

MARCH 21, 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

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- 1. Transit Operations Performance Report:** The North County Transit District (NCTD) Board of Directors (Board) received a monthly report detailing ridership statistics for January 2024. Systemwide ridership was 6.5% above the budgeted goal and 10.9% above January 2023 ridership. BREEZE ridership increased by 9.5% compared to January 2023. COASTER and SPRINTER also saw increases of 19.2% and 11.6%, respectively, and on-time performance was above the minimum standard of 95% on both modes. Additionally, Youth Opportunity Pass (YOP) usage for January increased by 31% compared to January 2023. NCTD modes have seen a steady year-over-year increase in ridership, in part due to the increase in leisure riders and the increase in service frequencies on COASTER, which went into effect in October 2021.
- 2. Employee Retirement and Health Benefits:** The Board approved a resolution to add a stand-alone health insurance program through CalPERS for employees whose retirement benefits are covered under the federal Railroad Retirement Board (RRB). NCTD fully assumed direct employment of rail operations and maintenance functions in 2023. As part of this transition, the RRB determined that COASTER Operations and Dispatch functions are covered under the Railroad Retirement Act and therefore must participate in the RRB retirement program as opposed to the CalPERS program that other NCTD employees participate in. NCTD factored these retirement costs in when considering the transition of these employees and determined that this impact is cost-neutral. This resolution allows these employees to still maintain CalPERS health coverage while participating in the RRB retirement program.
- 3. Public Hearing Set for FY2025 Operating Budget and FY2025-FY2029 Capital Improvement Program:** The Board voted to set a public hearing for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Operating Budget and FY2025-FY2029 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) on June 20, 2024, and authorized staff to publish a public hearing notice, release the budget and CIP documents, and receive public comments. Following the solicitation of this feedback, NCTD staff will present the final FY2025 Operating Budget and FY2025-FY2029 CIP at the Board meeting on June 20, 2024.
- 4. Federal Advocacy Contract:** The Board approved a contract with Holland & Knight LLP to support NCTD's advocacy efforts at the federal level. NCTD will utilize this partnership to continue to advance the Discretionary Grant Strategy and Legislative Agenda and advocate for NCTD's priorities in federal legislation and regulatory rulemaking. The contract with Holland & Knight has a base term of three years with the option to extend for an additional two years.