

# San Dieguito Double Track and Special Events Platform

E-News Update  
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## Nearly 100-Year-Old San Dieguito Rail Bridge to be Replaced

The year of 1919 was filled with memorable events. Woodrow Wilson was president, the U.S. Senate ratified Prohibition, and World War I ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. It was also the year the current San Dieguito rail bridge was rebuilt after being destroyed by a historic flood in January 1916. The original rail bridge dated back to the 1880's, when train service first began after the completion of the railroad line connecting San Diego to San Bernardino. Nearly a century later, after withstanding four major floods, the wooden trestle rail bridge is scheduled to be replaced.



The bridge replacement is a major component of a larger improvement project known as the San Dieguito Double Track and Special Events Platform Project. The project will also add 1.1 miles of second main railroad track to connect two adjacent double track segments and a special events platform at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. The project's second track will further efforts to double track 97 percent of the rail line between Oceanside and San Diego by the year 2050 to improve the reliability of passenger and freight service in the regional corridor. The special events platform will provide more transit options to visitors of the seasonal events at the fairgrounds, including the Del Mar racing season and the San Diego County Fair, relieving current vehicle congestion.

The project is not yet funded for construction and does not include plans to relocate the existing single-track rail segment along the Del Mar Bluffs, which is anticipated in the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Regional Transportation Plan between 2040 and 2050.

### Bridge Improvement Features:

- Noise Reduction
- Improved Tidal Flow
- Coastal Access
- Fewer Idling Trains
- Reduced Train Delays

### Next Steps:

A community open house will be held this summer to provide opportunities for public input on the bridge and track alignment alternatives.

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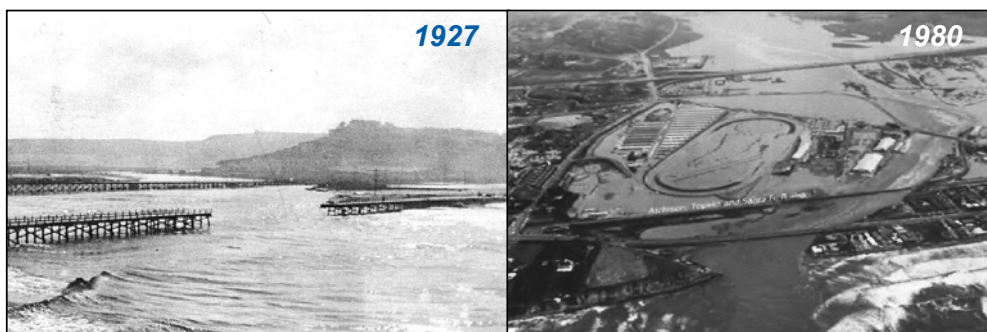
## The primary benefits of replacement of the San Dieguito rail bridge are three-fold:

### 1. Flood Protection from Major Storms

The low height of the Camino Del Mar road bridge and the San Dieguito rail bridge can worsen upstream flooding during major storm events. As a result, the fairgrounds, homes, and businesses in Del Mar and Solana Beach have been negatively impacted in the past.

Maintaining current rail operations is also imperative. The 351-mile Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) corridor is the second busiest intercity passenger rail line in the United States and is the only viable freight rail link between San Diego and the rest of the nation.

This section is used daily by as many as 50 trains, including COASTER commuter trains, Pacific Surfliner intercity trains, and BNSF Railway freight trains. That number is expected to increase to over 100 trains per day by 2030. As part of the ongoing corridor-wide transit improvements, enhanced rail operations are expected to reduce traffic congestion on Interstate 5 and Highway 101.



Since the rail bridge was rebuilt, it has withstood major flood events in 1927, 1937, 1978, and 1980, according to the San Diego History Center. **Left:** The old wooden trestle Highway 101 Bridge was destroyed during a major flood in February 1927. *Source: San Diego History Center* **Right:** A major flood event in February 1980 damaged the rail bridge and line, forcing resident evacuations and covering the Del Mar race track and fairgrounds with up to five feet of water. *Source: San Diego Department of Public Works*

[Click image for enlarged view.](#)

To ensure continued rail operations, federal construction standards from the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mandate an increase to the current rail bridge height to avoid floods that could cause bridge and rail line damage or failure.

The new height has yet to be determined but could be as much as ten feet higher than the existing bridge.

### 2. Quieter and More Reliable Train Operations

The existing rail bridge is 97-years old and is near the end of its service life span. Presently, the wooden bridge structure causes loud vibrations for neighbors and a rougher ride for passengers when trains approach and cross the bridge. The modernized bridge and other improvements such as the removal of a rail control point south of the river and new higher speed track enhancements will result in a quieter ride for rail passengers and may reduce noise for adjacent residents.

The reliability of rail service will also be improved by the double tracking of the bridge. Once completed, a significant bottleneck between Solana Beach and Del Mar will be eliminated and trains will no longer have to sit idle waiting at a siding as another train uses the single track. This will reduce the cascading effects of train delays in the busy LOSSAN corridor.

The age and wood frame of the bridge results in frequent and costly maintenance. A modern, concrete bridge will provide more protection from environmental and marine conditions such as the marine borer, sometimes referred to as the termite of the sea, which can penetrate wood pilings quickly and necessitates more frequent inspection and repair.



The rail bridge and track approaches are located in the FEMA 100-year flood plain. *Source: FEMA*

[Click image for enlarged view.](#)

### 3. Improved Lagoon Health and Coastal Access

The new rail bridge will have wider pier spans to improve overall tidal flow and water quality of the San Dieguito River and Lagoon. Improving tidal flow at the river mouth is a key piece in enhancing the coastal habitat and preserving the San Dieguito Lagoon. The wider pier spans will also create a more open lagoon view for residents.

Furthermore, the modernized bridge will provide one or more new public coastal access undercrossings, which are being planned in collaboration with the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority. Improved undercrossings provide a convenient, safe and legal way for pedestrians and cyclists to get from one side of the railroad to the coast.

SANDAG is planning the San Dieguito Double Track and Special Events Platform Project in close collaboration with other local and regional stakeholders. Those include the North County Transit District (NCTD), the cities of Del Mar and Solana Beach, the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority, 22nd District Agricultural Association, state resource agencies, Amtrak, BNSF Railway and regional transit users. SANDAG is coordinating the design, construction and funding for the project. NCTD will continue to own, operate, and maintain the rail line in this location.

During the next 20 years, SANDAG plans to construct more than \$800 million in improvements in the San Diego County section of the LOSSAN corridor, including a primary effort to double track the corridor from Orange County to downtown San Diego. To date, approximately half of the San Diego corridor has been double tracked. As a companion to the I-5 freeway, the San Diego segment of the LOSSAN corridor plays a critical role in the movement of people and goods within the region's North Coast Corridor.

Please visit [KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SDDT](http://KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/SDDT) for more information. [Email](#) us to receive updates about the project in the future.