

North Oceanside Double Track Project

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the North Oceanside Double Track Project?

The purpose of the project is to increase capacity and improve passenger and freight rail operations by adding a one-mile stretch of double track between Oceanside Harbor and Pier View Way in Oceanside. The project also includes the replacement of the existing single-track San Luis Rey River rail bridge with a modern, concrete double-track rail bridge, new rail signaling, low retaining walls in the rail road right-of-way, and the addition of two track crossovers which will allow trains to cross from the other track between Surfrider Way and Pier View Way.

SANDAG is also collaborating with the City of Oceanside to restructure the car and pedestrian undercrossing adjacent to the Oceanside Harbor; construct street median improvements at Surfrider Way to support a future Quiet Zone in Oceanside in order to limit train horn noise; and improve the safety and visibility of the bike and pedestrian undercrossing on the south side of the new San Luis Rey River rail bridge.

The project will improve a critical part of the 351-mile Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) rail corridor that serves as a vital link for passenger and freight movements in the San Diego region. Upon completion by 2020, the project will complete a 10.3-mile stretch of continuous double track along the 60-mile San Diego segment of the LOSSAN corridor.

2. What is the project's status?

The project's engineering, design, and environmental analysis processes are underway. The project's lead agency is the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The FRA is subject to the requirements of the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

The project is funded through preliminary engineering and environmental review only and is not yet funded for construction. SANDAG estimates this project's completion by the year 2020 to meet future planned service levels of more than 90 trains each weekday. Once construction funding is secured, the project would be built over a two-year period.

3. Why does the rail line need to be double tracked?

Double tracking, or adding a second main track, will allow for additional train frequency and improve on-time reliability of COASTER, Metrolink, and Amtrak Pacific Surfliner services by eliminating the need for trains to sit idle as another train passes. Currently, meeting or passing trains must take turns using the single-track San Luis Rey River rail bridge. The addition of a second main track also will expedite the movement of COASTER and Metrolink trains from the North County Transit District (NCTD) Stuart Mesa Maintenance Facility, located three miles north of Oceanside Transit Station. Increases in train service will not be possible without improvements to overall service reliability. It is estimated that future service levels will need to accommodate an additional 51 trains on the San Diego portion of the corridor by 2030 as anticipated in the regional transportation plans.

4. What agencies are involved in the planning and review of the project?

The SANDAG is planning this project in collaboration with NCTD, FRA, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Amtrak, Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway freight rail service, federal and state resource agencies, the City of Oceanside, and other stakeholders. Although the FRA is the project's federal lead, SANDAG is responsible for the design, construction, and funding for the project. NCTD is the owner and operator of the rail line.

5. What type of environmental review is needed for this project?

The environmental evaluation of the project is subject to the requirements of the NEPA. Based on the environmental evaluation of the project which has found the project would not cause a significant impact to the environment, it's anticipated that Categorical Exclusion (CE) will be completed in compliance with NEPA. The project will also be subject to permitting and approval requirements by regulatory resource agencies such for example the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and California Coastal Commission.

6. Will the public have an opportunity to comment on the project?

Yes. Although not a requirement under NEPA, the project team will accept and review public comments. Individuals and organizations can submit a written comment related to the project during the October 9, 2013, informational public meeting, or by emailing Tim DeWitt, Project Manager, at Tim.DeWitt@sandag.org. These public comments will be shared with the FRA, the federal lead agency for the project.

7. How is the project being funded?

The project is being funded through a combination of federal and local funding sources including the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), a FRA program, and from the regional *TransNet* half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements.

SANDAG has secured \$7 million to date for the preliminary engineering and environmental phases. Funding for construction has not yet been identified. Once construction funding is secure, the project could be completed in two years.

8. Why does the San Luis Rey River rail bridge need to be replaced?

The existing bridge, built in 1929 and rehabilitated in 1970, is metal and aging. Also, the bridge is single tracked, which forces trains to sit idle as a passing track causing train delays. A modern, double-track concrete bridge will improve system reliability as well as air quality, as less trains sit idle. Concrete bridges are considered to be more durable and have significantly lower maintenance costs compared to steel and wood.

9. Is the bridge being replaced in the same location?

The new double-track bridge will be constructed immediately to the east of the existing bridge. Rail service will continue to operate during construction because the existing bridge will remain in place and in service.

10. What is happening to pedestrian and bicycle undercrossing at the southern end of the rail?

The project will improve the pedestrian and bicycle undercrossing at the southern end of the rail bridge, which allows access to the San Luis Rey River Trail. SANDAG is collaborating with the City of Oceanside to realign the existing trail for improved user safety and visibility at the road intersection, increase the trail elevation under the bridge, and add a drainage system to help reduce flooding impacts that impede access to the trail. During project construction, SANDAG will work to keep the San Luis Rey River Trail entrance open to the fullest extent possible.

11. What if you have additional questions?

Information about the project will be provided on the project website at KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/NODT. Additionally, members of the public can visit KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/contact to sign-up for project updates or to share additional questions or comments. For specific project questions, please contact Tim DeWitt, Project Manager, at Tim.DeWitt@sandag.org.