

MEMORANDUM

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: June 26-27, 2025

From: STEVEN KECK, Chief Financial Officer

Reference Number: 2.8a.(10), Action Item

Prepared By: Dee Lam, Chief
Division of Local Assistance

Subject: **REQUEST TO EXTEND THE PERIOD OF PROJECT ALLOCATION FOR A
LOCALLY-ADMINISTERED MULTI-FUNDED SENATE BILL 1 SOLUTIONS FOR
CONGESTED CORRIDORS PROGRAM AND STATE TRANSPORTATION
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM RAIL PROJECT, PER SCCP AND STIP
GUIDELINES
WAIVER 25-114**

ISSUE:

Should the California Transportation Commission (Commission) extend the period of project allocation for the locally-administered multi-funded Senate Bill 1 (SB1) Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Leesdale Passing Siding Rail project (PPNO 9887), in Ventura County, for the time period as identified in the attachment?

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation recommends that the Commission extend the period of project allocation for the locally-administered multi-funded SB 1 SCCP and STIP Leesdale Passing Siding Rail project (PPNO 9887), in Ventura County, for the time period as identified in the attachment.

BACKGROUND:

The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency will not be able to request an allocation of programmed funds by the June 30, 2025, deadline. The attachment shows the details of the project and the explanation for the delays.

Current STIP Guidelines stipulate that programmed funds are available for allocation only until the end of the fiscal year programmed. The Commission may approve a waiver to the STIP Timely Use of Funds (TUF) deadline, one time only, for up to 20 months.

Current SB1 SCCP Guidelines stipulate that programmed funds are available for allocation only until the end of the fiscal year programmed. The Commission may approve a waiver to the SB 1 SCCP TUF deadline, one time only, for up to 12 months. The agency requests a one-time exception to SB1 SCCP TUF Policy for an additional eight months, for a total of 20 months for project allocation.

Attachment

**Time Extension/Waiver – Project Allocation
Multi-Funded SB 1 SCCP and STIP**

Project Number: 1

Applicant: Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency

County: Ventura

District: 75

PPNO: 9887

Allocation Amount: \$63,500,000 (SCCP \$43,500,000 STIP \$20,000,000)

Phase: Construction

Number of Months Requested: 20 Months

Extended Deadline: 02/28/2027

Department Recommendation: Support

Leesdale Passing Siding

The Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency (Agency) requests a 20-month time extension for the period of project allocation for the Construction (CON) phase of the Leesdale Passing Siding Rail project. The Agency experienced delays during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (PS&E) phase.

The project will upgrade and extend existing siding to eliminate the need for passenger trains to wait on a regular basis at the Oxnard station. This will also serve future needs to expand the Oxnard station to two platforms.

The project is experiencing significant delays in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) phase due to coordination required with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Currently, the PS&E phase is approximately 30 percent complete, with both structural and non-structural plans submitted to UPRR for review. Although the Agency anticipated completion of the PS&E phase by December 2026, there are additional delays and challenges associated with the project:

UPRR:

- Right-of-Entry Permit: Although some of the permits were processed concurrently each of the four necessary permits exceeded initial projections by an average of four months, resulting in significant delays to critical project activities (e.g., survey, utility potholing, geotechnical borings, and environmental investigations). As a result, the cumulative impact on the project schedule was approximately eight months.
- Design Review: UPRR's design and resubmittal review periods have been significantly longer compared to past projects, an additional two to four months at each milestone.

One reason for these delays is the increased number of projects UPRR must review in a short period. Additionally, UPRR updated its design review process and limited communications to email-only to review and resolve comments without meetings. This new process is further slowing the review process because questions must be in writing and cannot be sent directly to the reviewer. Which is a new process within the last several years. The questions go into a queue, then to the reviewer. This can take one to two weeks; the reviewer can take several weeks to respond. If there is a follow-up question, the process starts over. If it is still unresolved, then a meeting is scheduled, and it can take several weeks before the meeting happens. Previously a phone call with the reviewer could be done to resolve the comment on the same day. The UPRR design approval delays have impacted the timely initiation of the CPUC review process.

- Aging and Non-Standard Existing Infrastructure: UPRR's current standards are more stringent than when the existing infrastructure was built. For instance, track separation has increased from 15 to 20 feet, and bridge clearance requirements above high water marks have also increased. These changes created significant design challenges for new infrastructure adjacent to the existing facilities and required prolonged negotiations with UPRR to obtain approval for variances. The project includes three new bridges and nine culvert extensions, adding an additional two to four months to the project schedule, due to coordination with UPRR and the local flood control district.
- Potential Right of Way (ROW) Encroachment: Survey mapping revealed a wrought iron fence encroached up to 10 feet into the railroad right-of-way near Rice Avenue, creating design and real estate issues to delay the project. Resolving this encroachment issue will require complex coordination with UPRR's Real Estate and other departments, potentially adding six to nine months to the schedule. The encroachment permit issue also affects the planned fiber optic relocation, as minimum clearance requirements must be maintained between the railroad tracks and the fence. Lumen, the fiber optics owner, reports that special design considerations and variances will be needed to relocate the existing fiber optics lines, potentially adding another three to four months to the project schedule.

CPUC

- Field diagnostics are essential for at-grade crossing design and safety measures. The CPUC field diagnostic meeting is postponed due to pending design revisions and necessary updates to the diagnostic exhibits. Once these exhibits are finalized and approved by UPRR, the meeting with CPUC can be rescheduled within one to two months. However, given the number of essential stakeholders and staff whose input is critical, coordinating this meeting requires lead time. In a rapid-response situation, this can create scheduling challenges beyond the Agency's control, which may introduce additional delays.

OTHERS

- Rice Avenue Grade Separation Project Coordination Impacts: The Rice Avenue Grade Separation project, located within the same corridor, has presented unanticipated challenges involving multiple stakeholders including the City of Oxnard, County of Ventura, Flood Control District, private utilities including Lumen and PG&E, and the CPUC. In addition, unexpected design conflicts have emerged related to the installation of a new water line and modifications to the existing fiber optic infrastructure, requiring additional coordination, plan reviews, and approvals from the various stakeholders. While the exact impact on the schedule is difficult to quantify, this added complexity demands significant attention and critical resources, ultimately slowing the overall design progress and will result in a delay.
- Wood Road Crossing Vehicle Safety Concerns: Safety issues were identified during preliminary design at the Wood Road at-grade crossing, where the steep grade poses a risk to low-profile vehicles getting high-centered on the main line and a siding track. This required a full redesign, including removing the existing siding—originally planned for refurbishment—and reconfiguring the project's east-end termination. These changes will add at least one to two months to the project schedule.

Despite these setbacks, design consultant Zephyr Rail is moving ahead with tasks not dependent on UPRR or CPUC, using parallel processing to maintain schedule momentum.

At present, the Agency still has resubmittals to the UPRR and the other stakeholders for 30 percent and regular submittals at 60 percent, 90 percent, and 100 percent design.

The following is a summary of the expected delays explained above:

- Right of Entry Permits to perform field work – 8 months
- UPRR Design Reviews – 8 months
 - 10 percent submittal – 2 months
 - 25 percent submittal – 2 months
 - 30 percent submittal – 2 months
 - 60 & 90 percent submittals – 2 months; these could be reviewed concurrently
 - 100 percent submittal – Typically no formal review is required
- Wood Road re-design, siding and siding termination redesign – 2 months
- Rice Avenue Grade Separation resolving design conflict with utilities, potential CPUC meeting delays, and other potential delays with aging infrastructure and ROW encroachments – 2 months (this 2-month estimation is based on running the individual activities in parallel with other activities).

Combined, these amount to approximately 20 months of expected delays. UPRR has directed Zephyr to review the schedule and incorporate these delays, along with mitigation strategies, to minimize overall impacts to the project schedule.

Therefore, the Agency requests a 20-month time extension for the period of project allocation for the CON phase from June 30, 2025 to February 28, 2027.