



October 10, 2019

To: Transit Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Metrolink Fiscal Year 2018-19 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 2018-19 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 (Metrolink) membership includes the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, and the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC). Metrolink operates 173 weekday trains on seven lines, serving 62 stations, and carries approximately 44,000 riders each weekday.

In addition to fare revenue, Metrolink is funded by its member agencies, with formulas based upon several factors covering each aspect of operations, maintenance, rehabilitation, and capital. OCTA staff aims to continue to strengthen regional partnerships by actively participating in Metrolink decision making and performance improvements.

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 (ten 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 18,550 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. In fiscal year (FY) 2018-19, there was no regular weekend service on the extension. Weekend service on the 91/PV extension will begin in FY 2019-20.

Metrolink service along portions of each line in OC shares a corridor with the state-supported intercity passenger rail service known as the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner, 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 Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains at no additional charge to the rider, if they travel within the stations identified on their monthly pass. Amtrak Pacific Surfliner monthly pass holders may also ride any Metrolink train within the station pairs of their 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 transfers to local OCTA bus routes that directly serve a Metrolink station, including StationLink routes, at no charge to the passenger.

Discussion

This report provides an update on Metrolink weekday and weekend ridership, revenue and on-time performance (OTP) for FY 2018-19. All performance data is obtained directly from Metrolink, unless otherwise noted. Metrolink performance: ridership, revenue, and on-time performance are detailed in Attachment A.

Ridership and Revenue

Total Ridership

Systemwide Metrolink ridership totaled 11.9 million riders for FY 2018-19, which represents a 2.1 percent increase from the previous FY. Combined FY 2018-19 ridership (weekday and weekend) for the three Metrolink lines serving OC, including R2R passengers, was 5.1 million, virtually unchanged from FY 2017-18.

Metrolink Total Ridership			
	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	% Change
OC Line	2,816,916	2,864,777	1.7%
IEOC Line	1,368,651	1,315,621	-3.9%
91/PV Line	888,190	893,079	0.6%
OC Metrolink	5,073,757	5,073,477	0.0%
Systemwide	11,688,794	11,935,362	2.1%

In FY 2018-19, OC Line ridership increased by 1.7 percent compared to the previous FY, and 91/PV Line ridership increased by 0.6 percent, though IEOC Line ridership declined by 3.9 percent.

The decrease on the IEOC Line may be attributed to OTP delays on the freight dispatched portion of the route outside of Orange County. Metrolink staff is working to resolve the issues through BNSF Railway right-of-way.

The increase of 91/PV Line ridership may be due to the Perris Valley extension that opened in June 2016 and related fare discounts offered to incentivize riders. Ridership on the OC Line reached a record high, increasing by 1,652 percent since inception in 1994.

Average Weekday Ridership

As Southern California's commuter rail system, the weekday work commuters are Metrolink's key market, and schedules are optimized to serve that market.

In FY 2018-19, there were 18,550 combined average weekday boardings on the OC, IEOC, and 91/PV lines, including R2R passengers. Average weekday ridership declined on the IEOC Line compared to FY 2017-18, though it increased on the OC and 91/PV lines, as depicted in the following table.

Metrolink Average Weekday Ridership			
	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	% Change
OC Line	10,431	10,600	1.6%
IEOC Line	4,844	4,656	-3.9%
91/PV Line	3,263	3,293	0.9%
OC Metrolink	18,537	18,550	0.1%
Systemwide	42,876	43,833	2.2%

The OC Metrolink lines, stations, and boardings are geographically portrayed in Attachment B to the staff report. The table below shows the change in average weekday station boardings in FY 2017-18, compared to FY 2018-19.

Metrolink Average Weekday Station Boardings				
Orange County Stations	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	Variance	% Change
1 Anaheim	501	542	40	8.0%
2 Anaheim Canyon	322	307	(15)	-4.8%
3 Buena Park	576	594	17	3.0%
4 Fullerton	1,603	1,651	48	3.0%
5 Irvine	1,453	1,431	(22)	-1.5%
6 Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo	324	327	3	0.8%
7 Orange	693	639	(54)	-7.8%
8 San Clemente	113	102	(11)	-10.2%
9 San Juan Capistrano	140	143	3	2.4%
10 Santa Ana	848	817	(31)	-3.6%
11 Tustin	1,182	1,198	17	1.4%

In addition to local OC Bus routes that connect to rail stations, OCTA operates 12 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 1,700 average weekday boardings. OCTA also provides the OC Flex on-demand shuttle service that serves the Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo station in one of its zones. Like most connections to OC Bus service, Metrolink passholders may transfer to OC Flex at no additional cost.

Weekend Ridership

Metrolink weekend service began in 2006 with two roundtrips on the OC Line. There are currently four weekend roundtrips on the OC Line, two on the IEOC Line, and two on the 91/PV Line (excluding the Perris Valley extension). Weekend service on the 91/PV Line extension will begin in FY 2019-20.

Combined weekend ridership on the OC, IEOC, and 91/PV lines during FY 2018-19 exceeded 456,000 boardings, including R2R passengers. This represents a decrease of 1.5 percent compared to FY 2017-18. OCTA continues to promote Metrolink weekend service through Metrolink weekend campaigns, which feature exclusive deals and travel itineraries.

Metrolink Total Weekend Ridership			
	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	% Change
OC Line	222,313	227,147	2.2%
IEOC Line	164,146	155,367	-5.3%
91/PV Line	76,848	73,794	-4.0%
OC Metrolink	463,307	456,308	-1.5%
Systemwide	1,027,389	1,028,937	0.2%

Revenue

Systemwide revenue for FY 2018-19 was \$79 million, a 4.3 percent decrease from FY 2017-18. Annual revenue for the three lines serving OC totaled \$35.7 million, which is virtually equal to the previous FY. Revenue increased slightly 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 due to low OTP, but also 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 45 percent of the systemwide total of \$79 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 67.6 percent, exceeding the systemwide average of 35.5 percent. A summary of Metrolink revenue is depicted in the following table.

Metrolink Total Revenue			
	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	% Change
OC Line	\$ 22,139,666	\$ 22,495,173	1.6%
IEOC Line	\$ 7,786,709	\$ 7,443,678	-4.4%
91/PV Line	\$ 5,753,676	\$ 5,758,327	0.1%
OC Metrolink	\$ 35,680,051	\$ 35,697,178	0.0%
Systemwide	\$ 82,537,713	\$ 79,007,225	-4.3%

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 2018-19, Metrolink operated at a 92.9 percent systemwide on-time performance, a 0.9 percentage point decrease from the prior year. The OC, IEOC, and 91/PV lines averaged 90.6, 89.7, and 94.1 percent OTP, respectively, for FY 2018-19.

Key Initiatives FY 2018-19

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 five 2018 regular season Los Angeles Rams football home games at the Los Angeles Coliseum, and one special return train on the OC Line for a playoff game in January 2019. On average during the regular season, boardings on game days tripled compared to boardings on a typical Sunday. Following the success of the past three years of Football Train service, OCTA staff is coordinating with Metrolink to serve four home games this fall, starting

Sunday, September 15, 2019.

- The Metrolink Angels Express service is in its ninth year of providing baseball fans with a rail option to select weekday home games. One pre-season game and 48 regular season games are part of the 2019 program. Regular service was promoted for all games, and on Fridays, Metrolink operates special service funded by OCTA, RCTC, and LA Metro. Through game 44, 28,000 boardings have been recorded, a decrease of 14 percent compared to the prior year.
- In 2013, Metrolink ordered 40 new Tier 4 clean diesel locomotives and currently has 23 in service, with a goal of full implementation in summer 2020.
- In August 2019, Metrolink announced it has achieved the highest annual ridership in the almost 27-year history of the agency with 11,935,362 boardings in FY 2018-2019. The new record is an increase of 247,000 from the prior year and eclipses the previous record of 11,796,086 set in FY 2008-2009.
- To enhance the on-board customer service experience, Metrolink has invited elected officials, local celebrities, and other well-known individuals to serve as guest conductors to record new onboard train announcements. The announcements are played on trains to create a unique guest experience. Guest conductors representing Orange County include Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva and former Angels player Tim Salmon.
- Metrolink's 538-route mile network achieved Federal Railroad Administration-certified interoperability after North County Transit District's Positive Train Control (PTC) system was also fully implemented by the federally mandated deadline. Metrolink had already completed interoperability with operating partners BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, and Amtrak. Metrolink is one of four railroads in the country that reported full implementation of PTC in advance of the federal deadline of December 31, 2018.
- In February 2019, Metrolink announced installation of automated external defibrillators on all trains following the Board of Director's authorization to purchase the devices, and prior to the state deadline.
- As part of its commitment to safety, Metrolink recently introduced a new way for riders to contact the security operations center: via text. For passenger concerns on the train, platforms, or in parking lots, the text feature allows a direct connection with security personnel 24 hours a day.

Summary

This report provides an update on OC Metrolink commuter rail ridership, revenue, and OTP for FY 2018-19. Total ridership in OC is virtually unchanged at 5.1 million boardings, while weekend ridership has decreased by a slight 1.5 percent, compared to the previous year.

Attachments

- A. Metrolink Performance
- B. Metrolink Average Weekday Station Boardings (FY 2018-19)

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