



**October 11, 2018**

**To:** Transit Committee

**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

**Subject:** Metrolink Fiscal Year 2017-18 Performance Report

### **Overview**

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority is a five-member joint powers authority that operates the 400-mile commuter rail service known as Metrolink. A report on Metrolink ridership, revenue, and on-time performance for service in Orange County covering fiscal year 2017-18 is provided for consideration by the Board of Directors.

### **Recommendation**

Receive and file as an information item.

### **Background**

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority's (SCRRA) joint powers authority includes the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), the Riverside County Transportation Commission, the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, and the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC). SCRRA operates the Metrolink commuter rail service, which includes 171 weekday trains on seven lines, serving 62 stations, and carries approximately 40,000 riders each weekday.

SCRRA receives funding from its member agencies to support the on-going operations and maintenance of the Metrolink system. This funding is provided through the annual budget process and is based on formulas that include a number of factors covering each aspect of operations, maintenance, rehabilitation, and capital. OCTA staff continues to strengthen regional partnerships by actively participating in the Metrolink technical advisory committee, as well as decision making and performance improvements planning.

The three Metrolink lines that serve Orange County (OC) are outlined as follows:

- OC Line:
  - Oceanside to Los Angeles
  - Established in 1994
  - 29 daily trains (10 intracounty trains between Fullerton and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo)
- Inland Empire – Orange County (IEOC) Line:
  - San Bernardino to Oceanside via Orange
  - Established in 1995
  - 16 daily trains
- 91/Perris Valley (91/PV) Line:
  - Perris to Los Angeles via Fullerton
  - Established in 2002
  - Nine daily trains

Metrolink trains serve 11 OC stations daily and carry an average of more than 18,500 daily passengers on the three lines serving OC. Weekend service is offered on all three lines, with 16 trips on Saturday and Sunday.

The 22-mile 91/PV Line extension opened in June 2016, with four new stations: Riverside-Hunter Park/University of California, Riverside, Moreno Valley/March Field, Perris-Downtown, and Perris-South, resulting in increased ridership on this line. There is no weekend service on the PV extension.

Metrolink service along portions of each line in Orange County shares a rail corridor with the state-supported intercity passenger rail service known as the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner which is managed by the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency.

The Rail 2 Rail (R2R) Program, which began in 2003, allows Metrolink monthly passholders the option of riding the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains at no additional charge to the rider, provided that they travel within the stations identified on the monthly pass. Pacific Surfliner monthly pass holders may also ride any Metrolink train within the station pairs on their Amtrak Pacific Surfliner monthly pass. The R2R Program is fully funded by the three-member agencies that benefit from the program, LA Metro, VCTC, and OCTA, with OCTA contributing 66 percent. In OC, a valid Metrolink ticket or monthly pass also permits a transfer to local OCTA bus routes that directly serve a Metrolink station, including StationLink routes, at no additional charge to the passenger.

### ***Discussion***

The report provides an update on Metrolink weekday and weekend ridership, revenue and on-time performance (OTP) for fiscal year (FY) 2017-18. In FY 2017-18, Metrolink changed the methodology used to calculate ridership from on-board conductor counts to ticket sales as a base measure; accordingly, ridership on this, and all subsequent reports, will be reported based on ticket sales. FY 2016-17 ridership has also been updated to reflect ticket sales data, and will not match the last annual report, which included data based on conductor counts. All performance data is obtained directly from Metrolink, unless otherwise noted. Metrolink performance: ridership, revenue, and OTP are detailed in Attachment A.

### **Ridership and Revenue**

#### **Total Ridership**

Systemwide Metrolink ridership totaled 11.7 million riders for FY 2017-18, which represents a 0.4 percent increase from the previous FY. Combined FY 2017-18 ridership (weekday and weekend) for the three Metrolink lines serving OC, including R2R passengers, was 5.1 million, a decrease of 0.2 percent compared to FY 2016-17.

Metrolink Total Ridership			
	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	% Change
OC Line	2,779,306	2,816,916	1.4%
IEOC Line	1,424,599	1,368,651	-3.9%
91/PV Line	881,795	888,190	0.7%
OC Metrolink	5,085,700	5,073,757	-0.2%
Systemwide	11,640,283	11,688,794	0.4%

In FY 2017-18, OC Line ridership increased by 1.4 percent compared to the previous FY, and 91/PV Line ridership increased by 0.7 percent, though IEOC Line ridership declined by 3.9 percent. For several months, freight traffic along the service corridor has impacted passenger rail performance, resulting in a degradation of OTP, which may have also resulted in ridership losses. Metrolink is currently working with the BNSF Railway (BNSF) to develop processes aimed to improve OTP. In March 2017, the Riverside portion of the 91 Express Lanes (on State Route 91) opened, which could also have prompted

some Metrolink riders to switch to driving or carpooling instead of riding the IEOC Line.

#### Average Weekday Ridership

As Southern California's commuter rail system, the weekday work trip is Metrolink's target market. Train schedules are developed to best serve commuters during weekday peak periods.

In FY 2017-18, there were over 18,500 combined average weekday boardings on the OC, IEOC, and 91/PV lines, including R2R passengers. As the table below reflects, average weekday ridership experienced a slight decline on the OC and IEOC lines compared to FY 2016-17 but increased on the 91/PV line. Notably, the 91/PV Line experienced positive ridership changes that are attributed to the additional weekday service provided with the four new Perris Valley stations and steep fare discounts provided to incentivize riders to use the extended service.

Metrolink Average Weekday Ridership			
	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	% Change
OC Line	10,579	10,431	-1.4%
IEOC Line	4,900	4,844	-1.2%
91/PV Line	3,258	3,263	0.2%
OC Metrolink	18,737	18,537	-1.1%
Systemwide	42,928	42,876	-0.1%

The following table shows the change in average weekday station boardings in FY 2017-18, compared to FY 2016-17. All but a few stations show a decrease in average boardings, consistent with lower ridership reported numbers. The OC Metrolink lines, stations, and boardings are geographically portrayed in a map (Attachment B).

Metrolink Average Weekday Station Boardings			
Orange County Station	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	% Change
1 Anaheim	510	501	-1.7%
2 Anaheim Canyon	350	322	-7.9%
3 Buena Park	586	576	-1.6%
4 Fullerton	1,595	1,603	0.5%
5 Irvine	1,441	1,453	0.9%
6 Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo	330	324	-1.7%
7 Orange	721	693	-3.8%
8 San Clemente North Beach	122	113	-7.6%
9 San Juan Capistrano	147	140	-5.1%
10 Santa Ana	874	848	-3.0%
11 Tustin	1,209	1,182	-2.2%

In addition to local OC Bus routes that connect to rail stations, OCTA operates ten StationLink and iShuttle routes that are designed to meet certain trains. These rail feeder buses provide a commuter link to major employment centers, with nearly 2,000 average weekday boardings.

#### Weekend Ridership

Metrolink weekend service began in 2006 with two roundtrips on the OC Line. There are now four weekend roundtrips on the OC Line, two on the IEOC Line, and two on the 91/PV Line (excluding the Perris Valley extension).

Combined total weekend ridership on the OC, IEOC, and 91/PV lines during FY 2017-18 was approximately 463,000 passenger boardings, including R2R passengers. This represents an increase of 5.9 percent compared to FY 2016-17. OCTA continues to promote Metrolink weekend service through Metrolink weekend campaigns, which feature exclusive deals and travel itineraries.

Metrolink Total Weekend Ridership			
	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	% Change
OC Line	206,483	222,313	7.7%
IEOC Line	157,348	164,146	4.3%
91/PV Line	73,585	76,848	4.4%
OC Metrolink	437,416	463,307	5.9%
Systemwide	992,031	1,027,389	3.6%

### Revenue

Systemwide revenue for FY 2017-18 was \$82.5 million, which is 0.4 percent less than FY 2016-17 and 1.6 percent below the budget assumption. Annual revenue for the three lines serving OC totaled \$35.7 million, which is 0.5 percent less than the previous FY. Revenue increased on the OC and 91/PV lines compared to last year, but decreased on the IEOC Line. The IEOC revenue decline is largely attributed to the ridership decline resulting from degraded OTP and reflects more riders buying tickets for short trips, and riders traveling on discounted fare media, such as the student and youth passes. Metrolink revenue for the three lines serving OC was 43 percent of the systemwide total of \$82.5 million.

Passenger fare revenue covers roughly half of Metrolink operating expenses, with the remainder covered by other revenues and member agency subsidies. The OC Line consistently has the highest farebox recovery rate, currently 67.1 percent, exceeding the systemwide average of 43.3 percent. A summary of Metrolink revenue is depicted in the table below:

Metrolink Total Revenue			
	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	% Change
OC Line	\$ 21,986,578	\$ 22,139,666	0.7%
IEOC Line	\$ 8,164,423	\$ 7,786,709	-4.6%
91/PV Line	\$ 5,718,615	\$ 5,753,676	0.6%
OC Metrolink	\$ 35,869,616	\$ 35,680,051	-0.5%
Systemwide	\$ 82,904,550	\$ 82,537,713	-0.4%

## OTP

Trains can be delayed for a variety of reasons, including equipment issues, unscheduled delays (or meets) with other trains, delays from other operators utilizing the same tracks, construction or track maintenance, and incidents. Metrolink's OTP goal is 95 percent. A train is defined as on-time if it arrives at its final destination within five minutes of its scheduled arrival time. In FY 2017-18, Metrolink operated at a 93.8 percent systemwide OTP, a 0.5 percentage point increase from the prior year. The OC, IEOC, and 91/PV lines averaged 91.4, 88.5, and 94.2 percent OTP, respectively, for FY 2017-18.

## Key Initiatives FY 2017-18

Metrolink undertook several efforts to enhance service during the year. The list below highlights some of these efforts:

- In coordination with member agencies, Metrolink operated special train service on the OC and 91/PV lines to seven Los Angeles Rams football home games at the Los Angeles Coliseum. There were nearly double the number of boardings (83 percent increase) on game days compared to boardings on a typical Sunday. Following the success of the past two years of Football Train service, staff is coordinating with Metrolink to serve five home games this fall, starting Sunday, September 16, 2018.
- Funded through a Mobile Source Reduction Review Committee grant, the Metrolink Angels Express service is in its eighth year of providing baseball fans with a rail transit option for weekday home games. Through game 45, almost 36,000 boardings have been recorded, an increase of five percent compared to the prior year.
- Following the rollout of mobile ticketing in March 2016, 39 percent of Metrolink passengers purchase tickets via the mobile application. Mobile app use is up from 23 percent the previous year, mainly due to the installation of optic readers at LA Metro rail gates, which provide a seamless transfer between Metrolink and connections in Los Angeles.
- In June 2018, in response to an increasing number of trespasser strikes on the railroad right-of-way, OCTA launched a rail safety campaign that targets trespassers in the south OC area. The awareness campaign was digital, with the tagline *the penalty for trespassing could be your life*, and gained approximately two million impressions.
- In 2013, Metrolink ordered 40 new Tier 4 clean diesel locomotives and currently has 15 in revenue service, with a goal of full implementation by fall 2019.
- In June 2015, Metrolink launched Positive Train Control (PTC) in revenue service demonstration across the entire Metrolink network owned by the member agencies. With this accomplishment, Metrolink became the

first railroad in the nation to have PTC running during regular service on all of its hosted lines. In October 2017, Metrolink achieved PTC interoperability with BNSF and is the first commuter railroad in the nation to achieve interoperable PTC with both BNSF and the Union Pacific Railroad.

**Summary**

The staff report provides an update on the Orange County Metrolink commuter rail ridership, revenue, and on-time performance for FY 2017-18. Total ridership in Orange County is down 0.2 percent, while weekend ridership has increased by 5.9 percent, compared to the previous year.

**Attachments**

- A. Metrolink Performance
- B. Metrolink Average Weekday Station Boardings (FY 2017-18)

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