



SCRRA Metrolink Board Meeting Report December 9, 2005

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority Board announced ridership spikes of over 43,000 daily riders on Metrolink trains and emphasized the need to grow at its monthly meeting on Friday, December 9. The meeting was held at the Southern California Association of Governments San Bernardino Conference Room, 818 Seventh Street, 12th Floor, in Downtown Los Angeles.

Of note is the continuing increase of monthly ridership figures, which Metrolink announces every month. For November 2005, Metrolink recorded an average of 41,513 passenger trips on its trains, an increase of 7% from November 2004. 95% of the trains arrived on time. When the number of passengers is taken into account, 94% of those passengers arrived at their destinations on time. However, shared service on Amtrak Train 799 was on time only 77%, while the same service on Amtrak Train 768 was on time 59%.

Another item of interest is regarding the need to buy more equipment to supplement growing ridership. At the November Metrolink meeting, CEO David Solow reported that Metrolink reached the highest single-day ridership on its system: 43,000 boardings. However, a lack of locomotives and cars may threaten this increase in ridership in the future. In December, Metrolink staff recommended disposing certain locomotives originally intended as a source for parts to rebuild 3 Amtrak locomotives and, should they be sold, to use the funds to buy reconstructed locomotives for regular use. According to staff, Metrolink currently uses 39 locomotives, but increased service levels by 2010 will require 45. Metrolink was invited by the Utah Transit Authority to purchase several remanufactured locomotives. UTA left an option to buy ten more for upcoming improvements in Orange County service.

Staff also recommended extending a contract another year to evaluate the GeoFocus GPS technology on Metrolink trains. This technology intends to identify trains, analyze their performance and report delays of service to passengers on platforms. Since the project's beginning in 1999, GeoFocus has met numerous obstacles, in particular sharing bandwidth with Metrolink's Advanced Train Control System (ACTS), which is near capacity. Because of this, staff recommended continuing the evaluation to identify other sources of bandwidth, such as using cell phone or satellite technology, or making it part of a larger and longer-term overhaul of ACTS.