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$9,984,000.

Strategic Commitment

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitments of:

- **Safety is Foundational:** We will stay on the leading edge by deploying new technologies and processes to enhance the safety and security of our riders, our fellow employees, and the communities we serve. Ensuring the safety of the passengers.
- **Customers Are Our Business:** We respect and value our customers, putting them at the heart of all we do, and work hard to attract and retain new customers by understanding their needs and finding new and innovative ways to bring them on board. Ensuring safe and efficient service.
- **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. Working with stakeholders to ensure infrastructure stability.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is conducting a Coastal Rail Resiliency Study (CRRS) to develop short to medium-term solutions to protect the coastal railroad in its existing right-of-way (ROW) and general alignment. As a part of CRRS, OCTA completed an Initial Assessment that identified four areas (Area 1 and 2, Area 3, and Area 4) that require mitigation due to the potential for slope instability, coastal erosion, and landslide hazards. These four areas are referred to as the Coastal Rail Stabilization Priority Projects (CRSPP), which are under imminent threat of additional passenger and freight rail service disruptions. Site observations were initially conducted, followed by a detailed LiDAR (Light Detection and Range) survey with orthometric and oblique aerial imagery (March 2024).

The field and survey assessment determined that:

- **Areas 1 and 2:** (Milepost [MP] 203.83 to MP 204.40). Several areas along the beachside were found to be over-steepened and susceptible to additional degradation, requiring immediate reinforcement. The potential impact of coastal erosion is high in these locations due to the narrow beach, direct wave attack, and existing displaced rock on steep slopes.
- **Area 3:** (MP 204.07 to 204.34). Several areas along the inland side of the track were found to be over-steepened, susceptible to additional degradation, and require immediate reinforcement. Area of coastal bluff erosion on the inland side of the railroad ROW vulnerable to steep bluffs and landslides that foul the railroad ROW. Additionally, a temporary solution of a soldier pile catchment wall was implemented by SCRRA, the operator of the passenger rail service, in cooperation with OCTA, the owner of the railroad ROW near the Mariposa Pedestrian Beach Trail bridge located between the tracks and bluff at Milepost (MP) 204.2. The temporary mitigations aimed to prevent additional debris from reaching the tracks from a specific landslide. Since the construction of the wall, other failures along the bluff have occurred. The bluff in this vicinity has a history of slope failures.
- **Area 4:** (MP 206.00 to 206.10, MP 206.42 to 206.70). Portions of this area have been subject to recent coastal erosion where little to no riprap (large boulders with jagged edges) exists, posing a significant and immediate threat to the railroad ROW. This area

is bounded to the south by riprap placed to arrest erosion and landslides at Cyprus Shore.

Discussion

SCRRA seeks the services of a Contractor for the construction of the Coastal Rail Stabilization Priority Project (CRSPP) Area 1 and 2 riprap repair, and pedestrian bridge removal in Area 3 (Project) at multiple locations within the Orange Subdivision between MP 203.83 to 206.70:

Area 1 and 2: MP 203.83 to MP 204.40.

The Project aims to restore existing degraded riprap protection to the tracks from ongoing wave damage and beach erosion that has resulted in overall riprap loss from the standard design section, over-steepened slopes, unstable stones, exposure of the rail embankment to wave action, and overall degradation in protective capacity to the rail embankment in San Clemente.

Efforts to temporarily address riprap degradation have been conducted periodically by SCRRA/Metrolink by importing and placing riprap from the track. Recent placement includes stone placed near MP 203.85 in 2021, and near MP 206.70 in 2023 in the City of San Clemente.

The footprint of the repair is located within SCRRA ROW and/or within the footprint of the existing riprap. OCTA, as the owner of the railroad ROW, plays a role in this project. California Coastal Commission (CCC) also protects the interests of the public in terms of environmental impacts. Operators on this corridor include Metrolink, Amtrak, and BNSF. SCRRA and the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency passenger rail service will need to be suspended or significantly modified to facilitate this work. In addition, coordination with BNSF will be required to allow for periodic freight rail operations to continue during the work. To minimize impacts to passenger rail service, the contractor shall maximize the use of anticipated modified passenger operations, by performing work on all permissible days to ensure timely completion.

The Contractor shall install riprap repair between the track and typical toe of the slope. Import, grading and placing large, graded riprap shall be conducted to bring the existing riprap protection into compliance with Metrolink Engineering Standard ES2003 Roadbed Sections Exposed to Ocean Surf, at the repair areas shown on the drawings and as specified in ES2003. Large riprap shall meet the gradation requirements of Caltrans Riprap Slope Protection (RSP), Class X (Method A placement) modified gradation to address concerns with handling and delivering large riprap. Riprap may be delivered by side dump cars delivered by rail near to Area 1 and 2. However, riprap shall not be finally placed by dumping but shall be individually handled and hand placed as necessary to obtain a well-graded distribution of rock, rock having 3-point bearing on adjacent rocks, embedded into the revetment, and other requirements in accordance with SCRRA's engineering standards and standard specifications. Work from the track, and from the beach at low tide shall be required to prepare the placement areas and place riprap in a stable section at the indicated repair locations.

Total tonnage of RSP Class X required is estimated to be 7,700 tons.

Area 3: MP 204.07 to 204.34

The contractor shall be responsible for removal of the existing pedestrian bridge steel superstructure, approximately 900 linear feet, located in Area 3 on the landward side of the track. The bridge pile caps/concrete substructure and concrete approach ramps shall remain in place, as they may currently retain soil from the adjacent slope. After bridge removal, the contractor shall re-establish the existing pedestrian access from Mariposa trail to pedestrian underpass beach access. Additionally, the contractor shall close beach trail access between Linda Lane and the pedestrian bridge to block public access.

Support for Modified Passenger Operations

Metrolink service will be modified to operate Orange County and Inland Empire/Orange County (IEOC) line trains to stop or originate at Laguna Nigel/Mission Viejo Station. SCRRA will mobilize a temporary layover site at El Toro near MP 186.0 inclusive of temporary lighting, portable restroom and wash facilities, and security patrols. During the modified schedule trains will be stored at El Toro overnight and on weekends. Train crews will be transported to El Toro instead of Stuart Mesa and Mechanical personnel will perform routine inspection and minor maintenance at El Toro during the modified schedule. Crews will clean the interior of trains at El Toro. Refueling of trains will also be performed at El Toro as needed.

Metrolink staff will coordinate public outreach with OCTA to ensure timely communications with customers and other stakeholders, once the construction schedules are finalized.

Budget Impact

- OCTA is solely responsible for all costs associated with this emergency.
- At OCTA's request, the California Transportation Commission has allocated \$9,984,000 of emergency funding under the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) and the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) to Metrolink, supplying local funds to cover working capital needs until grant reimbursements are received.
- This is an unbudgeted revenue and expense. Approval of this item will add \$9,984,000 of revenue and expense to the FY25 Budget.
- Should the cost exceed this amount upon negotiation with the contractor(s), staff will return to the Board to request additional budget authority.

Next Steps

The Authority will start coordinating with OCTA and contractor(s) for the performance of the project.

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