

TO: Regional Transportation Commission

FROM: Luis Pavel Mendez, Deputy Director

RE: Proposed Passenger Train Service for the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction – Caltrain Extension Project to Monterey County and Coast Daylight Service Between San Francisco and Los Angeles

---

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Accept additional information on the Caltrain Extension Project to Monterey County and the Coast Daylight Project; and
  2. Appoint Commissioner Tony Campos to Serve on the Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC) Policy Committee.
- 

## BACKGROUND

Two planned passenger rail services -- the Caltrain Extension Project of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and the Coast Daylight Project of the Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC) -- would provide intercity passenger train service with a stop at the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction serving Santa Cruz County residents. At its May 3, 2007 meeting, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) received a presentation on the Caltrain Extension Project which includes improvements at the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction train station. The RTC has been a member of the Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC) since the group began working to expand intercity passenger rail service between Los Angeles and San Francisco along the coastal route. Currently Amtrak's Coast Starlight is the only train serving the entire west coast with one daily trip and providing service between Seattle and Los Angeles including service to the San Francisco Bay Area via Oakland. The Coast Starlight does not stop at the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction.

The Regional Transportation Commission has a record of support for both of these projects including numerous resolutions and letters of support over the last ten years.

## DISCUSSION-

### Caltrain Extension Project

At the May 3, 2007 RTC meeting Commissioners learned that the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction train station will be improved as part of the Caltrain Extension Project and as part of a Monterey County redevelopment project. The station building improvements will be part of the Monterey County redevelopment project. The Caltrain Extension project includes track realignment, a rail

platform, parking, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit interface area, traffic signals, drainage improvements and landscaping. Commissioners expressed their support for the Caltrain Service Extension project, especially the improvements at the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction station, and the additional transportation options that the project would provide to Santa Cruz County residents. Following the RTC meeting, Debbie Hale, TAMC Executive Director, asked for a letter of support for their application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for funding of the Caltrain Extension project (Attachment 1).

At the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, Commissioners requested more information regarding the redevelopment project at the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction station. When completed the station building is expected to have about 7,600 square feet of space. The Monterey County 5-Year Redevelopment Implementation Plan allocates over \$1.4 million to the project and states:

“The Pajaro Development Support Plan envisions development of a new passenger train facility and industrial development on the southeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Salinas Road. The development would incorporate a passenger train/multi-modal transit station, light industrial park, vocational training center, and a park and ride lot. All of the proposed uses are designed to compliment and support each other in a manner that would generate synergy at the site and create economic development opportunities for the residents of Pajaro. In addition, the industrial use could benefit both businesses and the Union Pacific railroad by being located adjacent to a freight rail facility for receiving supplies and goods, and distribution of products.”

Commissioners also asked for a breakdown of the work at the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction station to be included with TAMC’s Caltrain Extension Project. This is shown on Attachment 2. In addition, Commissioners asked for the cost of a train ride from Pajaro/Watsonville Junction to Salinas. This would be travel within one Caltrain zone which has a current cost of \$2.25 for a one way trip.

### Coast Daylight

The Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC) has been successful in securing regular intercity passenger rail service between Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo by extending the Pacific Surfliner service north. The service provides two roundtrips from San Luis Obispo and also extends as far south as San Diego. Expanding the service north to San Francisco requires a number of improvements to Union Pacific’s main rail line along the coast to increase the capacity and accommodate the additional trains. With the passage of Proposition 1B, the transportation bond measure approved by California voters in November 2006, funds for the necessary improvements are slated to be available soon. Caltrans included \$25 million for the project in the intercity rail program of Prop 1B and the Governor’s proposed budget recommends issuing the bonds necessary to fund the program. The funds would be used to make the necessary capacity improvements and purchase rolling stock. The availability of funds will make it possible to negotiate the necessary trackage rights with Union Pacific. When completed the project would connect to Amtrak’s Capitol Corridor and help to provide intercity passenger train service from San Francisco and Sacramento to San Diego. Attachment 3 provides more information on the Coast Daylight.

The CRCC has a technical committee and a policy committee. Typically staff from the member agencies attend the technical committee meetings and member agency board representatives attend the policy committee meetings which occur generally on a quarterly basis. Dennis Norton served as the RTC representative to the CRCC Policy Committee. Since Mr. Norton no longer serves on the RTC, the RTC should appoint a new representative. Commissioner Tony Campos has expressed interest and staff recommends that Commissioner Campos be appointed as the RTC representative to the CRCC Policy Committee. The upcoming meetings of the CRCC technical and policy committees are listed on Attachment 4.

## **SUMMARY**

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) is working to extend Caltrain service to Salinas and the Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC) is working to provide the Coast Daylight train with service from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Both projects include a stop at the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction. Improvements to the Pajaro/Watsonville Junction to accommodate the service are part of the Caltrain Extension Project and a Monterey County redevelopment project. The CRCC has a policy and a technical committee. Staff recommends appointing Commissioner Tony Campos to serve on the CRCC Policy Committee.

### Attachments

1. Letter of Support for TAMC's FTA Funding Application for the Caltrain Service Extension Project
2. Proposed Pajaro/Watsonville Junction Improvements with the Caltrain Service Extension Project
3. Information on Planned Coast Daylight Rail Passenger Service
4. List of Coast Rail Coordinating Council Meetings