

# WHEEL CLICKS

*Pacific Railroad Society Inc.*

APRIL 2012

## ALAMEDA CORRIDOR-EAST

Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority (ACE) secured \$37.6 million in state funding the last week of February to build a four-lane railroad underpass and pedestrian bridge on Baldwin Avenue, which accommodates 28,000 vehicles every day, according to ACE figures.

The total cost of the upgrade is more than \$80 million, and the remaining cost is being funded from county and federal agencies. ACE will begin soliciting construction bids for the project in late April, according to Paul Hubler, ACE spokesman.

El Monte Councilwoman Norma Macias, who also sits on the ACE board, said the project is much-needed. "I think it's a dangerous intersection, especially for children crossing when going to and from school," Macias said.

The project is one of more than a dozen railroad crossings either completed or in the process of completion in the San Gabriel Valley. And there are at least six more planned in the future, Hubler said. There have been two train collisions at the Baldwin Avenue railroad crossing in the last decade, officials said. Fifteen freight trains and Amtrak commuter trains cross Baldwin Avenue on a daily basis.

The project is expected to take 18 to 24 months, according to ACE. Baldwin Avenue will likely be closed beginning at the end of the year for the project, Hubler said. Drivers and pedestrians will be detoured around the construction zone on Baldwin Avenue during the closure.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

## NEW TRANSIT CENTER IN BALDWIN PARK

A decade long push to bring a new transit center to Baldwin Park finally moved forward as officials prepared for a groundbreaking ceremony March 24. The City Council during the first week of March awarded an \$8.6 million contract to PLC Construction Services to build the five-level parking facility with an overhead pedestrian bridge connecting the structure to the nearby Metrolink station. The project will be built adjacent to City Hall.

"With the rise in gas prices and what comes along with maintaining cars, we have to look at alternative modes of transportation and encourage public transportation," said Councilwoman Marlen Garcia. Metro, Foothill Transit and city-run buses now stop near City Hall, which is across the street from the Metrolink station.

The new parking structure would make the stops more accessible and allow for more convenient parking. There is a free overflow lot at Ramona and Badillo, but that location leaves a two-block walk to the train station or bus stops. City officials were under the gun to get the transit center construction under

way as a deadline looms from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which is pumping \$3.5 million into the project.

The deadline has already been extended as city officials struggled to find the required \$3.5 million in matching funds. The rest of the money comes from federal, state and other grants, officials said. In addition to transportation benefits, Baldwin Park officials hope that the center will attract developers to its downtown.

"Construction on the project will begin in the second week of April and should take about a year to complete," Public Works Director William Galvez said.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

## SAN DIEGO STREETCAR

On August 27, 2011, San Diego's new PCC streetcar was publicly unveiled. It will start weekend service on a clockwise loop called the Silver Line around downtown San Diego. The streetcar, No. 529, is an ex-Muni San Francisco car, which was bought secondhand from St. Louis Public Service in 1957 and retired in 1982. PCCs last ran in San Diego in 1949, while the year No. 529 was built was 1946.

Harry Mathis, the driving force behind this initiative, project manager Dave Slater, and the whole team at San Diego Vintage Trolley turned their concept into reality. They've got five more PCCs awaiting restoration and hope to increase the service as resources allow. Perhaps fulfilling Harry Mathis's idea of restoring PCC service to Balboa Park.

This information comes from Market Street Railway, a member supported, non-profit and historic preservation partner of Muni, the San Francisco Municipal Railway, via Russ Davies.

## SAN FRANCISCO TO IMPROVE RAIL NETWORK

The Port of San Francisco has been awarded \$2.97 million by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to improve segments of track within the port area to enhance safety, livability, and economic development. The money will be used to improve an approximately one mile-long spur connecting the Caltrain mainline track to the Port of San Francisco Rail Yard.

The current condition of the spur track limits the frequency, weight and length of trains that can use the track, which has been causing delays. The improvements will allow freight trains to operate at higher speeds and clear the mainline more quickly, significantly reducing delays to Caltrain commuter trains. Both the port's Pier 89 and Pier 94/96 facilities will benefit from the improvements.

[Info. from *Pacific Maritime* via John L. Whitmeyer]



**WHEEL CLICKS**

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**PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES**

Apr. 2, 9, PRM open Monday, 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
 16, 23, 30 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 Apr. 4, 11, PRM open Wednesday, 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
 18, 25 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 Apr. 6 PRS Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room,  
 Friday Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 Apr. 7, 14, PRM open Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
 21, 28 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 Apr. 7, 14, Saunders Yard open Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to ?,  
 21, 28 Noakes St. & Herbert Ave., Commerce.  
 Apr. 13 PRS Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra  
 Friday Rm., Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel, Alhambra.  
 Apr. 25 May Wheel Clicks Mailing, 10:00 a.m., 1240  
 Wednesday Dominion Ave., Pasadena.

**PROGRAMS**

by **RUSSELL DAVIES**

April 13: **Steam! Nothing but steam!** On this evening we'll see digital images of steam railroading from **nearly 20 different collections** in your **PRM archives**. The images

have been scanned from a mixture of slides, prints, and negatives. Most of the images will be from **the 1950s and earlier**, when steam was still in every day revenue service. **Be there, and bring digital briefs!**

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

New members voted into PRS in February were Eugene Pocock, #446; Richard Wilson, #447; and James Gaspar, #448. At the Board meeting on March 2, 2012, there were no late renewals.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The tally of ballots of PRS members for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 was counted at the meeting on March 9, 2012. There were 150 ballots with those between that number and those listed being nonmembers or abstentions. The winning officers are indicated by an \*. New officers take over on April 1, 2012. Out of a membership of about 430, 35 percent of members voted.

President ..... Neil Bjornsen ..... 147\*  
 Vice-President ..... Virginia Grupp ..... 135\*  
 Vice-President ..... Russ Davies ..... 1  
 Secretary ..... Lindsay Smith ..... 146\*  
 Treasurer ..... Nick Teel ..... 146\*  
 Director ..... Dave Abbott ..... 140\*  
 Director ..... Marti Ann Draper ..... 143\*

The Ballot Committee consisted of Bill Leslie, Pam Smith, Marlene Osborn, and Tom Geer.

**DAN SILVERMAN**

Pacific Railroad Society member Dan Silverman passed away on February 6, 2012 at the age of 83. He retired from Universal Studios publicity department many years ago. Dan enjoyed classic films and went to gatherings of Hollywood Heritage, the Way Out West Tent, film screenings at Universal, and the Early To Bed Tent meetings. He was predeceased by his wife, Eleanor, and survived by his children: Michael, Steven, and Susan. A memorial service was held for Dan in Los Angeles on February 7, and in Skokie, Illinois on February 10.

Ken Ruben

**CITIES GET ON BOARD WITH HIGH-SPEED RAIL**

One year ago, Rosemead, Montebello and Alhambra strongly opposed an elevated high-speed rail train along the 10 Freeway, and any taking of homes through eminent domain that the project might entail. Come June, those same cities, as part of a regional body, will be at the negotiating table for local rail funding with the very same state agency in charge of building a train from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

“We are still very much against taking homes on either side or the elevated (high-speed rail),” said Rosemead Councilwoman and COG board member Margaret Clark, who voted in favor of the new agreement. A key part of the agreement between COG, SCAG, the high-speed rail authority, Metro and other transportation agencies in Southern California counties includes a commitment to spend \$1 billion on Metrolink and Amtrak in Southern California that will “increase regional connectivity and increase speed of regional rail services.” Those improved existing regional systems would then work as feeders into the

high-speed lines.

COG members said they are drawing up a list of improvements to Metrolink lines that could include double-tracking, which means increasing ridership as well as speeds. Eventually, SoCal commuters could connect to trains going north to the Bay Area.

“That would be \$1 billion to be invested in the existing systems... in two or three years, not in 30 years.” Hasan Ikhata, executive director of SCAG, told the COG Transportation Committee during a meeting in Irwindale in January. Prominent backers include the state’s large engineering firms, labor unions and some environmental groups. The project is said to produce 600,000 jobs.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

### RAIL YARD PLANS CALLED ‘DEEPLY FLAWED’

The Natural Resources Defense Council and a coalition of environmental and community groups on January 31 claimed that the Port of Los Angeles inadequately described its plans for a new 153-acre rail yard. Additionally, the Port of Los Angeles did not provide a sufficient analysis of alternatives for Burlington Northern Santa Fe’s proposed \$500 million Southern California International Gateway rail yard, the NRDC wrote in a 32-page letter delivered to Christopher Cannon, the port’s director of environmental management.

The port’s draft environmental impact report for the project was deemed as “unwise” and “deeply flawed” by the coalition. Port officials declined to comment on the letter but said they will respond when the next version of the project’s environmental report is released later this year. If ultimately approved by the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners, construction would begin by 2013 in an industrial area wedged between Carson and Long Beach in a narrow finger that juts north from Wilmington.

BNSF’s rail yard is expected to eliminate more than 1.5 million truck trips from the Long Beach (710) Freeway by improving rail access from the nation’s busiest port. In total, 14 sites were examined but were considered to be too small for the rail yard’s operations, according to the port’s draft environmental impact report.

[Info. from *Daily Breeze* via John Whitmeyer]

### CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDRO

On February 29, Caltrain and its partners celebrated the completion of a \$61 million station improvement project at the San Jose Diridon and Santa Clara stations that will allow it to provide more service now and in the future.

The event began at the San Jose station, where attendees were able to view Caltrain, Altamont Commuter Express, and Capitol Corridor train sets from the new boarding platforms. From there, a special train took people to the Santa Clara station, where a new pedestrian underpass and a new boarding platform have been constructed, eliminating Santa Clara as a “hold out” station for train operations.

The project also included reconstruction of control points which will allow trains to move more quickly in and out of stations.

Beginning July 1, Caltrain riders will have to pay more to

buy paper tickets and eight-ride discount passes.

The purpose of the increase is not just to increase revenue, but to encourage riders to switch to Clipper cards, which are plastic passes that can be used on several Bay Area transit systems. The price of the Clipper cards won’t be increased.

Riders who stick with paper tickets will pay an additional \$.25 for one way tickets and \$.50 for all day tickets. The discount offered for an eight-ride ticket will decrease from 15% to 7.5% and all eight rides must be taken within 30 days instead of the current 60 days. Caltrain had wanted to eliminate the eight-ride ticket altogether but, after public protests, decided to retain it with reduced benefits.

Caltrain’s objective is to eliminate paper tickets, so if at least half of the paper ticket users don’t switch to Clipper cards by March 1, 2013, expect another fare increase.

The date for Caltrain’s change of operators is quickly approaching. On May 26, operations will switch from Amtrak to Transit America (Herzog). Employees had until March 8 to decide whether to stay with Amtrak and relocate or switch to Transit America and stay with Caltrain.

Most of the engineers and conductors I’ve talked to are staying with Amtrak and relocating. While most can work out of Oakland or Sacramento, some are relocating to San Diego, Seattle, San Antonio, and Chicago. Having gone through a similar scenario in 1992 when Amtrak took over Caltrain operations from Southern Pacific, I know this is a very stressful time and not an easy decision to make. Let’s hope everyone does what’s best for themselves and their families.

### GRANTS SOUGHT FOR OREGON RAIL UPGRADES

Shippers such as lumber mills in southern Oregon are seeking millions in government grants to improve railroad tunnels and increase freight capacity in a region that officials say is heavily dependent on trucks and planes.

One project would provide \$4 million in state money to raise the heights on four tunnels near Glendale, near the Josephine-Douglas county line, the Medford Mail Tribune reports. That would permit taller, high-capacity boxcars. Shippers expect a decision in late summer or early fall.

The other would use \$10 million in federal money on a \$12.5 million project to improve tunnels on the tracks connecting the Rogue Valley and Northern California. A decision on that grant is expected in the summer.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

### HIGH-SPEED RAIL SECTION COLLAPSES IN CHINA

A section of a high-speed rail line that had already undergone test runs collapsed in central China after heavy rains, state media reported. This was the latest accident since a crash last summer killed 40 people.

The New China News Agency did not mention casualties in its report on the collapse of a 984-foot section of the rail line. It said hundreds of workers were rushing to repair the line between the Yangtze River cities of Wuhan and Yichang.

The line is due to open in May. China has reaffirmed its intention to push ahead with the fast-paced buildup of the high-speed rail system, despite financial difficulties and worries that

safety may have been compromised in the rush to open new lines.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

### INDONESIA DETERS RIDERS FROM TRAIN ROOFS

Indonesia has gone to imaginative extremes to try to stop commuters from illegally riding the roofs of trains – hosing down the scofflaws with red paint to identify them later, threatening them with dogs, and appealing for help from religious leaders.

Now the authorities have an intimidating and possibly even deadly new tactic: suspending rows of grapefruit-sized concrete balls to rake over the tops of trains as they pull out of stations, or when they go through rail crossings. “We’ve tried just about everything, even putting rows of barbed wire on the roof, but nothing seems to work,” said Mateta Rizahulhaq, a spokesman for the state-owned railway company PT Kereta Api.

Trains that crisscross Indonesia on poorly maintained tracks left behind by Dutch colonizers six decades ago usually are packed with passengers, especially during the rush hour. Hundreds seeking to escape the overcrowded railcars clamor to the top. Some ride high to avoid paying for a ticket. Others do so because – despite the dangers, with dozens killed or injured every year – “rail surfing” is fun.

Many of the roof riders – and regular passengers – say the main problem lies with Indonesia’s dilapidated railway system. There are not enough trains to meet demand, they say. And there are constant delays in service.

The exhortations of clerics didn’t work. Neither did the dogs. At one point, police decided to do the expected: arrest the culprits, but officers were pelted with rocks and gave up.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

### TRASH TRAIN STALLS

For more than two decades, local trash engineers have been planning for the day when the Puente Hills Landfill near Hacienda Heights would close, and thousands of tons of municipal garbage would ride the rails to Imperial County. But the \$450 million trash train, also known as waste-by-rail, is being derailed by a sluggish economy.

The dream of San Gabriel Valley cities seeing all their stinking garbage leave the Valley for a landfill in the middle of nowhere is likely to be postponed, officials at the county Sanitation Districts said the last week of January 2012.

It is a matter of economics. Because it costs so much more to operate the trash train than to handle it at a growing number of local private landfills, and because the sluggish economy means we are producing significantly less trash, the county agency that manages solid waste may make cheaper arrangements for our trash’s final resting place come October 31, 2013, the day the Puente Hills Landfill will close. “It doesn’t mean we are giving up on waste-by-rail. It means it would be delayed until the economy recovers,” said Robert Ferrante, who heads the solid waste management department of the Sanitation Districts in North Whittier.

The county has built a Puente Hills Material Recovery Facility near the landfill, partially in preparation for the train. It is putting the final touches on a truck-to-train “intermodal”

facility, complete with its own underpass beneath Workman Mill Road between Industry and Whittier so heavy-laden container trucks can pass freely into a special train yard. The whole operation – including the 250-mile train trip to the completed Mesquite Regional Landfill – will be ready to go by February 2013, Ferrante said. But the \$450 million system may not be needed – at least not for the foreseeable future.

“Instead, we will look for a closer landfill – we want to operate in the most cost-efficient way,” he said. Without any subsidizing by the Sanitation Districts, it will cost about \$80 a ton in what’s called a tipping fee for trash that travels on waste-by-rail, as opposed to \$38.41 now to bury it in Puente Hills above the 60 Freeway. Also, the cost of reusing green waste – lawn clippings, tree branches, garden trimmings – is scheduled to rise once the landfill closes, Ferrante said.

The county charges very low rates for haulers who take this waste in a separate truck from the curb to the landfill, where it is mulched and used as cover instead of the agency importing expensive dirt. The rise in tipping fees for trash, and the added cost of finding new uses for green waste such as composting or bio-gas conversion, most likely will be passed on to the homeowner, apartment owner and commercial owner’s trash bills. How much will trash bills rise? Ferrante said he could not make a guess.

Ferrante said when Puente Hills closes, all its tonnage could easily be absorbed by in-county and near-county landfills “without the need to go to waste-by-rail.” He said the change from a “landfill capacity crisis” in the late 1980s and 1990s to an open market could not have been foreseen. Whittier Councilman Greg Nordbak, who chairs the Sanitation Districts’ Board of Directors, said the market is in play. “Private enterprise will drive it. And we will do what is most economical,” he said.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

### PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

The Amtrak Spring/Summer 2012 system timetable will take effect on May 7, 2012. The Fall/Winter timetable will take effect on November 5, 2012.

Effective with the Amtrak Spring/Summer system timetable, the *Sunset Limited*’s schedule will be revised. The westbound *Sunset* (Train 1) will begin departing almost three hours earlier from New Orleans at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. The train will arrive at San Antonio at 12:05 a.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. It will depart at 2:45 a.m., and arrive at Los Angeles at 5:35 a.m. on Wednesday, Friday and Monday. At Los Angeles sleeping car passengers may remain aboard the train until 6:30 a.m. The eastbound *Sunset* (Train 2) will depart from Los Angeles at 10:00 p.m. on Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday. The train will arrive at San Antonio at 4:50 a.m. on Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday. It will depart at 6:25 a.m., and arrive at New Orleans at 9:40 p.m. on Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday. The schedule change will restore connections between the *Sunset Limited* and the *Coast Starlight* (Trains 11 & 14) and to make possible an attractive next morning arrival to Arizona destinations. Better connections between the *Sunset Limited*, *Coast Starlight*, *Texas Eagle* and Amtrak corridor services in California are predicted to increase the ridership and revenue of

these trains.

#### Historical On-Time Performance

The February 2012 historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

Route	February 2012	January 2012	Last 12 months
Sunset Limited	60.0%	*	63.5%
Texas Eagle	86.2%	*	84.2%
Heartland Flyer	53.4%	*	70.0%
Southwest Chief	91.4%	*	92.5%
California Zephyr	60.3%	*	61.0%
Empire Builder	74.1%	*	72.4%
Coast Starlight	91.4%	*	77.5%
City of New Orleans	94.8%	*	88.3%
Pacific Surfliner	76.9%	*	73.7%
San Joaquin	90.5%	*	90.8%
Capitol Corridor	92.7%	*	93.7%
Amtrak Cascades	66.0%	*	66.5%
Illinois Service	90.9%	*	85.0%
Michigan Services	72.1%	*	62.0%
Hiawatha	92.0%	*	93.1%
Missouri River Runner	97.4%	*	96.7%
Acela Express	96.2%	*	93.5%
Northeast Regional	92.9%	*	91.1%

\* January historical on-time performance not available.

#### AMTRAK CASCADES

From March 16 until late spring 2012. Seattle-Vancouver, B.C. *Amtrak Cascades* Trains 510 and 517 will operate with *Superliner* equipment in order to free up a Talgo trainset, allowing the several trainsets to cycle through a maintenance program. During this period there will be no business class, and no bicycle space. There will be a different food service car, also.

The program will include renovations to the bistro and lounge cars, which have begun to show some wear and tear after over a decade of heavy use by passengers.

The floors in the bistro and lounge cars will be replaced, the walls will be re-painted, all seats will be reupholstered with new leather, and metal finishes will be restored to their original luster.

The BNSF Railway will be working on the railroad bridge across the Fraser River in New Westminster, British Columbia, on six Mondays in March and April 2012, between 7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. On March 12, 19 and 26, and April 2, 9 and 16 - trains 510 and 517 will not operate, and will be replaced with buses (3510 and 3517 respectively).

Trains 513 and 516 operate outside the work period and will operate normally.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

#### AAR MARCH STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

The Association of American Railroads reported that as of March 1, 2012, 289,505 freight cars were in storage, an increase of 6,269 from February 1, 2012, and equal to 19.0% of the North American fleet, excluding cars without a load since before 2005.

In July 2009, 1.603 million cars were in the fleet, including cars without a load since before 2005. From July 2009 through February 2012, 71,987 new cars were installed, while 139,003 cars were scrapped or otherwise removed. That yields a net

reduction of 67,016 cars in the North American fleet.

527,060 cars were in storage on July 1, 2009 (including cars that last moved loaded prior to 2005). By March 1, 2012, that was down to 300,463, for a reduction of 226,597. Subtracting the 139,003 cars scrapped or otherwise removed yields a net of 87,594 cars that have been returned to service.

Of the 502,853 cars that were in storage on July 1, 2009 (excluding those that last moved loaded prior to 2005), only 51,515 remained in storage continuously through March 1, 2012. Nearly 90 percent of the cars that were in storage at the peak have either carried a load since then (and perhaps subsequently returned to storage) or been scrapped.

#### KEEPING TRAINS SAFE

Southern California continues to mourn the victims of two of the worst train disasters of the past decade. This makes railroad safety not only an emotional topic but an all-too-real issue for people here. It means that when it comes to new safety measures, our choices should be guided by practical interest in what truly will prevent crashes while maintaining a high level of service.

Let's resist the temptation to condemn efforts by railroad companies to ease a federal mandate that they install technology known as Positive Train Control on trains carrying passengers and hazardous materials. The mandate was part of the Rail Safety Improvement Act, passed in reaction to the 2008 Chatsworth disaster, in which an engineer distracted by text messages was blamed for the head-on collision between a Metrolink commuter train and a Union Pacific freight train in Chatsworth that caused 25 deaths and 135 injuries.

The Chatsworth crash occurred 3½ years after the Glendale accident where a suicidal man parked an SUV on the tracks, triggering a chain-reaction wreck of two Metrolink trains and a stationary freight train, killing 11 and injuring more than 100.

Congress gave rail companies across the nation an end-of-2015 deadline to install PTC systems, designed to use GPS and wireless communications to monitor the locations of trains and apply the brakes automatically to prevent collisions.

But installing the systems on 70,000 miles of track would cost \$13 billion. The railroad industry says the price tag is too high and the deadline too tight. So its lobbyists in Washington are pushing lawmakers to reduce the scope of the mandate and delay the deadline by three years.

This might sound like train operators are being cheap and uncaring. Their actions certainly have angered some of those affected by the Chatsworth crash. But the operators have a point. While the National Transportation Safety Board says the PTC system would have prevented the Metrolink collision in Chatsworth, the U.S. Department of Transportation's railroad administration says installing it nationwide would not save enough lives in the long run to justify the cost. In any case, according to a recent report, Metrolink itself wouldn't be affected by a delay, because the Southern California rail network hopes to have its PTC system in place well before 2015.

It's not as if the railroad industry generally resists safety measures. Since Chatsworth, Metrolink has banned the use of cellphones by engineers and installed inward-facing cameras to monitor them, a response to the revelation that engineer Robert



Sanchez was exchanging text messages in the seconds before the crash. Even before Glendale and Chatsworth, Metrolink decided to invest \$250 million in a fleet of passenger cars that, among other safety features, protect passengers by directing the energy of crashes away from seating compartments.

The rail industry knows public confidence in its safety is vital to business. For communities touched by the Metrolink disasters, it's natural to want train operators to spare no expense to try to save others from the same grief. But higher expense doesn't necessarily mean greater safety. Authorities should listen to railroad companies' ideas about how best to spend money to make a real difference.

[Info. from *Daily Breeze* via John Whitmeyer]

## URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

### BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT

The BART Board of Directors has voted unanimously today to direct staff to advance the proposed BART to Livermore Project, Phase I to the next level of project development, including environmental review, conceptual engineering, development of Ridership Development Plans, and analysis of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The Board also directed staff to initiate the establishment of a project partnership to, among other things, seek external funding sources to advance the project with no impact on funding for essential BART capital needs.

The project would extend BART five miles to a transfer station, and express bus service. Preliminary estimates are a daily ridership of about 21,000 new riders in 2035. A BART extension to Livermore was initially identified in the 1957 Rail Plan, the first blueprint for the BART system. In 2007, the San Francisco Regional Rail Plan affirmed a Livermore extension as a vital link needed to connect to the regional rail network.

Among the next steps are completing a project level Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which will include a detailed examination of factors such as the impact of alternative alignments and modes of transportation. No BART money will be used to fund the EIR. The overall cost for the project is still being studied, with estimates ranging from \$800 million to \$1.2 billion.

#### New BART Police Zone Geographical Policing Structure

The BART Police Department (PD) has a new Zone Geographical Policing Structure, which breaks the current zones down into smaller, easier to manage areas that are more compatible with its existing span of control. A Zone Lieutenant will now be in command of one of the five patrol zones, where a team of patrol Sergeants, Police Officers and Community Service Officers will be responsible and accountable for providing 24/7 service to their areas within the BART District.

The new Zones are: Zone I: (All Oakland Stations), Zone II (Contra Costa County and City of Berkeley stations), Zone III (Alameda County stations from San Leandro to Dublin/Pleasanton), Zone IV (San Francisco stations), and Zone V (San Mateo County stations).

BART PD expects this re-structure to improve Police services by identifying problems for more diligent responses while enhancing its Community Oriented Policing Problem Solving (COPPS) program. COPPS is an organization-wide

policing philosophy and management approach that promotes community, government, police partnerships and proactive problem solving to reduce a jurisdiction's crime and social disorder. oversight," BART Board Director Tom Radulovich said. The NOBLE Audit Report was published in 2011 and provided recommendations to improve the BART PD.

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BART PD expects this re-structure to improve Police services by identifying problems for more diligent responses while enhancing its Community Oriented Policing Problem Solving (COPPS) program. COPPS is an organization-wide policing philosophy and management approach that promotes community, government, police partnerships and proactive problem solving to reduce a jurisdiction's crime and social disorder.

#### More Electronic Bike Lockers

Over the last few months BART has installed 336 new electronic bike lockers at 19 stations. This is the second deployment of lockers around the BART system.

The first shared-use electronic lockers started appearing at BART stations in 2008. BART now has more than 500 electronic lockers available to provide secure, weather-protected parking for bicyclists.

Unlike older generations of keyed lockers, which had one user per locker, the electronic lockers allow multiple users.

To use the electronic lockers a cyclist needs a BikeLink Card. They can be purchased online for \$20 at [www.bikelink.org](http://www.bikelink.org), retail locations are also listed there. The card works like a debit card. The cyclist inserts the card at an available locker, estimates how long his bike will be stored there, backs his bike in and closes the door. When the cyclist returns, he again insert their card, a rental fee is deducted from the card (currently lockers are rented at the rate of 3 cents per hour), the door opens and the cyclist retrieves his bike.

BART staff is currently finalizing plans for the purchase of between 200-300 additional electronic lockers in 2012.

#### GOLD LINE LAND PURCHASE

Monrovia officials and the Gold Line Construction Authority have reached a \$56 million land deal for a maintenance yard required for the light rail project, clearing the last major obstacle to the \$735 million, Pasadena-to-Azusa extension. The construction authority agreed to pay \$40.6 million to purchase 14 acres from the city and the Redevelopment Agency's successor agency and to settle the eminent domain case for the land. The authority also agreed to pay Monrovia officials up to \$15.75 million for public improvements around the planned maintenance and operation facility.

The city, the successor agency, and the construction authority signed the agreement February 23 that should enable the authority to acquire the final 14 acres it needs for the 24-acre yard. The deal still has to be approved by a Superior Court judge. An oversight committee to the successor agency, which is required by the state and has yet to be formed, still must approve the \$40.6 million land deal, city officials said.

"I feel great," Monrovia Mayor Mary Lutz said. "This has been our goal for the last two years. It's finally happening." But City Manager Mark Alvarado said they're also concerned since the makeup of the oversight committee is not yet known. Only a few members of the seven-member committee have been appointed so far.

The construction authority also agreed to pay for the cost of a planned parking facility for the future Monrovia Gold Line station, Lutz said. Monrovia officials also agreed to pay the construction authority up to \$200,000 for legal expenses involving a related court battle and \$650,000 to reduce contamination on the land. Had the state not eliminated redevelopment agencies, the deal would have been executed more expeditiously and in fewer steps, Lutz said.

Lisa Levy Buch, a spokeswoman for the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority, said the construction authority expects to have possession of the land, which will allow work to begin, in mid-March and have ownership of the land this summer.

The construction authority, after waging a battle in the courts, recently agreed to pay a commercial property owner \$24 million for his land for the maintenance yard. George Brokate, a Marine veteran from Newport Beach, received his asking price for the 4.5 acres on the southwest corner of Evergreen and Shamrock avenues.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

#### METRO TO ACT ON FARE EVADERS

Citing millions of dollars in lost revenues, officials of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) on February 23, after wrestling with the issue for years, made their most forceful push yet to lock the turnstile gates to anyone without a ticket at a large number of rail stations.

The effort is the latest bid for Metro to fix a disjointed regional ticketing network that allows some a free ride while creating problems for others who choose to pay. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky wrote a February 23rd motion asking for a plan to implement gate-locking at Metro rail stations within six months. He added that it has been "a long, painful, teeth-pulling exercise" to reach this point.

The subway and light-rail system have operated without locked gates for decades, with Metro officials trusting passengers would do the honorable thing and buy tickets without being forced. Only occasionally would transit officers patrol and issue fines to passengers caught boarding for free. But ticketing problems arose as the system grew, particularly for riders who transfer to and from other carriers run by different agencies, such as Metrolink.

A batch of turnstiles were introduced in 2009 – although anyone could walk through them without a ticket. Now they are in 40 Metro rail stations, including all those along the subway, 14 on the Green Line, and five each on the Gold and Blue lines.

The Metro board on the 23rd passed another measure to ask other transit system operators in the region to change their ticketing systems to synchronize with Metro's Transit Access Pass. Eight municipal bus operators are already TAP-enabled and Metrolink officials say they will follow suit this spring.

Yaroslavsky said one reason Metro officials failed to lock the gates sooner is because they were operating under the false

assumption that only 3 percent of riders were evading fares. The Metro staff tested locking gates at 10 stations last fall and winter and reported increased revenue at the 7th Street/Metro Center and North Hollywood stations by 18 to 22 percent. Yaroslavsky said Metro probably is missing out on at least \$4 million in revenue each year because of fare evasion on the Red Line subway alone.

One effort already underway includes converting paper day passes and single-ride tickets to plastic TAP cards over the next few months, leaving only interagency transfers on paper. Another idea is to transition to locked gates incrementally, with only one or two at a time. Even so, locked turnstiles can be jumped.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

#### REPAIRS DELAY EXPO LINE

Officials with the Exposition Construction Authority, who announced November 28 that they had turned the system over to Metro for pre-revenue operations, are complying despite saying that some of the requested changes – like fans in the trench or tunnel – are unnecessary. The two agencies agree on some of the requested changes. One is to fix the line's primary technical problem at the junction where the Expo Line shares tracks with the Blue Line, which runs between Long Beach and downtown Los Angeles.

Rick Thorpe, CEO of the Construction Authority, explained that rail operators receive signals from the track ensuring that the train is going the right speed, and in one area those signals were not going through. Art Leahy, CEO of Metro, said the junction is already tricky because trains will run frequently – minutes apart – in both directions, but the problems with the circuitry make full testing impossible. "We can simulate service south of 23rd Street. We cannot simulate service north of 23rd because of the junction," Leahy said. "We can't get the trains through there fast enough. We've got to work out some signal system issues with the junction," he said. "I think optimistically we're a few days away in solving it," Thorpe said.

Metro officials said they were working with the city Fire Department and are pushing for certain changes because the line can't open before the California Public Utilities Commission certifies it as safe. The first part of the line to open will go 7.9 miles, between the downtown 7th Street/Metro Center station and La Cienega Boulevard.

Leahy said that as soon after problems at the junction are fixed, he'll be able to begin pre-revenue operations, which can take up to three months, and set an opening date shortly after.

[Info. from *Daily Breeze* via John Whitmeyer]

#### PORTLAND, OREGON

##### Oregon Iron Works

Oregon Iron Works Inc. is a finalist to become a subcontractor helping manufacture MAX trains for TriMet's Portland-Milwaukie light-rail project, the company confirmed December 13. The Clackamas company would probably hire well more than 100 people to make 18 or more cars in what would be its first time making light-rail trains as opposed to streetcars. But company managers said they have no guarantee of landing the work as the bidding process continues on TriMet's \$1.49 billion eastside transit project.

"It's incredibly flattering to be one of the finalists," said

Chandra Brown, vice president of Oregon Iron Works and president of its subsidiary, United Streetcar.

Winning the contract as part of a bid by Switzerland's Stadler Rail would be another significant leap for Oregon Iron Works in terms of hiring and expertise. The fabrication company builds bridge parts, marine vessels, buoys and other structures. It employs more than 400, plus 35 at United Streetcar.

Stadler, based in Bussnang, Switzerland, included Oregon Iron Works as part of a move to do some manufacturing in the U.S., Brown said. The Clackamas company would hire welders, machinists and others to work on the light-rail cars and do final assembly. Oregon Iron Works managers learned December 12 that Stadler is a finalist along with perhaps two other companies. Another likely finalist is Siemens, which has built MAX cars before.

United Streetcar, which bills itself as the only U.S. manufacturer of modern streetcars is making cars for Portland's eastside line and a new network in Tucson. Delays have been reported on both projects because of missed deadlines for streetcar delivery. But Corey Vraguen, Oregon Iron Works president, said that work is on time in Portland and ahead of schedule for Tucson.

#### Portland-Milwaukie Bridge

Construction on the Portland-Milwaukie light-rail bridge continues as a 75-foot section of reinforced steel cage was lowered into place recently. The reinforcement is part of one of six 150-foot deep shafts that, after being filled with concrete, will form the legs for the platform that will hold the west tower of the newest bridge to cross the Willamette River in Portland.

The bridge is expected to be completed in September 2015 and is for light-rail, pedestrians, and bicyclists as well as a future streetcar. The 1,750-foot bridge is the centerpiece of the proposed 7.3-mile MAX Orange Line. The new bridge is between the Ross Island and Marquam Bridges.

#### Light-rail Line through Milwaukie

A second petition has been filed aimed at blocking a light-rail line through Milwaukie. Provided it reaches the ballot and is approved by voters, it could not only jeopardize \$5 million in city funding for the project, but tie Milwaukie officials' hands concerning future maintenance or improvements on the line. A light-rail opponent filed a petition in January to collect signatures to place a measure on the November ballot. It would change the city charter to require a public vote before Milwaukie can spend any money to finance, design, construct or operate the \$1.5 billion Portland-Milwaukie light rail.

A nearly identical measure was filed in late December that would place a measure on the May ballot to prevent Clackamas County from making \$25 million in the same kinds of expenditures. The 7.3-mile Orange Line between Portland and Oak Grove is slated to open in September 2015.

Milwaukie Council President Greg Chaimov, who is a lawyer, said the petition would probably accomplish the opposite of what the petitioner wants. Chaimov, along with Clackamas County attorney Scot Sideras, interprets the U.S. Constitution to say that government bodies cannot change laws to void existing contracts.

#### TriMet Ridership Continues to Rise

For the 11th month in a row, rush-hour trips on TriMet

increased in January, as did total ridership on the agency's trains and buses compared with the same period a year ago. TriMet said February 16 it recorded more than 8.2 million boardings on buses, MAX trains, and WES commuter rail in January, a 1.3 percent increase. Rush-hour trips rose 1.6 percent.

The Wilsonville-to-Beaverton WES line saw a double-digit increase for the 20th consecutive month, up 17.4 percent. Since WES opened in February 2009, ridership has increased 37 percent and rides have totaled more than 1 million. "WES has now reached a significant milestone," General Manager Neil McFarlane said. "As the state's first commuter rail line, its popularity continues to grow."

[Portland info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

#### BULLET TRAIN FOCUS SHIFTS TO LOCAL RAILS

In a major shift in thinking about the state's bullet train, powerful transportation agencies in Northern and Southern California want to quickly obtain up to half the project's bond financing to upgrade local rail corridors that could become part of the proposed high-speed network. Until recently, the project was expected to draw down only \$2.7 billion of its \$9-billion bond fund in coming years to help pay for a 130-mile rail segment in the Central Valley. But the new proposals call for potentially spending an additional \$4 billion upfront, which would leave just a few billion in the state's voter-approved financial package.

"We ought to be investing whatever is available now to show California and the rest of the country the benefits of high-speed rail very soon," said Jose Luis Moscovich, executive director of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority. "We believe there can be simultaneous efforts in Southern California and on the peninsula" between San Francisco and San Jose.

Giving local rail improvements a higher priority also represents a retrenchment from the original vision that the bullet train would be a state-of-the-art system, running on dedicated track its entire length. The new proposal would blend the bullet train into existing rail corridors and make it share track with commuter trains and even freight railroads. The plan, which has received some encouragement from Gov. Jerry Brown's top bullet train appointee, would provide \$1 billion to improve key Southern California passenger rail corridors, making it possible for Metrolink and Amtrak to increase maximum speeds from 79 mph to 110 mph.

In the Bay Area, transportation agencies are preparing to ask for \$3 billion for similar projects, including several miles of tunneling to the new Transbay Transit Center, which is under construction in downtown San Francisco. The money would prepare the urban terminals of the system to handle bullet trains that would run at speeds up to 240 mph from Anaheim to San Francisco. Proponents say the goal is to ensure that the high speed rail funding would provide near-term transportation benefits in case the overall \$98.5-billion project stalls.

If approved, the funds would pay for scores of grade separations, new signals, bridge replacements, track additions, station improvements and faster locomotives for conventional passenger service. In the Bay Area, the existing right-of-way for the Caltrain commuter line would be electrified. Adding track and new high-tech systems to manage train movements and avoid



collisions can make an integrated system safe in urban areas, officials say.

“Investing in the terminals is a good way to provide the connections we need and the best way to implement high speed rail in California,” said Will Kempton, chief executive of the Orange County Transportation Authority, who sits on a state oversight panel for the bullet train project. “These investments will not be lost in terms of public benefit whether or not high speed rail goes forward.”

Concerns persist that the bullet train project might not be able to secure enough local, state and federal funding to extend the system beyond the Central Valley, where the authority wants to begin construction this fall on a section of track from Bakersfield to Chowchilla that would cost an estimated \$6 billion. The Central Valley, however, will not be equipped to operate high speed trains until another \$20 billion to \$25 billion is found to connect the segment to either Palmdale or San Jose.

In Southern California, a draft agreement with the rail authority has been approved by the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Riverside County Transportation Commission and two regional planning agencies, the Southern California Assn. of Governments and San Bernardino Associated Governments. The Orange County Transportation Authority is considering the agreement. The San Diego Assn. of Governments was scheduled to vote on the proposal in late February. The California High Speed Rail Authority and the Legislature also would have to approve the issuance of state rail bonds to pay for the local projects.

Dan Richard, the rail authority’s board chairman, said he supports the Southern California plan and the concept of tapping into the bond fund soon. “We won’t waste it, but holding it for years just diminishes its buying power,” he said. Richard, however, said the assumption by some of the local agencies that state bond money alone could pay for improvements may contradict terms of Proposition 1A, the bond measure passed by voters.

The law requires that certain types of spending for the system be matched by other government agencies. Richard noted the proposed agreement with Southern California agencies opens the possibility of funding sources other than the bonds.

Officials in Northern and Southern California contend that billions of dollars in bullet train construction costs could be saved by dropping plans for exclusive rights-of-way in dense urban areas. Even with an exclusive corridor, they say, bullet trains could not travel much faster than conventional trains.

“Blending the systems will make high speed rail more feasible and provide a broad benefit across the population centers of the state,” said Art Leahy, the MTA’s chief executive and an early critic of exclusive rights-of-way for the bullet train. The shared track approach has been embraced by the rail authority.

Hasan Ikhata, executive director of the Southern California Assn. of Governments, said state officials did so only after the association proposed dropping the high-speed project from a regional transportation plan, a major planning document. Such a move, he added, would have made it difficult for high-speed rail to obtain government funding. “The committee involved did not want to put the high speed rail project into the plan because

just building a line in the Central Valley without working on the terminals would not benefit anybody,” Ikhata said.

Richard asserted that he “reached out” to the local agencies rather than being pressured by them to accelerate spending for upgrades to local rail lines.

Until now, Moscovich of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority said, high speed train officials had gravitated toward the sort of costly and exotically engineered networks found in some other countries, rather than a practical starter line that could provide quick benefits. “We don’t need a Tokyo-style system,” he said.

[By Dan Weikel & Ralph Vartabedian of *Los Angeles Times*]

### SENATORS APPROVE TRANSIT FUNDING

The United States Senate approved a \$109-billion transportation bill March 14 that boosts Los Angeles’ efforts to speed expansion of its bus and rail system. The measure passed 74 to 22. The bill, possibly one of the few major pieces of legislation that could be signed into law before the fall election, maintains the current level of funding for highway and transit projects for two years. “It probably will be the major jobs bill of the year,” said Sen Max Baucus (D-Mont.).

The bill would significantly expand a federal loan program crucial to Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s efforts to build a dozen local transit projects in one decade instead of three. Among the projects are the subway extension to the Westside, a rail extension to Los Angeles International Airport, a downtown connection for rail lines and expansion of transit lines in the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys.

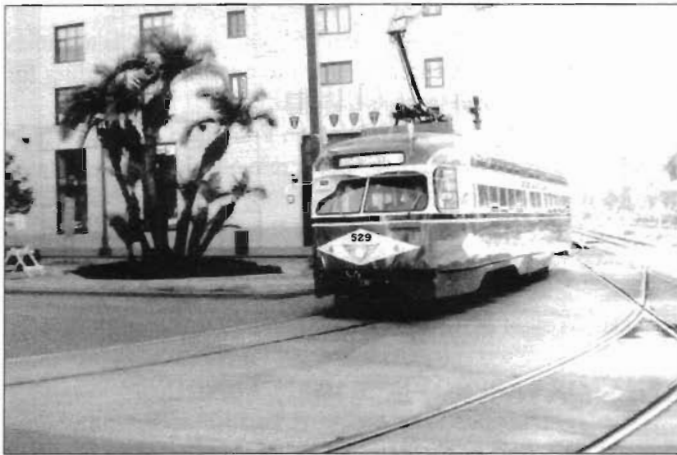
The expansion of the loan program is expected to remain in a final bill because it enjoys the backing of business, labor and, perhaps more notably, Sen. Barbara Boxer, who will play a key role in writing any final version.

Officials say that \$20 billion in federal loans could be made available nationally over the next two years under the legislation. Loans to the MTA would be repaid from the half-penny sales tax increase approved by L.A. County voters in 2008.

Los Angeles also is relying on federal funding – separate from loans – for new rail projects. President Obama, in his new budget, has proposed \$50 million for extending the subway to the Westside and \$31 million to connect the Gold Line to the Blue and Exposition lines. But the money must be appropriated by Congress.

The bill would allow for extension of the 2015 deadline – but not beyond 2018 – for railroads to install collision avoidance systems on trains carrying passengers and toxic materials, if the transportation secretary determines that implementation appears unfeasible. Congress in 2008 mandated the systems after a Metrolink commuter train collided with a Union Pacific freight train in Chatsworth, killing 25 people and injuring more than 130. Metrolink is moving to complete installation of its \$201-million collision avoidance system by mid-2013.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]



*San Diego's new President Conference Committee (PCC) streetcar, No. 529, will use San Diego Trolley's (light rail) tracks.*  
 Photo by Russ Davies



*Train 799 left LAUS with a locomotive P42 and a consist of the Overland Trail, National Forum, followed by five other cars.*  
 Photo by Dick Finley



*After August 27, 2011, PCC #529 will provide weekend service clockwise around San Diego's downtown loop, while requiring a new pantograph.*  
 Photo by Russ Davies



*It's 7:42 a.m. on December 19, 2011, in Washington, D.C., as a Virginia Railway Express train approaches the L'Enfant Plaza station in this south-looking view along the platform.*  
 Photo by Charles Varnes



*PRS passengers are waiting to board the National Forum on the right and the Overland Trail on the left at Los Angeles Union Station on December 18, 2011.*  
 Photo by Dick Finley



*Looking from the south end of the Virginia Railway Express L'Enfant Plaza station platform, a morning northbound VRE train approaches at 7:54 a.m.*  
 Photo by Charles Varnes