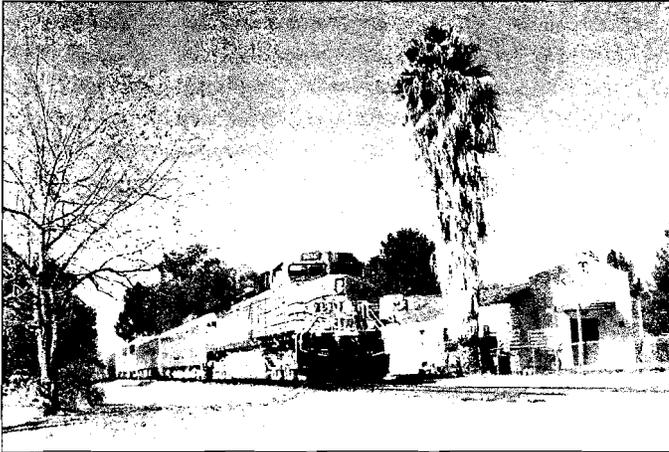


WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

JANUARY 2006



Burlington Northern Santa Fe 5014 leads the BNSF Southern California Christmas Train past the Pacific Railroad Museum in San Dimas on Dec. 4, 2005. Photo by Charles Varnes

RAIL TRANSIT BOOSTS PROPERTY VALUES

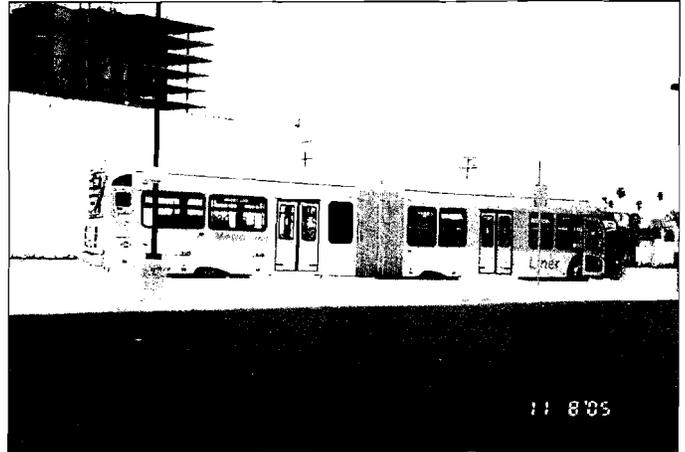
Property values increase significantly for medium density apartments and condominiums and commercial and retail properties near rapid transit stations. Rent for retail space close to transit stations was almost three times higher than in other areas.

[Info. from *Economics Research Associates, 1995*]

LOS ANGELES RUN THROUGH TRACKS PROJECT

Caltrans District 7 has completed the Final Environmental Impact Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIRS/EIS) for the proposed Los Angeles Run Through Tracks Project. The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines, and with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Federal Railroad Administration environmental guidelines.

Based upon information in the Final EIR/EIS and other supporting documents, Caltrans has identified Alternative A-1 as the preferred alternative. Alternative A-1 consists of an aerial structure extending southward from Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) over US 101, then curving toward the east, forming an S-curve, before rejoining at-grade, existing rail tracks that pass under the 1st Street Bridge. The structure links to four existing tracks in LAUS, and then provides a transition to two tracks. The project would allow some trains to pass through LAUS without having to do pull in-pull out movements, thereby improving the operational efficiency of the station.



RAILQUIZ What is it that is seen in North Hollywood across from the Red Line Subway Terminal? Photo by Margo Petros

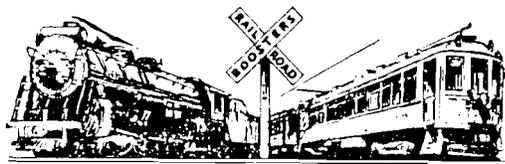
- A. Burlington Zephyr
 - B. Union Pacific M10000
 - C. Orange Line Busway Articulated Bus
- For Answer see Page 12.



An eastbound ATSF Extra powered by a set of EMD FT units is about to pass beneath the highway bridge west of the Barstow, California, station on January 6, 1949. Photo by John Petros

Copies of the Final EIR/EIS are available at these locations:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Caltrans District 7 | Los Angeles Central Library |
| 100 Main Street | 630 W. 5th Street |
| Los Angeles, Cal. | Los Angeles, Cal. |



WHEEL CLICKS

JANUARY 2006 VOLUME 69, NO. 10

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Membership Dues: \$25.00 per year

PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM is operated by Pacific Railroad Society at 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773. Telephone (909) 394-0616. Museum e-mail: PRSTrainman@aol.com Open Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays 1-5 p.m.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR LINDSAY SMITH

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Jan. 6 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Valencia Room at
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Jan. 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 21, 28 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting on January 28.
 Jan. 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes &
 21, 28 Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 7, 21;
 Sats. Extra work day: 14, 28. Committee meeting: 21.
 Jan. 13 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Alhambra Room
 Fri. of Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave, Alhambra.
 Jan. 25 *Wheel Clicks* mailing party, 10:30 a.m. at 1240
 Wed. Dominion Ave., Pasadena. Annual Dues Envelopes
 will be mailed.
 Feb. 3 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Valencia Room at
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Feb. 4, 11, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 18, 25 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting on February 25.
 Feb. 4, 11, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes &
 18, 25 Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 4, 18;
 Sats. Extra work day: 11, 25. Committee meeting: 18.
 Feb. 6 Exc. #521 "The Sierras in Winter" Leave LAUS

Mon. at 10:15 a.m. on *Coast Starlight* to Emeryville.
 Feb. 10 Exc. #521 Return on *San Joaquin* #714 from Emeryville and Amtrak bus from Bakersfield to LAUS.
 Fri.
 Feb. 22 *Wheel Clicks* mailing party. 10:30 a.m. at 1240
 Wed. Dominion Ave., Pasadena. Ballot package will be mailed.

MEETING PROGRAMS

by RUSS DAVIES

January 13: **The best of Vic Uzzoff!** This presentation will feature American steam when it was still in revenue service, mainline and short line. By this date we will have finalized the archiving of the thousands of slides in this fantastic collection. Vic was a Captain in the Army assigned to the "Voice of America" radio program, and traveled the World in that capacity, photographing trains and traction. We'll spice the program up with a touch of overseas scenes, and maybe a little traction for you "sparkers!" A slide presentation from your Museum Committee. Be there, and bring slide briefs!

February 10: **A week in the life of Cajon Pass.** In October 1998, Roger Fogt spent the better part of a week shooting video footage of the Cajon action, and we'll see it this evening. We'll see trains on **Sullivan's Curve**, and the late, lamented **Desert Wind**. If we're lucky we'll hear "train talk" coming from the trains we're watching, recorded at the same time on Roger's scanner (please keep the cross talk to a minimum, just this one time!). Be there, bring slide briefs, and chatter all you wish!

BURT DRAPER MEMORIAL SLIDE CONTEST

The order of winning at the contest on November 11 was Hal Rothenborg, Keith Ogle, Russ Davies, and Roger Fogt.

CORRECTION AND ADDENDUM by BARBARA SIBERT

Regarding the Synopsis of Board Minutes under Treasurer, reported in the December issue of *Wheel Clicks*. The Carriso Gorge trip was canceled and the deposit checks were returned, so the only loss was the cost of printing the flyer. In fact, realizing there were a number of problems to work out involving the operation of the trip, Trains Unlimited Tours issued a \$50.00 voucher to be used on any Trains Unlimited trip in 2006. These have been mailed to all members that signed up for the trip.

SYNOPSIS OF BOARD MINUTES—November 4, 2005

CALL TO ORDER—The Board of Directors of Pacific Railroad Society, Inc. was called to order at 7:46 p.m.

ROLL CALL—Present were President Will Walters, Vice-President Rob Markowitz, Secretary Bill Smith, Treasurer Marti Ann Draper, and Directors David Abbott, Stan Ames, Owen Danaher, Dick Finley, and Lindsay Smith. Also present were Cecelia Ditlefsen, Hayden Draper, Tsai Draper, Ken Ruben, Barbara Sibert, and Stuart Spencer.

TREASURER—Marti Ann Draper presented the financial report for Nov. 4, 2005.

INSURANCE—Cecelia Ditlefsen will send a letter to our insurer regarding Workers' Compensation.

EXCURSIONS—PRS will participate in Key Holiday Tours' Reno Snow Train excursion; adopted by voice vote. PRS will

plan a trip to Ventura for our 70th Anniversary, date to be determined; adopted by voice vote.

MEMBERSHIP—Bill Farmer is retiring and moving to Train Mountain in Oregon, but will still carry on as chair of the Membership Committee.

MUSEUM—Lindsay Smith reported that he was selected by the committee as the nominee for Chair of the Museum Committee. Aims of the late Ralph Melching will be perpetuated.

PROGRAM—The Bert Draper Memorial Slide Contest will be featured at the Nov. Membership Meeting.

PUBLICATIONS—Dick Finley said the mailing party for the Dec. issue will be on Nov. 22, 2005.

PUBLICITY—Will Walters said the Museum could start peddling the new PRS pins.

ROLLING STOCK—Will Walters reported on the restoration of plumbing on the *National Forum*, new batteries will be installed tomorrow, the car will be on line in a few months, and vestibules in the car are devoid of paint. "Thomas, the Tank Engine" will be at OERM in Nov. with *Shasta Springs* in the consists headed by "Tommy." *Chippewa Creek* may winter here in Southern California. If room is needed at Saunders Yard, the car could be moved to LAUS.

Ed Von Nordeck brought a container to OERM, and we have access to half of it. PRS will purchase one half of the container for \$1500, to be charged against the *Descanso* fund; adopted by voice vote.

LEGAL—The committee will be called upon to look into a written agreement between PRS and OERM.

WEBSITE—Rob Markowitz, webmaster, said work on the museum website is indicated whereby new content is added. It was agreed after discussion that we should look within PRS for help in updating the website.

NEW BUSINESS—President Walters reported that in August, Golden Gate RR Museum received word of their eviction by the US Navy from their site at Hunters Point, San Francisco. GRRM must be out of the site by Feb. 15, 2006. As a result, they have liquidated a sizeable amount of their collection. Three ex-SP baggage cars and an ex-*Coast Daylight* coach-baggage car are now available.

The Rolling Stock committee was authorized to submit a bid of up to \$8,000 for any or all of the following: ex-SP 3302, coach-baggage car; ex-SP 6615, baggage car; ex-SP 6796, baggage car; and ex-SP 6652, baggage car. Motion adopted ayes 7, noes 0. GRRM will open bids on Nov. 11.

ADJOURNMENT—Meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of October 2005, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 269,555.

[Calculations by Tom Nelson].

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL by TOM NELSON

The average, weekday, system ridership on Metrolink trains during October was 41,177, a 3 percent gain over September. The Inland Empire/Orange County (IE/OC) Line and the 91 Line (Riverside-Fullerton-L.A.) both had percentage increases of 7. Up to Nov. 18 system ridership on weekdays was averaging

between 42,000 and 44,000.

System schedule adherence on weekdays in October was 93 percent, the same as in September. The best of the long distance routes was the San Bernardino Line at 95½ percent. The system on-time performance was improving in Nov., running up to the 18th at 95 percent.

October 3, 2005, was the 10th Anniversary of Metrolink's IE/OC Line. This line serves stations along the route between San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, and Oceanside. It carried a weekday average of 4,237 riders in Oct. It was the nation's first suburb to suburb commuter rail line, according to the Riverside County Transportation Commission.

SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS

A Metrolink timetable effective Sept. 6, 2005, shows the addition of two trains serving the San Fernando Valley. Regular riders were unable to get to work on time in the morning, because the Amtrak trains they normally rode were always late. To accommodate these passengers, Metrolink added Train No. 108 departing Chatsworth at 8:25 a.m. for Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS), 10 minutes ahead of Amtrak 768's scheduled time. To provide for No. 108, Train No. 103 was added leaving LAUS at 7:15 a.m., 15 minutes before Amtrak 799's scheduled departure, and terminating at Chatsworth.

New Metrolink timetables were set in Nov. to be issued effective Jan. 3, 2006. For the IE/OC Line, two new midday round trips are to operate between Riverside and Oceanside, Train Nos. 850, 851, 852, and 853. Present Train No. 811 is to run 45 minutes earlier, and Nos. 811 and 802 are extended between Irvine and San Juan Capistrano. Train Nos. 324, 329, and 331 on the San Bernardino Line and Nos. 683 and 609 on the Orange County Line have minor adjustments. Nos. 205, 207, and 212 on the Antelope Valley Line are adjusted 5 minutes. Northbound trains in the 900s on the Ventura County Line are renumbered due to the addition of Train No. 103. This is the extent of the changes.

COMMUTER SERVICE DREAMS

With the demise of Orange County's 9.3-mile CenterLine light rail transit (LRT) project due to a lack of federal funding, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) on Oct. 14, 2005, decided to use part of available local funds to improve commuter rail service. The OCTA Board voted to operate Metrolink trains between Fullerton and Mission Viejo on 20- to 30-minute headways from 5 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week, beginning in 2010. Additional rolling stock would be needed.

If OCTA could not make a case to show a ridership demand for LRT service between Fullerton and Irvine (original Center-Line proposal) and later between Santa Ana and John Wayne Airport, where would the demand materialize for such frequent commuter service not going north of Fullerton? Then there is the problem of inadequate track capacity, even after completion of the second track between Santa Ana and Orange. To intermingle all these extra trains with existing Metrolink, Amtrak, and freight services stretches the imagination.

A better use of local funds would be a less ambitious addition of commuter rail trains. At the same time, build a shorter section of a future LRT spine, mostly single track to LRT standards, with a couple of passing sidings, and operate two or

three streetcars until more funding becomes available. This starter line could run from the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center through downtown to Santa Ana College, then south on Bristol St. to South Coast Plaza, a total of about six miles. An alternate plan would be to work with the City of Irvine on a similar short line.

Transit professionals familiar with Ventura County's meager sources of financial backing for mass transit are not enthused with Santa Barbara County's proposal of commuter rail linking the two counties. Ventura County officials would be faced with going to the voters to fund their part of the project at a time when they are already considering the feasibility of asking for an increase in the sales tax to support present commuter service within the county. Also, it is not likely that Union Pacific would be pleased at adding more traffic to its single-track Coast Line.

CONSTRUCTION

Before construction can begin on the second main track between Orange and Santa Ana, certain electric utility work must be completed. In the area of Lincoln Ave. between Fairhaven Ave. and Virginia Ave. in Santa Ana, power poles must be removed and replaced, and some utility lines must be placed under ground. The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Board at its Nov. 18, 2005, meeting approved the authorization of a work order with Southern California Edison to perform this work. The amount is not to exceed \$126,590 plus a 10 percent contingency.

The bids for the Santa Ana – Orange track came in too high. It seems the cost of street work is several times higher than track work. What is needed is a principal contractor with expertise in street relocation who will obtain a subcontractor to lay the track. As a result, SCRRA intends to perform a work evaluation prior to going out again for bids.

MISCELLANEOUS

The issuing of addenda to the Specifications slowed the process of new rolling stock acquisition. No action was anticipated at the December SCRRA Board meeting, but as of November, bids were expected to be in by Jan. 10. A contract award is to be made early in 2006.

With the improvement in diesel oil prices in November, it appeared no additional fare increase would be necessary at this time. SCRRA staff will continue to watch the situation and determine if a mid-2006 fare adjustment will be needed.

Los Angeles residents living to the west of the tracks between L.A. and Glendale objected adamantly against turning the Chevy Chase Dr. crossing of the railroad into cul-de-sacs. An article in the Spanish language newspaper *La Opinion* quoted Atwater Village residents claiming the proposed crossing closure was an effort to keep the Latino residents out of Glendale. At a council meeting on Sept. 27, Glendale Mayor Rafi Manoukian told the audience that the proposed street crossing closure was "dead in the water." On Oct. 11 the Glendale City Council voted unanimously to explore safety improvements at the crossing instead of closing it.

[IE/OC Anniv. and schedule adjustment info. from Ed Von Nordeck]

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Construction along the Sprinter line continued. Portions of State Route 78 in San Marcos were scheduled to be closed for

night work during the week of Nov. 7 and subsequently for three months. This will permit the contractor to drill for bridge column foundations for one bridge and to set formwork and pour concrete for a column at another bridge site.

On Sept. 22 the North County Transit District Board (NCTD) approved the award of the Sprinter Vehicle Maintenance Facility Contract to The Whiting-Turner Contracting Co. The first excavation, which began construction of this facility, took place on Nov. 8, 2005.

NCTD has approved the continuation of the Coaster/Amtrak Rail2Rail program through June 30, 2006. This popular travel option allows Coaster monthly pass holders to ride Amtrak, as well as Coaster trains, between Oceanside and San Diego within the zone limits of their pass.

For the Rolling Stones concert at Petco Park (the baseball stadium in downtown San Diego) on Friday, Nov. 11, Coaster scheduled an extra train to Oceanside, stopping at intermediate stations. Its departure was to be approximately one hour after the end of the concert, leaving about 11 p.m. The last regularly scheduled train departs the Santa Fe Depot at 12:05 a.m.

[Sprinter info. obtained at NCTD Headquarters]

LAS VEGAS LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT

Congress gave final approval on Nov. 19 to several bills before recessing for Thanksgiving, sending them to the White House to be signed into law. Among the items were Southern Nevada projects for \$3 million to initiate an LRT system along a 33-mile corridor that would link Henderson, Las Vegas and North Las Vegas with valley resorts.

[Info. from PTP via Charles Varnes]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDRON

Caltrain's gamble of adding increased Baby Bullet train service plus a 17.5% fare increase seems to be paying off. Average weekday ridership in September 2005 was 34,430, a 9.4% increase over September 2004 and a 29% increase since the Baby Bullet trains debuted in June 2004. Meanwhile, revenue is up 27.6% over September 2004 and is up 50% since before Baby Bullet service began.

If ridership levels are maintained, revenue should increase even more in January 2006. Caltrain will implement a 5.6% fare increase at that time, which will be the final step in its plan to close a \$13.6 million budget gap for the 2006 fiscal year, which began last July 1.

On November 7, the San Mateo City Council voted to close historic Bay Meadows Race Track. Though the closing won't come for at least three years, it will be one more piece of Bay Area history coming to an end. Caltrain and Southern Pacific have served the race track with special stops, and even special trains, for more years than I can remember.

When the land is redeveloped, it will feature businesses, shopping, and housing, which will supposedly bring in far more tax revenue than Bay Meadows could. An alternate site is being sought for the race track.

Caltrain Maintenance of Way crews have been busy during November. Crews replaced 475 ties between Hillsdale and Belmont and also replaced ties between Sunnyvale and Santa Clara. Also, conduit was laid between Redwood City and CP

Dumbarton. This was done in preparation for a larger project to rehabilitate Dumbarton Bridge for the start of service to Newark and Union City by 2010.

The remodeled Palo Alto Transit Center made its debut on October 10, offering a new canopied and landscaped passenger plaza, a new bike rack, and self-cleaning bathrooms. The center provides connections for Caltrain passengers to SamTrans and Valley Transit Authority buses, and includes a new track level pedestrian crossing, complete with gates and fencing.

WASTE BY RAIL

by JACK WHITMEYER

With local landfills nearing capacity, special container trains will be running by 2010, taking waste to the recently purchased Mesquite Regional Landfill in Imperial County. In addition is the proposed purchase of the Eagle Mountain Landfill in Riverside County. Both of these can be served by the Union Pacific Railroad into Imperial Valley over ex-SP railroad tracks.

The Mesquite Landfill is expected to handle 1,900 containers on a 24-hour basis with trains of 190 special containers each or ten trains per day. Approximately seven miles of track will be built at this facility. Unknown at this time is the track capacity of UP Railroad route necessary to handle this traffic, but some obvious double tracking will be in order.

[The following information is from an article that appeared in the *Daily Breeze* for Nov. 5, 2005.]

The Puente Hills Landfill, the largest operating landfill in the nation and one of the last remaining municipal landfills located in the urban area of Los Angeles will operate until 2013, then it will close for good. With Puente Hills preparing to close and many other landfills reaching their capacity, what's going to happen to L.A.'s waste? "Rail haul, or waste-by-rail, is a good answer," says Grace Chan, assistant department head for the Sanitation District's Solid Waste Management Department. "We have a very definitive timeline for implementing waste-by-rail. The trains will be up and running by 2010," says Chan.

Both the Mesquite Regional Landfill in Imperial County and the Eagle Mountain Landfill in Riverside County are conveniently served by railroads and both are permitted to accept up to 20,000 tons of refuse per day. "Together, these landfills have enough disposal capacity for all of Los Angeles County's trash for the next 100 years," Avila says.

To understand how waste-by-rail works, one must begin with the Material Recovery Facilities, or MRFs. Trash is sorted at an MRF to recover materials that are sold to recycling markets. The residual waste, or trash that's not recyclable, is loaded onto rail compatible containers and transported to a rail yard. At the yard, the containers are loaded onto trains, taken to remote landfills and then unloaded. The first MRF for the waste-by-rail program, the Puente Hills MRF, began operation this year.

The remote desert landfills themselves will be lined with special plastic to prevent wastewater from leaching into the ground. They'll also be outfitted with special collection systems to gather the gas that's generated by tons of decomposing garbage. Both of those systems are being built with the 2010 deadline getting closer.

Equally as important for the waste-by-rail program is the creation of railroad yards and stations which will be able to

handle the loading and unloading of the trash containers. "Most of the railway infrastructure exists already. We'll be using Union Pacific tracks. We just need to add a few miles of track at the landfills," adds Chan.

The Sanitation Districts will also need transfer sites in Los Angeles County or Intermodal Facilities (IMFs). The IMF is where the sealed containers of trash will be loaded on to train cars for travel to the remote landfills.

Obviously, it costs a lot more to send trash 200 miles by rail than it does to put it in a local landfill," Chan reasons. To eliminate the public's sticker shock when rail haul actually begins, the Sanitation Districts have come up with a plan to gradually phase in the cost increase.

"When waste-by-rail comes along there are a lot more cost components involved. We think that it could cost about 55-dollars per ton as compared to today's cost of about 20-dollars per ton," explains Chan. "A plan began in January 2005 collects \$1.77 more per ton for a special rail fund," explains Coke.

When the trains start rolling, officials will have collected enough funds to get the program off the ground. As they start spending the special rail fund, the costs of rail haul will continue to go up gradually.

MCCLLOUD RIVER RAILWAY

Seaside Holdings, Inc., of Palm Gardens, Florida, wants to buy the 80-miles of railroad track that the McCloud River Railway is abandoning. [See article on McCloud Railway in the February 2004 issue of *Wheel Clicks*.] Jeff Forbis, CEO and president of the McCloud Railway Co. since 1992, said he needs a few more weeks to prepare documents supporting the liquidation value and the minimum acceptable purchase price.

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) granted the McCloud Railway a time extension and also that Seaside file its Offer of Financial Assistance 10 days after Forbis submits the documents. Forbis is keeping open the 20 miles of track between McCloud and Mt. Shasta for the profitable Shasta Sunset Dinner Train.

The 80-miles of steel rail he is abandoning has in recent years been used by the Sierra-Pacific (S-P) sawmill in Burney and by Dicalite Minerals, which ships diatomaceous earth from the siding in Cayton Valley. Salvage value of the rail line is estimated at \$30,000 per mile. In the meantime, even if he accepts an offer, Forbis said he would keep the railway open for S-P and Dicalite at least until the end of this year, and possibly until March 2006.

The STB said that if no adverse filings are made, "The railroad is free to end operations and begin salvage operations," and it has one year to complete the abandonment. The abandoned section includes a station at Burney and about 31 miles of track between Hambone in Siskiyou County and Lookout Junction in Modoc County.

[Info. from *Intermountain News* via Roger Titus, Cond. MCR]

NEW MEXICO COMMUTER RAIL

New Mexico took delivery of the first of 10 "Rail Runner" cars the last week of Aug. Three more cars arrived the first week of Sept. The cars will serve commuters between Belen and Bernalillo with a new rail service later this year. According to

the Mid-Region Council of Governments (Mid-Region COG), the Rail Runner will operate on existing railroad tracks currently owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.

In addition to the bi-level, regional transit-type rail coaches from Bombardier, Albuquerque-area Mid-Region COG is also taking delivery of five MP36PH-35 diesel-electric locomotives from MotivePower Industries. According to Chris Blewiett, a planner with Mid-Region COG, the state-financed starter line will be able to handle peak volumes of 3,000 to 4,000 passengers per hour. The 46-mile route will initially serve seven stations.

Initially, the RailRunner service will run Monday through Friday with northbound trains leaving Belen early in the morning. Trains will run in both directions midday, and one train will run from Albuquerque to Belen in the late afternoon.

A route linking Albuquerque to Santa Fe has been in planning for some time with sections of rail right-of-way already acquired for an opening tentatively projected for 2008. *Railway Gazette International* reports that the Santa Fe extension will require about 35 miles of new track at a cost of \$250 million.

The new RailRunner Express commuter rail service will constitute the backbone of a regional public transportation system. Planning is underway for an interstate rail system linking New Mexico with cities in Colorado and Wyoming.

New Mexico Department of Transportation has purchased nearly 300 main line miles of trackage from Burlington Northern Santa Fe between Belen, New Mexico and Trinidad, Colorado, and also acquired BNSF yard property in Albuquerque in a total \$76 million deal. BNSF will continue to operate over the trackage.

[Info. from PTP via Charles Varnes and NARP via Ken Ruben]

TWO VEHICLES COLLIDE WITH TRAIN

The location of an accident on Nov. 22 was in Oak Hills (north of BNSF Summit on the RR) on I-15 where it passes above the ex-SP now UP Palmdale-Colton Cutoff, which is in a deep cut under the freeway.

Investigators from the California Highway Patrol say that Michael Jimenez of Victorville was traveling northbound in the fast lane when the accident started. "Witnesses put him as going approximately 90 miles per hour," said Officer Skip Evans of the CHP. Ladora Yager, driver of the other vehicle, was northbound in the No. 3 lane.

"Jimenez made an unsafe lane change, lost control of his truck, and struck Yager's car. Both vehicles left the roadway, went over the guard rail and onto a dirt embankment," said Evans. "The vehicles tumbled down the embankment, where they struck the side of a passing train with one vehicle being dragged several feet farther. The Union Pacific train, headed to Palmdale, was passing under the freeway bridge just then, and caused further damage to the vehicles. When the vehicles hit the train, it broke some of the freight cars loose from one another, but did not derail any of them. "When the freight cars were jarred, the train's emergency brakes kicked on," Evans said.

The drivers of both vehicles were killed, but there were no passengers in either vehicle. Investigators were on the scene until early Wednesday morning. A representative from Union Pacific was unavailable for comment.

[Info. from *Victorville Daily Press* via Chard Walker]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

On Dec. 9, 2005, the Amtrak Board of Directors appointed David Hughes, Chief Engineer, as Acting President and CEO following its dismissal of President and CEO David Gunn. The Board of Directors has launched a national search to find the railroad's next leader.

Gunn's dismissal generated a great deal of controversy. On Nov. 10 a New York Times editorial criticizing the decision appeared. Editorials and articles appeared in many publications. A Congressional hearing was held, also.

In early December 2005, Gunn accepted the position of adjunct scholar with the Free Congress foundation. The Foundation is one of the few conservative policy institutes that favors public transportation, especially rail.

DEPOT DOINGS

FRESNO, Calif. An Official Opening Ceremony was held at the newly restored and rehabilitated station, located at 2650 Tulare Street, on Saturday, Nov. 19, 2005. Major funding for the \$6 million project came from the Department of Transportation and City of Fresno, which purchased the building and land from Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. Other fund contributors were California Pollution Control Financing Authority and the State of California Office of Historic Preservation.

AMERICAN ORIENT EXPRESS

Railfan photographers who wish to photograph passenger trains other than the usual Amtrak ones will have an opportunity when the *American Orient Express* trains run from and to Los Angeles in 2006. The tour names, routes, and dates follow.

American Southwest

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Los Angeles to | Albuquerque to |
| Albuquerque | Los Angeles |
| January 22 - 25 | — |
| October 6 - 9 | — |
| — | November 9 - 12 |

Great Transcontinental Rail Journey

| |
|--------------------------------|
| Washington D.C. to Los Angeles |
| April 20 - 29 |
| — |

Coastal Culinary Adventure

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Los Angeles to | Seattle to |
| Seattle | Los Angeles |
| May 2 - 8 | May 9 - 15 |
| November 14 - 20 | — |

National Parks of the West

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Los Angeles to | Salt Lake City to |
| Salt Lake City | Los Angeles |
| May 16 - 22 | May 23 - 29 |
| May 30 - June 5 | June 6 - 12 |
| June 13 - 19 | — |
| — | July 18 - 24 |
| July 25 - 31 | August 1 - 7 |
| August 8 - 14 | August 15 - 21 |
| August 22 - 28 | August 29 - September 4 |

The train's arrival and departure times are unavailable at this time.

2006 TRAVEL PLANNING

At the beginning of the new year it is time to begin thinking about travel and vacations. Both Amtrak and Via Rail Canada

offer fares permitting unlimited travel for 45 days (Amtrak) or 30 days (Via Rail Canada).

Explore America Fares

Explore America fares permit 45 days of coach travel, with three stopovers allowed, within one (or more) of four geographic regions in the United States. On some trains, passengers can upgrade their accommodations to Business Class, First Class, or Sleeping Car accommodations.

The regions are:

- Western Region: The Pacific Coast, from San Diego to Vancouver, BC, eastward to Wolf Point, Denver, Trinidad, Albuquerque and El Paso.
- Central Region: From eastern points Port Huron, Detroit, Toledo, Fostoria, Cincinnati, Atlanta and Pensacola to western points of Wolf Point, Denver, Trinidad, Albuquerque and El Paso.
- Eastern Region: The Atlantic Seaboard, Raleigh to Montréal, westward to Detroit, Toledo, Fostoria, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and southward to Atlanta and Savannah.
- Florida Region: Miami, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, northward to Savannah, and westward to Pensacola.

2006 fares are not available at the present time. 2005 off-peak fares adult ranged from \$288.88 for one region to \$376.35 for three or four region travel. Peak adult fares ranged from \$309.00 for one region to \$437.75 for three or four region travel. Children and senior and disabled Explore America fares are also available. Complete information, including restrictions is available from Amtrak.

North American Rail Pass

The North American Rail Pass is offered jointly Amtrak and Via Rail Canada. The North American Rail Pass provides 30 consecutive travel days of coach travel with unlimited rides and stopovers throughout the United States and Canada. Travel must include travel on Amtrak and Via Rail Canada and include at least one journey between the United States and Canada. Travelers may upgrade to Business Class or Sleeping Car accommodations for an additional charge.

The off-peak 2005 fares were \$543.00. The peak fare was \$766.00. A 10 percent discount for children and seniors is available. As with any special fare, restrictions apply. The North American Rail Pass is sold by Amtrak.

Amtrak Tour Programs

Amtrak has partnered with selected tour operators to offer vacation packages that combine travel on Amtrak with an assortment of America's best travel destinations. Complete information on Amtrak tour programs is available in the "Hot Deals" section of the Amtrak web page (www.Amtrak.com).

- West Coast tours are offered by Key Holidays. Their tour programs include the Pacific Northwest, San Francisco, Yosemite, Monterey, Hearst Castle, Grand Canyon, and Reno.
- Northwest Montana programs are offered by Flathead Travel. Their tour programs, along the route of the *Empire Builder*, include Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake, Whitefish and Kalispell, Mont., and the Big Mountain Ski and Summer Resort in Montana.
- Colorado and Montana ski tours are offered by RMA Tours. Their tour programs include Whitefish, Mont., and Winter

Park, Copper Mountain, Breckenridge, Keystone, Aspen/Snowmass, Sunlight Resort, and Powderhorn Resort, Colo.

[Info. from Ken Ruben and Ed Von Nordeck]

OAHU TRANSIT PLANNING

The company hired to analyze Honolulu's mass transit alternatives has identified more than 70 possible route combinations for an Oahu rail system stretching 24 miles from Kapolei to Manoa. By December, it was hoping to reduce the options to three or four routes and present them to the public. Working under a \$9.7 million contract from the city, the planning firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas is examining the city's transit options, including rail.

Because planners can draw on similar studies done in Honolulu at least three times in the past two decades, company officials think they can prepare a set of recommendations by next fall, putting the city on a path to begin construction in 2009.

Probably the biggest challenge involves planning a rail route through downtown Honolulu. In late 2006 will be issuance of an alternatives analysis and draft environmental impact study, or EIS. In early 2007 the city plans to select the locally preferred alternative. In 2007-09 will be preparation of final EIS and approval of federal officials.

[Info. from *Honolulu Advertiser*]

UPRR COMPLETES CROSSING SIGN PROJECT

Union Pacific Railroad has completed a four-year, \$16 million project to install new, high reflective crossbuck warning signs at more than 18,000 railroad crossings across Union Pacific's 23-state system. Union Pacific also installed emergency notification signs at these crossings.

Each crossing has a unique Department of Transportation number that is included on the sign, along with the toll-free number for UP's Response Management Communication Center (RMCC). The crossbuck and emergency notification signs were installed at public at-grade crossings without flashing lights or gates. RMCC's toll-free telephone number is 888-877-7267. The DOT number enables RMCC to identify the motorist's exact location. If, for instance, a vehicle is stuck on the track, the dispatcher is notified to stop train traffic.

Through the first eight months of this year, RMCC received 1,381 calls from motorists who were able to report a problem and their location based on information provided on the signs.

The safety initiative also included private crossings which are those that cross the railroad tracks but are not a public street or road. Private crossing, stop and emergency notification signs were installed at all locations except crossings that allow agriculture producers to go from one field to another.

[Info. from Union Pacific Railroad via Charles Varnes]

POWDER RIVER BASIN JOINT LINE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

During the first week in November BNSF completed major track maintenance and improvement projects that will speed the flow of coal train traffic on the Joint Line in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming. At Shawnee Junction, where BNSF and Union Pacific Railroad lines split at the south end of the Joint

Line, BNSF completed realignment of tracks, replacement and removal of turnouts and signal system upgrades that will allow both railroads' trains to move through the junction at 50 mph, double the previous speed limit of 25 mph.

The Shawnee Junction project was completed Nov. 3. That same day, BNSF crews finished an intensive 11-day project to reduce the number of rail joints in the area. Crews eliminated 465 rail joints, or about two-thirds of the total on the Joint Line, which should reduce the likelihood of joint-related rail incidents during the winter months.

During this project, crews exceeded production goals, making a total of 544 welds (elimination of some joints requires more than one weld) compared with a plan of 460 welds. A similar six-day joint elimination program is scheduled to begin Nov. 28 on the Joint Line, including the Orin and Reno subdivisions.

In addition, the enhanced Joint Line maintenance program will continue through Dec. 16, subject to weather, with plans to complete 70 miles of undercutting and rehabilitation of 56 turnouts. The program began in July.

"We've had up to 200 people working on these projects, and we haven't had a reportable injury this year on the Orin Subdivision," says Dave Hestermann, assistant vice president and chief engineer, Central Region, Engineering. "That's just outstanding performance in view of all the activity and the long hours and long days these crews have been working."

[Info from *BNSF Today* via Charles Varnes]

NEW BNSF WIND FENCE ADDS EXTRA SAFETY

Wind fences are making life easier for BNSF Operations employees in western Montana, by reducing heavy winds up to 50 percent compared with 25 percent with older versions. The new wind fences are made of four-cabled belts, run through polymer "sleeves" bolted horizontally to 50-foot H-piles (steel posts) driven halfway into the ground. The older fences were made of wood and snow-fence fabric.

BNSF began installing the new wind fences last year near Browning, Mont., and at the east entrance to Glacier National Park along the Midvale Creek bridge. Wind protection is very important in the Browning subdivision because of a large right-hand curve near milepost 1124 that routinely gets 60 to 100 mile-per-hour winds. The Midvale Creek bridge is prone to similar problems and is noted for being very high.

"With such high wind speeds, empty, double-stacked container cars (which are about 20 feet high) can turn into "sails," explains BNSF Division Engineer Rick Harman located in Havre, Mont. "As a result, the propensity for derailments increases as do other operational problems."

BNSF uses a system of anemometers installed along the line to measure wind speed, direction and temperatures that sends special "wind alert" notification to dispatchers. In addition, operations protocols are in place to stop and hold empty railcars when winds are too high.

Although more expensive, the new wind fences are definitely more effective and have reduced the number of operating restrictions on the line due to wind, says BNSF Structures Supervisor Dwayne Whitaker, also in Havre. "When the wind is blowing and you step behind the fences, it's like stepping

behind a building," Whitaker explains.

BNSF has been installing the fences near Browning in 800-foot phases. The first installment was in 2004; the second, this year; and the final phase will be completed in 2006. The Midvale bridge installation was started last November and completed in April.

[Info from *BNSF Today* via Charles Varnes]

BNSF SHORT-LINE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

BNSF Railway Company honored three of its short-line connections with Short-Line Achievement Awards at BNSF's eleventh annual Short-Line Conference October 24 at Fort Worth. Matt Rose, BNSF's chairman, president and CEO, presented awards to:

- Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad of Wichita, Kan.
- Southwestern Railroad of Carlsbad, N.M.
- Sierra Northern Railway of Woodland, Calif.

"All of our short line connections have played a role in our joint success in 2005," said Pete Rickershauser, BNSF's vice president, Network Development, who introduced the Achievement Award recipients. "These awards recognize the resourcefulness and achievements of those short lines that have gone beyond our expectations through innovation, determination and hard work."

About 200 people attended the conference, which featured discussions on BNSF's network development, service and marketing plans for 2006 and how short lines fit into those plans. Discussions were led by Carl Ice, executive vice president and Chief Operations Officer; John Lanigan, executive vice president and Chief Marketing Officer; and other members of the BNSF leadership team.

"Short lines provide an intense customer focus, resourcefulness, operational flexibility, and a local presence in their communities," said Rickershauser. "We see their role expanding in the future as they do more gathering and distribution, and aggregate blocks of cars for integration with BNSF's network of main-line trains."

BNSF connects with more than 200 short lines, regional carriers and switch carriers. They operate almost 19,000 miles of track. Through August of this year, BNSF shipments that originated or terminated on short lines accounted for about 16 percent of BNSF revenues. Of BNSF revenues attributed to shipments originating or terminating on short lines, 53 percent were Industrial Products commodities while 28 percent were Agricultural and related products.

[Info from BNSF Railway via Charles Varnes]

BNSF TESTS SYNTHETIC CROSSTIES

Wooden crossties are still the mainstay of the railroad and have been since the 1800s, but they and concrete ties are beginning to see a little competition from new synthetic crossties made, of all things, from recycled plastic.

Since 2002, BNSF has replaced about 20,000 worn-out wood ties with synthetic ties. Most of the ties have been installed in the Gulf Coast areas, including the Houston, Lafayette and Galveston subdivisions, where rot and insects significantly shorten the life of wood ties.

Synthetic ties are made up of about 80 percent recycled

materials, byproducts from industrial manufacturing.

Since 1990, BNSF has followed synthetic tie development with great interest and has examined and priced the ties produced by about a dozen manufacturers. Although most of the manufacturers use recycled materials for their ties, the variety of materials, technologies and designs they employ differ. To date, BNSF has tested synthetic ties produced by three companies.

So far, the synthetic ties seem to be enduring well, says BNSF's Director of Track Standards and Procedures John Bosshart. They can last up to 50 years, whereas wood ties last only about 30 years, and far worse under hot, humid conditions. "So far, the synthetic ties seem to be holding up well," says Bosshart. "Laboratory tests show that plastic ties may last up to 35 years longer than wood ties."

Although the useful lives of the two types of ties are different, they are installed in much the same way. Synthetic ties are pre-bored, and standard spikes can be used to drive them into the ground. They can't be driven in by hand, however, because the spikes tend to bounce out of the plastic-like material. The two types of ties also weigh roughly the same amount and they even look a lot alike, says Bosshart.

There are a couple of drawbacks to the synthetic ties, however. Although they hold up well to compression, they are somewhat less flexible than wood ties. They also cost about twice as much. With the price of oil rising, Bosshart doesn't anticipate that the price of synthetic ties will come down anytime soon, given the fact that oil is a primary plastics ingredient.

However, synthetic ties could prove cost effective when it comes to replacing switch ties, he says. Longer wooden ties used for switches cost significantly more than shorter, regular wood ties. By contrast, the price difference between longer synthetic switch ties and shorter synthetic ties is much less steep, which could make them more economical than wood.

Railroad purists need not worry that synthetic will supplant wood ties anytime soon, though. BNSF's 32,000 miles of track consist of an estimated 131 million ties. Twenty-thousand made of synthetic material are just a molten drop in the bucket.

[Info. from *BNSF Today* via Charles Varnes]

BNSF WHEAT SHIPMENTS by CHARLES VARNES

To give examples of how much wheat the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway moves in a year the railway posted the following information on a BNSF Today web page.

One-third of the United States' entire annual wheat production is moved on BNSF trains. BNSF ships enough wheat to provide 905 million people with one year's supply of bread. If stacked from end-to-end, the loaves of bread would be 9,905,303 miles long, which would reach the moon and back or circle the earth 20 times.

In addition to the wheat shipment information the page included the following information.

Last year BNSF hauled 42,200 cars of corn syrup, which is enough to make 45.6 billion cans of soda – that's 153 cans of soda for every person in the United States. BNSF hauls more than 5,500 cars of malt per year, enough to make more than 12 billion, 12-ounce cans or bottles of beer.

RAILROAD GIANT

The world's largest rail car with 36 axles rolled into Duluth, Minnesota, in early May. The CEBX Schnabel car was built in Germany in 1980, and weighs about 370 tons. Loaded with hydraulics, the Schnabel car cost about \$3.5 million to build.

The car will be used to move a 678-ton high-pressure steel tank from a heavy-lift ship to a new facility that OPTI Canada Ltd. is building near Fort McMurray, more than 200 miles north of Edmonton in Alberta. When there, it will go into a plant designed to extract oil from a tar-sand formation.

The car's supervisor, William Bingman, and the five-man crew won't depart for Canada until December, because the ground must be frozen solid to support the tremendous weight of the load, particularly in some of the boggy areas the train must traverse. The loaded car will travel at a maximum speed of 15 mph, and for safety's sake, will move only during daylight hours. "A good day for us is about 100 miles," said Bingman. [Info. from Railroad Newsline]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by DICK FINLEY

LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL RIDERSHIP

| | Red Line | Blue Line | Green Line | Gold Line |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| October 2005 | | | | |
| Weekday Ave. | 112,371 | 73,366 | 32,130 | 14,748 |
| Saturday Ave. | 76,938 | 52,748 | 19,414 | 10,267 |
| Sunday Ave. | 63,680 | 44,073 | 15,775 | 9,356 |
| Month Total | 3,062,888 | 2,024,800 | 850,684 | 407,831 |

RED LINE

Visitors to Hollywood's night clubs and restaurants will have a new means of traveling from and to the Metro Red Line stations at Hollywood/Highland and Hollywood/Vine. A pilot bus program approved Nov. 29 by the Los Angeles City Council on a 14-0 vote begins Dec. 22 and will operate Thursdays through Saturdays from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. The fare of \$1 per ride is not expected to interfere with existing bus lines.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

RED LINE WILSHIRE EXTENSION

At the Board Meeting of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) on Oct. 27, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa of Los Angeles announced that a panel of experts had preliminarily concluded "without any objection" that it would be safe to build a subway beneath Wilshire Blvd. beyond Western Ave.

Villaraigosa said the panel of five experts, formed Oct. 14, was "unanimous" in its conclusion, believing that "there's the technology and the expertise currently here in Los Angeles and around the country that can safely tunnel through and under Wilshire Boulevard."

METRO RAIL MID-CITY/EXPOSITION PROJECT

The Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Final EIS/EIR) has been prepared to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Quality Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The document describes the environmental setting and consequences of the construction and operation of the Mid-City/Exposition Light Rail Transit Project to the public and involved local, State, and Federal agencies.

Metro has released the Final EIS/EIR on the light rail transit

line (LRT) from Downtown Los Angeles along Exposition Blvd. to Venice/Robertson boulevards in Culver City in a dual track alignment. The 9.6-mile-long Exposition Line will share tracks and the 7th/ Metro and Pico stations with the Metro Blue Line. South of Downtown, it will travel on a rail right-of-way on Exposition Blvd., then continue to Venice and Robertson.

In addition to 7th/Metro and Pico, the line would have eight stations along the route, three with parking. A second phase of the project will extend the line to Santa Monica.

Release of the report is one of the final steps before construction can begin in 2006 with the line completion in 2010. For more information please call the Project Hotline at 310-366-6443 or visit the web page at metro.net/expo.

METRO GOLD LINE

Frustration with ever worsening traffic is stimulating new interest in denser, more urban patterns of development. Situated two blocks from Old Pasadena, a picturesque 19th-century business district, the Del Mar Station has 347 mostly market-rate apartments distributed among four buildings, each in a different architectural style. Designed by Stefanos Polyzoides, a leading proponent of the planning movement known as new urbanism, Del Mar Station is still under construction. The developer, Urban Partners of Los Angeles, one of 11 companies that bid on the site, sold the complex this year for \$134 million to Archstone-Smith, a real estate investment trust, after receiving an unsolicited offer.

Tenants are expected to begin moving in early next year. Interest in projects at transit stations has surged recently, said Carol Inge, the deputy executive for transportation development for MTA. Since the 1990s, MTA has been involved in nine joint projects with developers, costing a total of \$1.5 billion. These include Urban Partners' 449-apartment development, with 36,000 square feet of retail space, over the subway station at Wilshire Blvd. and Vermont Ave.

Of the 3,300 transit stations around the country, only about 100 are known to have inspired so-called transit-oriented development, or TODs, according to a study financed by the Federal Transit Administration. Developers say that having to coordinate with transit and other public agencies makes these projects challenging, particularly if train service is operating while construction is taking place.

For the Wilshire-Vermont project, for example, Urban Partners was required to temporarily relocate the elevator and stairs leading to the subway stop 90 feet below the street. This delayed the project for a year and accounted for at least 8 percent of the \$120 million cost, said Paul Keller, a principal of the company, which is known for adapting old buildings to new uses.

In suburban communities like Pasadena, residents often fear that denser development will increase traffic. "People make a fundamental mistake," Mr. Polyzoides said. "They see them as purveyors of gridlock." But instead, he said, people who live near stores will more likely do their errands on foot, thereby reducing traffic. Despite such obstacles, advocates for public transit say they expect demand for transit-oriented developments to escalate in major metropolitan areas because of the influx of new residents, particularly immigrants accustomed to public transportation, the aging of the population, the rising incidence

of single-parent and other nontraditional households, and lower crime rates, which have made downtowns more appealing.

By 2030, the population of the six counties that make up the greater Los Angeles region is expected to grow by a third, to 24 million. Over the last two decades, 500 miles of rail lines have been added. According to a recent report by Reconnecting America, a nonprofit group that promotes TODs, households in transit zones nationwide own an average of 0.9 car, compared with 1.6 cars for metropolitan regions as a whole. And a 2003 study financed by the California Department of Transportation found that state residents living near transit stations were five times as likely to commute by transit that the average resident worker in the same city.

Around the country, most buildings near stations are poorly designed and uninviting, said Robert Cervero, the chairman of urban planning at the University of California, Berkeley, and the principal author of the federally sponsored TOD study. "They lack the good-quality pedestrian environment and the kinds of urban amenities that instinctively draw people to them," he wrote in an e-mail message.

At Del Mar Station, however, commuters and residents will share 1,200 underground parking spaces, and considerable attention has been paid to the plaza that runs through the middle of the project. A newly restored Spanish-style railroad depot will house a restaurant and shops.

[Info. from PTP of November 2, 2005, via Charles Varnes]

SAN DIEGO

At the Board of Directors Meeting on Nov. 10 up to \$2 million was transferred from the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) to the Centre City Development Corporation for East Village transit and urban developments. The East Village work was originally phased in five separate projects. Two of these, improvements at the Gaslamp Station and reconstruction of the Park and Market Station, are complete. Due to high construction costs, only two of the remaining three projects can be funded. These two projects are rail and urban improvements from G Street to Broadway on Park Blvd. and reconstruction of rail through the Smart Corner development from Broadway to C St. and on C Street from Park Blvd. to 11th Ave. The Orange to Blue Line Connection Project is being deferred.

CTC Operation

Over the last several years the MTS staff has implemented a system-wide capability referred to as Centralized Train Control (CTC). The CTC was intended to provide trolley operations staff with the capability to monitor and control all field elements, including train location/status, traction power substation components, trackside switches and signals, and train-route selection from one centralized location. With this technology fully implemented, trolley staff would be capable of providing significantly enhanced management of all field operations.

The enhanced capability was determined to be essential as part of the relocation of existing central control staff to the new Operations Control Center. This capability is also referred to as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), although the common reference is CTC.

Funding for the CTC will be incorporated into the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and will be phased in order to complete the project by specific line segments. The first line

segment will be the Green Line, which will extend from Santee Town Center to the Santa Fe Depot. Implementation would start in the third quarter of 2007 and be completed in FY 2008. The system will not be able to detect if a person is on the track although it will be able to detect other types of obstructions, particularly metal objects. Trains will still be manually controlled by the train operator, not by central control.

Vintage Trolley Operation

On July 14, 2005, the MTS Board of Directors approved of a vintage trolley operation and the purchase of two vintage PCC cars from a private owner in the Lake Tahoe area and storage and restoration of the cars at the MTS light rail maintenance facility. Staff was to evaluate options for the solicitation of private funds. Since that time, staff has formed San Diego Vintage Trolley Inc. (SDVTI) and has collected \$50,000 toward the purchase, transport, and restoration of the PCC cars.

On Sept. 28, 2005, SDVTI purchased the two PCC cars from the fleet owned by Gunnar Henrouille of Lake Tahoe for \$30,000. The cars should have arrived in San Diego in late Nov. or early Dec. Staff has been approached by an individual who owns one PCC car in Perris, Calif., who has offered to sell the car to SDVTI for \$3,200. Staff believes purchase of the third car is a wise choice in order to retain enough parts and supplies of original quality to keep the ~~two cars~~ operational once restoration is complete.

Performance Indicators

In October, MTS system carried a total of 7,140,893 passengers with 3,846,424 traveling on MTS bus and 3,294,449 traveling on MTS rail. MTS rail reported 96.9 percent of its trips on time. MTS bus had 2.61 total collisions per 100,000 miles in the month of Oct. MTS rail had two collisions at a rate of 0.28 total collisions per 100,000 miles.

SAN FRANCISCO MUNI

In an attempt to close a \$57 million budget gap for the fiscal year that began on July 1, the Municipal Transportation Agency, which oversees Muni and the Department of Parking and Traffic, increased cash fares, cut some service and raised parking fees and fines. According to preliminary numbers, Muni met its revenue goals during the first month of the fare increase, bringing in 11 percent more than in September 2004. The 25-cent fare increase by Muni is budgeted to bring in about \$13 million extra over the course of the fiscal year. Cable car fares, which increased from \$3 to \$5 in Sept, were responsible for the most significant jump compared to 2004, a 70 percent increase.

San Francisco has been experimenting with the automated tracking "NextBus" system since 1999, but it now has funding to expand the system citywide. NextBus uses a global satellite system to track the location of specially equipped Muni vehicles. The date is then translated into alerts notifying people how long the estimated wait is before the next bus or train is likely to arrive. The real-time data is updated regularly. The information is available on electronic message boards at certain bus stops and can be retrieved from any personal computer, cell phone or personal digital assistant that is connected to the Internet. Eventually, officials hope the information can be retrieved by phone on the regional "5-1-1" transportation number.

Muni has installed the equipment on all five Metro lines, the F-line and the 22-Fillmore, the 24-Divisadero and the 33-

Stanyan trolley lines. Plans call for plugging all trolley lines into the system by next summer and all buses by the end of 2007. Muni operates more than 1,000 buses, trolleys, trains and cable cars.

The Municipal Railway's on-time performance inched upward to 71.3 percent in the three months that ended Oct. 31, but still remained far from the goal of 85 percent that the transit agency is supposed to meet by July 1. City law sets that systemwide goal and requires quarterly reports.

[Info. from Ed Von Nordeck]

BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT

With ridership on the rise after a four-year slump, BART began adding cars in October to trains during the morning and evening commutes. One to two cars are being added to many trains based on ridership patterns, said Linton Johnson, BART spokesman. The number of passengers riding the transit system was up 3 percent to 4 percent over the previous year during September, meaning an average of 15,000 more riders each weekday. BART's average daily ridership is about 334,000.

Over the past couple of years, as ridership lagged, the transit agency has been running shorter trains, particularly outside of commute hours. Most of the longer trains are running on the Pittsburg/Bay Point-to Daly City line, the system's busiest. Cars have been added to more than half the trains on that line, Johnson said. Each car can comfortably hold about 100 people, according to BART.

[Info. from Ed Von Nordeck]

PORTLAND, OREGON

In Milwaukie City councilors decided in the first week of Nov. to designate five acres along Kellogg Lake as a park honoring the late Robert Kronberg. This was a promise kept to former property owners, and questions remain about whether the site can still be developed as a transit center for buses and future light rail. Councilors voted in June 2004 to recommend the west Kellogg Lake site to Metro's South Corridor Policy Committee. Phil Selinger, TriMet project planning director, said TriMet could consider one of eight other alternative transit center sites if the Kellogg Lake site is eliminated.

The extension to Clackamas Town Center, the Green Line, is on track to open in September 2009. TriMet was to start buying land in Nov. for park-and-ride stations along the 6.5-mile route south from the Gateway transit center. Most of the land needed for tracks, which parallel the I-205 Freeway, was set aside decades ago. The federal government, which is supplying 60 percent of the money to build the line, gave approval to property acquisition in Oct. Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled for completion in November 2006, and construction is to begin in January 2007.

The I-205 project coincides with the rebuilding of the downtown Portland transit mall, at a combined cost of \$557 million. Of the eight new stations on the Green Line, five have park-and-ride lots. Most of the spaces will be in Clackamas County – 630 at the Fuller Road Station and 750 in a parking garage at Clackamas Town Center. The mall's transit center will be on the ground level of the garage.

Reliance Development, a Portland firm, plans a 276-unit condominium project north of the mall. Land south of the Town Center station is zoned for high-rise office buildings, said John

Rist, Clackamas County's light-rail project manager. TriMet expects the Green Line to carry at least 33,000 riders daily by 2025. Commuters to downtown Portland – a 38-minute trip – will have an alternative to the rising costs of gas and parking, Rist said.

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

SEATTLE MONORAIL

Two monorail trains clipped each other on a curve shortly after 7 p.m. on Nov. 26. Firefighters on four ladder trucks helped 84 passengers off the elevated train. No one was seriously hurt, but officials said two people were hospitalized with minor injuries.

The one-mile monorail line, which has only the two trains, was built for the Seattle World's Fair in 1962, and has been popular with tourists, drawing as many as 23,000 riders a day. A years-long fight to expand the system for commuter use was soundly rejected by voters last November. The Red and Blue trains remained frozen together on the tracks above Fifth Ave. and Olive Way on Nov. 28, while city officials struggled with how to separate the two trains. Authorities have known about the tight curve since 1989, when the inclusion of Westlake Center changed the original 1962 track design to taper at the point leading into the mall.

The last time the system went down was as the result of a 2004 Memorial Day weekend fire. There were no major injuries, but it caused 150 people on board to be trapped while the cars filled with smoke. The cause was later found to be a series of malfunctions, beginning with a broken drive shaft. The city spent \$2.5 million in refurbishing the trains with new electrical systems and fire safety upgrades before the line went partially operational six months later.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times* and *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*]

SEATTLE MONORAIL PROJECT

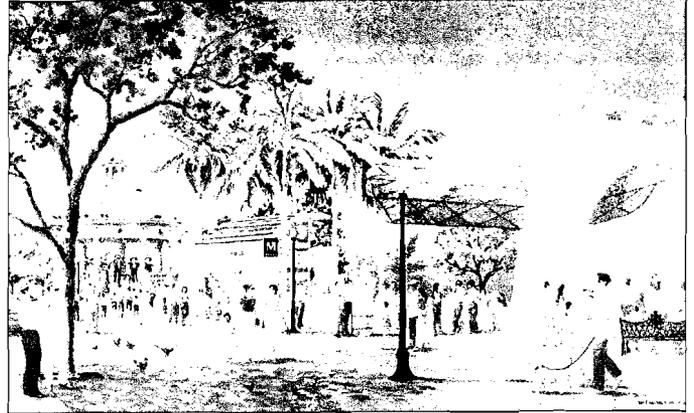
Proposition 1, which would have authorized the Seattle Monorail Project to go forward with plans for a scaled-back elevated train line from Interbay to West Seattle, was soundly defeated on Nov. 8. The agency that spent \$180 million toward an elevated train system reluctantly began taking its first steps toward folding. "This was a viable mass transit project, and it's not now. It's going away," John Haley, the Seattle Monorail Project's interim executive director, said at a news conference.

Haley joined the project in August after his predecessor stepped down amid public outrage over an \$11.4 billion financing plan that included \$9 billion in interest on low-grade bonds – more than four times the monorail's estimated price tag. Mayor Greg Nickels and the City Council pulled their support from the project in September, threatening to deny permits needed to build on city streets unless the board put a plan it could afford on the ballot.

Haley said he'll recommend that the board quickly sell off or transfer more than \$60 million worth of land it bought for rail stations. The monorail project also has to pay off about \$110 million in debt, so it will continue collecting motor-vehicle taxes from Seattle residents. Haley said he will recommend that the board let him go immediately, and expected the agency to be closed by the end of the year.

[Info. from *The Spokesman-Review* via Frank Mares]

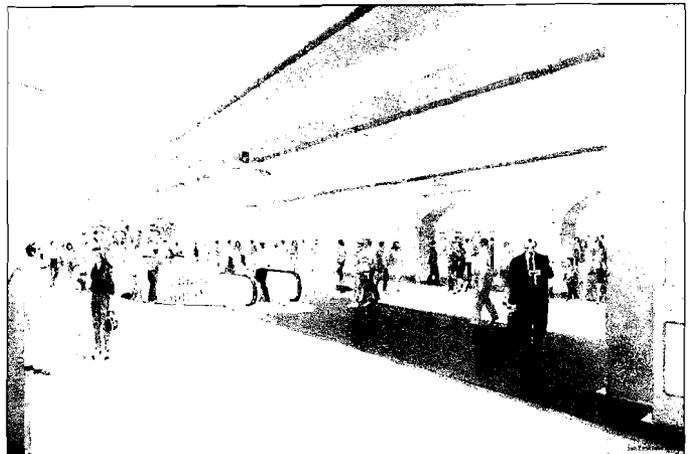
ANSWER to Page 1 RAILQUIZ: C, as seen on Nov. 8, 2005.



Boyle Heights/Mariachi Plaza Station of Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension is seen at surface level near 1st Street and Boyle Avenue. Rendering by MTA



Mezzanine Level of Boyle Heights/Mariachi Plaza Station is seen near ticketing. Rendering by MTA



Stairs, escalators, and elevator is seen on Mezzanine Level of Boyle Heights/Mariachi Plaza Station. Rendering by MTA