



## Coastal Rail Resiliency Study (CRRS)

### Public Meeting #1

Tuesday, July 15, 2025, from 5 - 6:30 p.m.

San Clemente City Hall, Council Chambers

See the table below to view the written questions and comments submitted by meeting participants.

#	Question/Comment
1	<p>One of the best questions asked today was, “why is OCTA responsible for these tracks?”</p> <p>It seems like way more than half of the benefit goes to the Freight Companies and the DOD.</p> <p>We get very poor Metrolink service this far south of Laguna Niguel and Amtrak is even worse.</p> <p>In addition I hope to hear that sea walls, vertical or otherwise are off the table. They are incompatible with recreational beaches.</p>
2	<p>Main Point: Don’t underestimate the natural sand retention capabilities of Capistrano Bight.</p> <p>San Juan Creek has been crippled for decades — very little sand makes it out there. Last major deposit was during harbor construction — that lasted almost 50 years. That shows how effective Dana and Cottons Point are at retaining sand. It took decades of swells to hit the riprap — and now sand has eroded since riprap met the ocean.</p> <p>Wide beaches cost \$\$ — but if they’re wide enough, sand retention is Free. Worked in the past it can work again.</p>

<b>3</b>	<p>A lot of discussion about use of riprap placement &amp; sand replenishment.</p> <p>Question 1: Why is there continued use of riprap which has shown to increase the rate of sand loss?</p> <p>2) Why not replenish sand now &amp; see if that eliminates the need for more riprap?</p>
<b>4</b>	<p>You have proposed a set of remediation concepts for Beachside. Let me be very clear — You have support from the community for beach nourishment, sand retention, and shoreline protection.</p> <p>You will have opposition from the community for more riprap, rock revetments, and seawalls.</p> <p>Finally, corrective action is needed where you installed riprap in 2021–22, and this ruined our beach and walking trail. This is long overdue and must be addressed before OCTA undertakes any new projects.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p>Have waited years for RR under pass access to Poche Beach (SC) under PCH to reopen. Please!</p>
<b>6</b>	<p>Where is BNSF in this process?</p> <p>This is their main interest in protecting the railway. What are they contributing?</p> <p>OCTA is protecting the rail and blocking access to beaches &amp; creating hazardous conditions.</p> <p>People here tonight are trying to preserve their community and beaches. Riprap has made dangerous conditions, leaving the state &amp; city liable for injury.</p> <p>Coastal Commission should be protecting our beaches and our access.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p>I apologize for the straight talk but I really think it's time to look at this project realistically and level with the public. Most of us simply aren't buying this process, as was apparent from so many of the public comments. Most of those I spoke with thought the meeting was an attempt to make it look like OCTA is consulting with the public, but we feel you are simply not hearing us. We need OCTA to authorize an independent cost/benefit analysis on this issue before it destroys more beaches or spends more taxpayer funds on fruitless efforts to preserve this doomed rail line.</p> <p>This is not personal. We understand that OCTA representatives are just doing their jobs, but we really need some frank, honest, realistic talk at this point.</p>

8	<p>Thank you for holding this public forum tonight. I'd like to add four brief points as a reality check:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First, your website continues to claim that the LOSSAN corridor is the "<i>second busiest passenger rail corridor in the nation</i>". Yet, data from your own agencies, when compared to national railroad statistics prove this <i>IS</i> not and very likely has <i>NEVER</i> been the case. If you insist on repeating this statement, please provide data to back it up. We need to trust you to provide accurate information.</li> <li>2. Secondly, you are suggesting that if you dump enough boulders and erect enough walls, coastal rail will last another 30 years. Yet, we've seen unprecedented and devastating erosion in just the last 5 to 10 years, particularly in Capo Beach and San Clemente. There are existential threats to this line both from Dana Point to Cotton Point, and along the crumbling cliffs of Del Mar. It's questionable whether we have even 5 years left if it rains hard, let alone 30. And three,</li> <li>3. The largest threat to the railroad is clearly coming from the bluff side and not the sea – at least not yet. But you continue to spend money armoring and destroying our beaches, while spending nothing to prevent landslides. How much seeding of native plants or bluff dewatering could be accomplished with \$300 million? Private owners would surely be cooperative because these efforts would help them too.</li> <li>4. And lastly, you continue to insist that the railroad is vital and essential. It isn't. It shut down for 251 days in 2023/24 and no one really noticed. Average daily ridership in the San Clemente segment represents .08% of Orange County's population. Couldn't they be better and more cheaply served on electric buses? Freight use is flat, cited at only \$1 billion per year for decades. This represents only 3% of California rail freight and a tiny fraction of the \$21 trillion in California goods movement. Military use is scant and is mitigated by redundancies already built into STRACHNET.</li> </ol> <p>If coastal rail is truly essential, please prove it with an independent cost/benefit analysis. And if it's truly justified, you need to get to work urgently on relocation.</p> <p>The truth is that coastal rail is neither essential nor sustainable and your expensive band aids are destroying public access to our beaches.</p>
9	<p>Thanks for giving the presentation on Tuesday evening. I have a few comments for you to consider.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regarding the rail concepts: Vibrations caused by the freight trains can be minimized using two criteria: A. Slow the heavy, FAST trains down. It is only about 7 miles of track we are talking about. The heavy fast moving trains can slow down for a short distance starting at the curve where they enter the beach areas from the north and from the south. They slow down for the curves</li> </ol>

	<p>anyway. Keep that slower speed until they are out of the beach areas. The slow speeds will aid in keeping the tracks from "pumping" and the steep slopes from further sloughing.</p> <p>B. Take better care of the train wheels. The maintenance of the heavy, freight trains need to be taken care of. Living close to the tracks I notice that there are issues with flat and worn out wheels that create more vibrations. If there were paying passengers on the freight trains there would be a lot of complaints about the bouncy ride. But since they don't carry people the smoothness of the train is not addressed. They are allowed to make more harmful vibrations.</p> <p>2. Bluff side concepts:</p> <p>There is the problem of groundwater causing instability. Remove the unwanted water before it creates a problem . How? Install wells at critical locations to draw out the water. This action is being done in Rancho Palos Verdes to stop the ground slippage there. Driving on the 5 freeway through the north end of San Clemente, you can see several areas where there is groundwater oozing out along the freeway. This water could be collected before it causes problems to the coastal bluffs. Then it could be used for irrigation to other areas in need of water for irrigation.</p> <p>3. Beach side concepts:</p> <p>Sand, Sand and more Sand. The placement of sand is the most important thing that should happen. Revetments are not going to be solutions. Sand is the solution. Revetments make the sand erode faster.</p> <p>Why can't we get sand from behind our dams that are filling up? Trains could be bringing sand from not far off dams on rail car dumpers and dump the sand on the beach. That would be a great, nearby source for sand that used to be going to the beach and is now stuck filling up behind a dam. That would cut down on costs and provide a much needed solution.</p> <p>You have been only looking at protecting the tracks at the expense of the beach. The tracks can be replaced/moved. Once you lose the beach to erosion caused by your revetments, it is gone forever. The beach is a priceless resource. San Clemente is a beach town. It is our identity, You must protect it at all costs. You have no right to take that away. You must listen harder to what the San Clemente residents are saying, SAND!</p> <p>One last item:</p> <p>Why aren't the freight trains at the table helping with these problems? contributing money? looking for solutions?</p> <p>Thank you for your time and effort. Feel free to contact me if there are any questions about my comments.</p>
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