

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society, Inc.

AUGUST 2007

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL RIDERSHIP by Dick Finley

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during May increased from April by 1 percent to 43,477. The largest increase was 6 percent for the Riverside Line. Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence during May was 96 percent.

FARE INCREASE

On May 11, Metrolink's Board of Directors approved a three-year program of fare increases under which the system-wide average fare will increase by 3.5 percent each year, effective July 1, 2007; July 1, 2008; and July 1, 2009. Metrolink fares are also transitioning from a zone-based system to a calculation base on the equivalent driving distance between stations.

SAFETY

Metrolink and the Southern California Rail Safety Team have been working with law-enforcement agencies around Southern California to promote safe behavior around railroad crossings and on railroad property. On March 7, 2007, Metrolink, Amtrak, BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, the California Public Utilities Commission, and the Fullerton Police Department coordinated the first countywide enforcement event with police departments throughout Orange County. During the six-hour event, 209 citations were issued to drivers and 22 citations were issued for trespassing. Five arrests were made, two stolen vehicles were recovered, and 17 vehicles were impounded.

On Wednesday, April 7, 2007, the Pacific Harbor Line railroad joined forces with the Southern California Rail Safety Team and several law-enforcement agencies during an Officer-on-the-Train safety event in San Pedro. Officers from the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, the Metrolink Sheriff's Transit Bureau, the BNSF Railway Police, the Union Pacific Police, the Los Angeles Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, and the Port Police observed several railroad crossings in the Wilmington/San Pedro area. During the five-hour operation, 95 vehicle citations were written; five drivers received warnings; nine vehicles were towed; and seven pedestrian trespassing citations were issued.

METROLINK TO CALIFORNIA SPEEDWAY

California Speedway has its own Metrolink station, so you can avoid race day traffic congestion. You can purchase your Sunday charter train tickets at the same time you purchase your race tickets by calling 800-944-RACE. Round trip tickets \$25.

In 2007, Sunday charter trains will operate directly to California Speedway. These chartered trains, containing over 3,000 seats, will operate two trains from Oxnard, Fullerton, and Lancaster, and one train from Orange and Oceanside through San Bernardino. All lines have intermediate stations.



The Vista Dome Observation car Silver Solarium brings up the rear of the Southwest Chief June 3, 2007 in this photo taken moments before the departure of the California Zephyr Railcar Charters Tour to Santa Fe, Taos, and Sangre de Cristo Country from Los Angeles Union Station. Photo by Charles Varnes

On Fridays and Saturdays of each race weekend, many regularly scheduled trains on Metrolink's San Bernardino Line may make special stops at California Speedway. The San Bernardino Line operates between San Bernardino and Los Angeles on Fridays and between Riverside-San Bernardino and Los Angeles on Saturdays. Please call 800-371-LINK to verify service.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZATIONS

Consistent with the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Operating and Capital budgets by the SCRRA Board, the following items were approved.

○ To Bombardier Transit Corp., a contract of \$21,983,137 for operating maintenance, including recollectable work, and rolling stock rehabilitation and renovation work.

To Connex, a contract of \$23,816,085 for commuter rail operations including special and recollectable trains, support of maintenance-of-way and capital project work trains, and mobilization costs.

To Mass Electric Construction Co., a contract of \$8,589,021 for operating maintenance, support of capital construction and recollectable projects.

To Herzog Contracting Corp., a contract of \$12,581,630 for operating maintenance, support of capital construction and recollectable projects.

To the County of Los Angeles, a contract of \$7,444,315 for law enforcement services consistent with service assumptions. \$1,819,280 of the amount is recollectable from Metro.



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AUGUST 2007

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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.**

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Aug. 3 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Aug. 4, 11, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 18, 25 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Sts., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: 25.
 Aug. 4, 11, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 18, 25 Yard., Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. day: 4, 18; Extra day: 11, 25. Committee Mtg.: 18.
 Aug. 10 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room
 Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Aug. 23 Exc. #530 *Feather River Railroad Days Festival*
 Thurs. leave L.A. 10:45 a.m. motorcoach to Bakersfield.
 Aug. 27 Exc. #530 return L.A. 6:40 p.m. from Bakersfield.
 Mon.
 Sep. 2 Exc. #533 *Sun Diegan* with *National Forum* and
 Sun. *Overland Trail*. Leave L.A. Train #564 at 7:20 a.m.,
 or Train #580 at 3:00 p.m., and return Train #571 at
 1:15 p.m. or Train #591 at 9:05 p.m.
 Sep. 7 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at

Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Sep. 1, 8, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 15, 22, 29 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Sts., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: 22.
 Sep. 1, 8, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 15, 22, 29 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. day: 1, 15; Extra day: 8, 22, 29. Com. Mtg.: 15.
 Sep. 14 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room
 Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Sep. 21 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes &
 Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.

MEETING PROGRAMS

by **Russ DAVIES**

August 10: The best of **your Museum's slide collections!** You'll see action from the cameras of **Dave Cameron, Ted Damon, Bill Farmer, Herb Johnson, Ralph Melching, Vic Uzoff,** and more. **Don't miss this one! (And bring slide briefs.)**
 September 14: "**Coast to Coast on the National Forum, Part II**" This will be the east to west, return portion of the **June and July, 2006, PRS Excursion #525**. We'll ride along with **Tom Geer** and his **Digital Image wizardry**. **Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

Late renewal members were assigned Seniority Numbers 437-484. At the Board Meeting on July 6, the following members with numbers were voted into PRS: Charles Stone, 485; William Wilson, 486; Dennis Fox, 487; David Reid, 488; Edward Evan, 489.

BOARD MINUTES SUMMARY – JUNE 1, 2007

TREASURER: In the absence of a Treasurer, Director Draper reported that she has assisted Owen Danaher in preparing financial reports. Bills have been duly paid.
INSURANCE: Insurance Committee Chair Draper reported that she was in receipt of a Certificate of Insurance regarding our liability policy.
EXCURSIONS: Excursions Committee Co-chair Cammarano reported solid bookings for the Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and San Diego trips aboard *National Forum*. Space has been booked for 18 passengers with Trains Unlimited to Portola.
MUSEUM: Owen Danaher reported that Il Shea Roofing has submitted a bid of \$32,640.00 for re-roofing the Museum, with the sum taken from the David G. Cameron Estate Fund, and to be considered a capital improvement.

Sometime next year, San Dimas Historical Society will move to Walker House. More Blackhawk films are on DVD.
SPECIAL EVENTS: Vice-President Cammarano reported 35 bookings for the Tehachapi trip. The Christmas Banquet is very much "on track," a tour of the steam shop at Knott's Berry Farm being a prominent feature.
ROLLING STOCK: Rolling Stock Chair, Director Walters, says the *National Forum* should be ready to leave Saunders Yard by the end of June. Window issues are being addressed. A one-year inspection is due for the car. Windows of the Hi-Level car will be worked on and toilet-tank issues addressed. On a regular basis, 10 to 12 volunteers show up for workdays. The UP cupola caboose is making outstanding progress. A scratch-build

stovepipe will soon be installed on the crummy. Work parties on the ex-SP articulated chair car at Orange Empire Railway Museum (OERM) have been crowded out by activities at Saunders Yard. Truck work needs to be finished at OERM.

NEW BUSINESS: Barbara Sibert reported that John Ulloth is willing to edit and assemble an informational brochure. He wants photos and text.

BUDGET COMMITTEE: Chair Draper showed a pair of hypothetical Budget Revenue sheets, one for being in the black, the other for the red, thereby prompting a free-form discussion on budgetary and fund-raising matters. Director Walters advised that we may have to face one or two years in the red.

MEMBERSHIP: Chair Virginia Grupp reported that membership has been in a slow decline. Owen Danaher stated that storage costs have also been climbing.

[Complete Board Minutes are available from Secy. Bill Smith]

CORRECTION— March issue Page 12, Up Lf photograph: Pacific Harbor Line EMG is ex-D.R.G.W. #5412 built in 1980.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of April 2007, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 304,937.

During the month of May 2007, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 300,661.

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDHON

On June 28, Caltrain suffered a major service disruption that affected thousands of evening commuters and capped off a day-long series of delays. Problems began around 10:30 a.m. when power was lost to a number of controlled switches at various points on the Peninsula. As a result, some train crews had to manually throw switches to line their trains for the desired route, resulting in delays of up to 30 minutes.

About the time the switching problem was being cleared up, northbound Baby Bullet Train No. 365 struck an automobile at West Meadow crossing in Palo Alto, resulting in a fatality to the driver. No one on the train was hurt, but both main lines were shut down.

After about two hours, the southbound track was reopened, with trains restricted to 10 mph past the scene. The northbound track was opened about an hour later. The shut down resulted in the cancellation of eleven northbound and six southbound trains. In addition, Train Nos. 260 through 280, which were en route, experienced delays of up to two hours.

Also on June 28, ground was officially broken for the rebuilding of the Burlingame station. As mentioned last month, the new station will include separate boarding platforms, with pedestrian crossings and gates to allow two trains to occupy the station at the same time. The South Lane road crossing has been permanently closed to make room for the new platforms.

On June 15, Caltrain's train dispatchers moved into their new offices at the Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility (CEMOF) near the site of the old Southern Pacific roundhouse. The site is bounded by Coleman, Lenzen, and Stockton avenues and by West Taylor Street on the north in San

Jose. Plans were for the facility to officially open on July 1, but that didn't happen. Caltrain officials are now hoping for an August 1 opening, but even that might be optimistic.

On July 4, Caltrain ran their annual fireworks trains from San Francisco to San Jose for people viewing the fireworks show at Pier 39. Trains left San Francisco at 11:00 p.m., 11:30, and 12:15 a.m., making all Peninsula stops, and ran only as far as Diridon station. No service to Tamien station was provided.

The town of Atherton received one more service blow on July 1, when their shuttle to Redwood City was discontinued due to very low ridership. It began in August 2005, when the Atherton stop was eliminated from weekday Caltrain service. Now Atherton residents must find their own way to Redwood City or Menlo Park to board Caltrain. Apparently most of them do that already.

CANCER RISK RISES NEAR RAIL YARDS

Residents who live in the shadow of Southern California's booming rail yards face cancer risks from soot as much as 140 percent greater than in the rest of the region, according to new studies by state regulators. In addition, clouds of diesel exhaust blown by the wind from the rail yards blanket wide swaths of greater Los Angeles, upping annual cancer risks slightly for millions more residents. Hardest hit in the region are neighborhoods in Commerce that are near one Union Pacific and three BNSF yards.

Railroad officials said the studies showed that the rail yards produce less than 1 percent of the region's diesel particulate emissions. But they said they were concerned about their contribution to local health risks and were spending millions of dollars to slash emissions in coming years with hundreds of new locomotives, anti-idling devices, cleaner fuels and other measures. "We're certainly part of the issue," said Lanny Schmid, director of Union Pacific's environmental programs. "We like to think we're a small part of the issue, and we're going to get it even smaller."

A past study has shown that cancer risks are highest at the ports that feed the rail yards. Railroads claim exemption from local and state air pollution laws under interstate commerce clauses.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

RAIL TRANSIT TEMPO

by TOM NELSON

HONOLULU

It looks like Honolulu, Hawaii, may actually go forward in building an elevated fixed guideway line. In Aug. 2005 the city council adopted a half-cent general excise tax for transit effective Jan. 2007. It is expected to generate up to \$200-million a year which will amount to up to \$3.6 billion during the estimated 16-year lifetime of the project. Whether the line will be light rail transit (LRT), monorail, maglev, bus rapid transit (BRT), or something else was undecided. Tentatively, it will be a two-track line between West Kapolei and Manoa, with a spur to Waikiki, consisting of about 28 stations. Completion date for the first portion is expected approximately 2012.

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

The Las Vegas Monorail Co. plans to extend to the airport its present monorail line. When completed in 2011, the mono-

rail will be able to carry visitors from McCarran International Airport to stations along the Las Vegas Strip, avoiding the increasing street traffic.

PORTLAND, OREGON

The Oregon Iron Works (OIW) was awarded a \$4-million contract to build a low-floor, prototype streetcar for Portland's street railway line. OIW believes there are 80 U.S. cities interested in streetcar systems, so it has formed a subsidiary, United Streetcar, LLC, to construct streetcars for new lines and expansion of existing transit companies' fleets. OIW already has a partnership and technology transfer agreement with Skoda of the Czech Republic.

SEATTLE

Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) awarded a \$38.9-million contract to Earth Tech to prepare the final design for Central Link. This is the 3.15-mile LRT extension between downtown Seattle and the University of Washington. This segment and most of the remainder of the LRT line to Sea-Tac Airport are scheduled to open in July 2009. The 1.7-mile segment between Tukwila and Sea-Tac is to open in Dec. 2009. King County Metro owns the 1.3-mile Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, being refurbished to handle Sound Transit's light rail vehicles (LRV), and will operate and maintain the LRV trains.

A tunnel boring machine (TBM) broke through Beacon Hill in May, completing excavation and lining of the first of two tunnels in this location. The 4,388-foot bore began in Jan. '06 as part of Central Link's LRT line. The TBM was being relocated to perform the same work for the second tunnel.

ANCHORAGE

The Alaska Railroad intends to begin commuter rail service this year between Anchorage, the airport, and Dimond Center Mall. The train will be equipped with existing rolling stock initially. Next year the railroad expects to receive a \$4.7-million Colorado Railcar DMU funded by the Forest Service.

FORT WORTH

In May two bills were making their way through the Texas Legislature to allow North Texas to prepare a ballot measure for transit. If approved by the voters, they would raise the sales tax by one cent to a new total of 9.25 cents per dollar. At present only two cents is available for local purposes, with 6.25 going to the state.

The mayor of Fort Worth and many elected officials from other cities rallied on May 2 in support of the proposed measures. They rode part way on the Trinity Railway Express and were optimistic about establishing similar service to other cities in the area.

AUSTIN, TEXAS

Austin Capital MetroRail's 32-mile Austin-Leander interurban line will utilize DMU equipment. The German-built, self-propelled railcars are 134 feet long, 75 percent low-floor, carry 200 passengers, have maximum traction power of 630 horsepower, and a maximum speed of 75 miles-per-hour.

HOUSTON

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas, (METRO) has awarded a \$77-million contract to Washington Group International to begin work on the \$2-billion Metro Solutions transit project. Involved are development, preliminary

engineering, and preparatory construction for 20 miles of guided transit with 34 stations.

MONTERREY, MEXICO

Effective in April 2007, Kansas City Southern Railroad de Mexico was to transport one new LRV every 15 days during nine months from Lecheria, Mex., to Monterrey for its LRT system. The cars are being built at Bombardier's Sahagun, Mex. plant.

NEW ORLEANS

In early May a power substation was expected to be received by New Orleans Regional Transit Authority. This and the stringing of overhead trolley wire were considered to be the keys to reopening the St. Charles Ave. streetcar line to Napoleon Ave., hopefully by the end of summer.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

After six failures to pass a proposition to build LRT in Kansas City, the voters approval of the seventh attempt caught the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority completely by surprise. The funding for LRT is the three/eighth-cent of sales tax which is being used to fund up to 50 percent of the existing bus service. Also, there were no environmental or engineering studies.

What to do? The Authority is currently using seven/eighth-cent of the sales tax authorized for transit. The other one/eighth is available. They are looking at a plan of fewer than the proposed 27 miles for the initial line and more time to construct it. The Authority understands that the voters have said they want LRT, so a process has begun to bring before the voters modified LRT legislation, which will make it workable. There is time, because the three/eighth-cent will not be diverted to the light rail until April 1, 2009.

OTTAWA

Last December the Ottawa City Council aborted OCTranspo's \$653-million LRT project, because the project was unable to meet the funding requirements in the project agreement. Matching contributions of funds from the federal and provincial governments, and property acquisition conditions, did not materialize as mandated by the aforementioned agreement.

[Info. from *MassTransit*, *Railway Age*, *Metro*, Altamont Press]

FIRST UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CROSSING PHOTO ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM IN TEXAS

On June 1, the City of Grand Prairie and Union Pacific Railroad introduced the first railroad crossing photo enforcement system in Texas. At an event at the corner of SE 9th Street and Pacific Street in Grand Prairie, Union Pacific and city officials introduced the new photo enforcement system created by Redflex Traffic Systems, Inc. of Scottsdale, Ariz.

Although the 11 crossings in Grand Prairie have gates and lights, accidents between trains and motor vehicles at those crossings resulted in five fatalities in the last four years.

The photo enforcement system at the 9th Street crossing is the first of several to be installed along the main Union Pacific rail line that runs through Grand Prairie. The next locations to receive the system are SW 19th Street, SW 23rd Street, Center Street, SW 2nd Street and Belt Line Road. The proceeds generated by photo enforcement will be dedicated to safety improve-

ments at railroad crossings, which will help prevent vehicles from crossing the tracks while a train is approaching.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, grade crossing accidents between trains and motor vehicles across the nation have decreased by 76 percent in the last 34 years. In 1972, there were approximately 12,000 collisions between trains and motor vehicles compared to 2,897 in 2006.

[Info. from www.uprr.com/newsinfovia Charles Varnes]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

On July 11, the House Appropriations Committee approved its Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations bill, making no amendments affecting Amtrak. The bill will go to the floor with \$1.4 billion for Amtrak and \$50 million to match state intercity passenger rail investments.

On July 10, the Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies approved FY 2008 legislation which included \$1.47 billion for Amtrak.

Senate Bill 294, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2007, was approved by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar on May 22, 2007. There has been no further action. The Bill authorizes Federal funding for the operation and development of intercity passenger rail service; makes improvements to Federal passenger rail transportation policy and activities; enhances passenger rail security; and reauthorizes Amtrak for 6 years.

On July 25, the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) marked its 40th anniversary with call for renewed federal-state commitment to the nation's rail system. In its press release NARP called on America to adopt a nationwide "grid and gateway" train network.

The gateways are major terminals, in many cases served by short and medium-distance higher frequency and higher speed services, and the grid is an expanded national passenger train network connecting all major metropolitan areas. The vision also includes a dramatic improvement in linkages between airports and intercity rail, a concept where the U.S. lags far behind Europe.

AMTRAK NEWS

Amtrak-GrandLuxe Rail Journeys Partnership

Amtrak and GrandLuxe Rail Journeys (formerly American Orient Express) are partnering to offer premium service on three routes from November through early January 2008. The premium service is being promoted as the *GrandLuxe Express*. It will be provided aboard seven GrandLuxe Rail Journey cars (a diner, lounge and five sleeping cars) coupled to the Chicago-Los Angeles *Southwest Chief*, the Chicago-Bay Area (Emeryville) *California Zephyr*, and the Washington, D.C.-Miami *Silver Meteor*:

Prices for the Chicago-Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay area journeys range from \$1599 to \$2499 per person. The Washington, D.C.-Miami prices range from \$789 to \$1299 per person.

The luxury travel will be sold from the train's origins to their destinations, although GrandLuxe advertising indicates that it may

be possible to travel to an intermediate station.

Several two day one night, special itineraries are being offered. The itineraries and dates are: Denver-San Francisco Bay Area (Emeryville), Oct. 30; Denver-Chicago, Oct. 29 and Nov. 1; Chicago-Washington, D.C., Nov. 4; Chicago-Albuquerque, Jan 9, Jan 10, and Jan 11, 2008; Washington, D.C.-Chicago, Jan. 6, 2008. Prices begin at \$789.

New Quik-Trak Machines

Amtrak is installing a new version of its Quik-Trak electronic self-service ticketing machine. The new machines feature upgraded touch screens, brighter graphics, and are ADA-compliant making them more user friendly for passengers with disabilities. The new machines are faster, also. They are expected to issue tickets in half the time previously required.

When installation is complete, the number of machines available will increase from 176 machines in 67 stations to more than 300 machines in 150 stations.

The new version of the Quik-Trak electronic ticketing machine was recently named a KioskCom Self-Service Expo Excellence Award winner. The award, judged by a panel of experts in the self-service and kiosk industry, was presented in the Best Travel/Hospitality deployment category.

No Checks in Food Service Cars

Effective June 1, Amtrak stopped accepting personal checks for payment in all food service cars, diners, cafes, lounges, and purchases from food carts. Now payment must be in cash, travelers checks, or with an American Express, Discover, Mastercard or Visa credit card. All food service cars have been equipped with a credit card terminal that will immediately validate and charge credit cards used for purchases. Debit card transactions that require entering a pin cannot be accepted.

Railfones Discontinued

Railfones were deactivated on all Amtrak trains on June 1. Because most travelers have cellphones, the phones which were basically cellular pay phones, receive very little use now. Consequently, it is no longer cost-effective to provide the service. The Railfones will be removed as quickly as possible.

Amtrak Guest Rewards Program

Holders of Amtrak Guest Rewards (AGR) MasterCards issued by Bank of America (BOA) stopped earning AGR points at the closing date of their May statements. Cardholders accounts remain open. The AGR cards were replaced with new BOA MasterCards which earn World Points.

AGR program members received either an email or letter inviting them to pre-register for the new AGR World MasterCard from ChaseBank USA, NA. In the fall AGR program members will receive an email or letter inviting them to apply for the new card.

ExpressTrak Car Storage Special Moves

Amtrak operated a special train in May and another in June from Los Angeles to Guadalupe to move *ExpressTrak* refrigerator cars to the Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMV) for storage.

The first special operated on May 12. It consisted of AMTK 130 and 20 *ExpressTraks*. The second special operated on June 9. Its consist was AMTK 94, 25 *ExpressTraks*, and the PV *Silver Lariat*. The *Lariat* was being delivered to the SMV for use on the July 16 lunch and dinner trains. It returned to Los Angeles on June 20 on *Pacific SurjZiner* Tr. No. 798.

After delivering the *ExpressTrak* cars the locomotives continued on to San Luis Obispo and returned on Surfliner Tr. No. 798 the same day.

INTERCITY TRAINS

Amtrak has changed the way it sells space in *Superliner* transition sleeping cars. All *Superliner* trains, except *Auto Train*, will offer at least four roomettes (numbers 17-20) for revenue sale year round. The attendant in the adjacent full sleeper will take care of the roomettes. The other four roomettes (numbers 21-24) will remain employee business travel (BT) space. During peak travel periods roomettes 17-24 will be offered for revenue passenger sales. No roomettes will be available as BT space. Following are the details for the trains.

Tr. Nos. 112, *Sunset Limited*. Eight roomettes (17-24) will be available year round.

Tr. Nos. 314, *Southwest Chief*. Eight roomettes (17-24) will be available on trains originating May 25 through Oct. 21. Four roomettes (17-20) will be available beginning Oct. 22; roomettes 21-24 will return to BT space. The transition sleeper will be renumbered 034010440, in order that roomettes in the car are sold last.

Tr. Nos. 516, *California Zephyr*. Eight roomettes (17-24) will be available on trains originating May 25 through Sept. 23. Four roomettes (17-20) will be available beginning Sept. 24; roomettes 21-24 will return to BT space. The transition sleeper will be renumbered 054010640, in order that roomettes in the car are sold last.

Tr. Nos. 718, *Empire Builder*. Four roomettes (17-20) are available year round. No BT space is available on the train due to crew space requirements.

Tr. Nos. 11/14, *Coast Starlight*. Six roomettes (17-22) will be available on Tr. No. 11 May 16-Oct. 17, and on Tr. No. 14 May 14-Oct. 15. Four roomettes (17-20) will be available beginning after those dates; roomettes 21-24 will return to BT. The transition sleeper will be renumbered 114011440, in order that roomettes in the car are sold last.

Tr. Nos. 29130, *Capitol Limited*. Four roomettes (17-20) will be available year round. Roomettes (21-24) will remain BT space. For a period of time during the summer, they will be available for revenue sale.

Tr. Nos. 52/53, *Auto Train*. No roomettes in the transition sleeper are available for public sale or as BT space at any time, due to the high crew requirements on the train.

Tr. Nos. 58/59, *City of New Orleans*. Four roomettes (17-20) will be available year round.

Southwest Chief

Reports that the BNSF Ry. will abandon its freight operations through Raton Pass by the year's end are incorrect. The railroad has stated that it has made no decision regarding the future of the route, and no timetable has been set for such a decision. Amtrak does not see the discontinuance of BNSF operation over the line as "an imminent threat to our operation on the line."

California Zephyr Railcar Charters Tour to Santa Fe,
Taos, and Sangre de Cristo Country

For a brief, shining moment, the excitement and glamour of the Streamliner Era reappeared when four immaculate private cars carried guests on a round-trip tour from Los Angeles to

Santa Fe July 3-8. The four private cars, *Colonial Crafts*, *Silver Rapids*, *Silver Lariat*, and *Silver Solarium* were coupled to the rear of the *Southwest Chief* from Los Angeles to Lamy, N.M. where they were uncoupled and moved by a Santa Fe Southern Ry. locomotive to downtown Santa Fe.

The *Colonial Crrlfs* is a three bedroom, drawing room buffet lounge built by Pullman-Standard for the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1949.

The three *Silver* cars were built by Budd for service on the *California Zephyr* (CZ). The *Silver Rapids* contains eight roomettes and six bedrooms. It was built as a 10 roomette, six bedroom car. Subsequently two roomettes were replaced by a service galley for beverage and light snack service, and a shower room. The *Silver Rapids* was built for the Pennsylvania Railroad as its contribution to transcontinental sleeping car service on the CZ. The *Silver Lariat* is a Vista Dome chair car built for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. It is equipped with a modern galley, wet bar, lounge and dining facilities. It seats 44 plus 24 in its dome. The *Silver Solarium* was built as a three bedroom, drawing room (with shower) Vista Dome observation sleeping car.

At Santa Fe the tour members stayed at the La Fonda, a former Fred Harvey hotel. Activities included in the tour were a performance of *La Boheme* at the Santa Fe opera, a ride on the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, a motor coach tour to Taos, and concluded with a day at leisure in Santa Fe. The friends of the author who were on the tour reported that it was absolutely "first class," without exception.

The author thanks Burt Hermey and Al Bishop, the tour hosts, for the opportunity to visit the private cars before the tour departed.

Coast Starlight

The *Coast Starlight* was cancelled between Portland and Sacramento on June 9, 10, and 11 with no alternate transportation provided. The reason for the cancellation was a 72-hour maintenance window on the Union Pacific to accommodate the enlargement of the Dorris Tunnel and other work.

On the days the line was closed stub *Starlights* operated between Seattle (SEA) and Portland (PDX) and Los Angeles (LAX) and Sacramento (SAC). Tr. No. 11 operated SEA-PDX, and turned to become PDX-SEA Tr. No. 1014 the same day. Tr. No. 14 operated LAX-SAC, and turned to become SAC-AX Tr. No. 1011 the following day.

WESTERN CORRIDORS

New timetables, effective May 21, were issued for the *Pacific Surfliner*, *Sun Joaquin*, and *Capitol* corridors.

Pacific Surfliner

To provide additional seats on the *Surfliners*, during the Del Mar horse racing season, one trainset of the eight, was replaced with *Horizon* cars on July 16th. Four of the cars of the *Surfliner* removed from service, become a four car add on- set each day on Tr. Nos. 768 and 589. At deadline it was not known if the dome car would be used on the single-level train. The dates of the racing season are July 18 through Sept. 5.

On Sundays through Thursdays June 5-Dec. 20 *Pacific Surfliner* Tr. No. 596 terminates at Solana Beach with motor-coach service to San Diego-Old Town and San Diego. Train service is suspended to permit work on a project to stabilize the

Del Mar Bluffs. Tr. No. 562 will originate at Solana Beach Tuesdays through Fridays, with substitute motor coach from San Diego during the period.

Effective Apr. 2, Tr. No. 763 began departing San Diego 5 minutes earlier at 6:10 a.m., Solana Beach at 6:46 a.m., and Oceanside at 7:02 p.m. The remainder of its schedule is unchanged. All other northbound *Surfliner* schedules remain the same.

Tr. No. 792 does not stop at Camarillo due to platform access issues.

Thruway Bus Route 17's route and schedule was slightly adjusted effective May 17.

San Joaquin

There were no changes to San Joaquin train schedules.

Several bus routes received schedule changes.

Capitol

There are no changes to *Capitol Corridor* train schedules, but adjustments have been made to the connecting bus schedules. The new printed schedules became available at stations beginning May 18. The new timetable can be downloaded from the Capitol Corridor web site at <http://www.capitolcorridor.org/>

Cascades

On June 8, 2007, Washington Governor Chris Gregoire and British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell announced an agreement between Washington State, British Columbia, BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) and Amtrak to make infrastructure improvements that will permit a second daily Amtrak *Cascades* train between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. The announcement was made at the King Street Station in Seattle.

The Province of British Columbia, Amtrak, and BNSF are funding the \$7 million project, which includes construction of a new 11,000-foot siding near Colebrook Road in Delta, B.C. The new passenger rail service is expected to begin operating in summer 2008. Construction is scheduled to begin in July 2007.

In 1995, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Amtrak began operating a single daily round trip train between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. In 1999, WSDOT and Amtrak began operating another daily round-trip train between Seattle and Bellingham, Washington. The second train went into service with the expectation it would be extended to Vancouver, B.C. once rail line improvements were made in British Columbia.

When the new service begins operations, an Amtrak *Cascades* will depart from Vancouver, B.C. in the morning, travel to Seattle, and then continue on to Portland, Ore. Each afternoon, another train will depart Portland, travel to Seattle, and then continue on to Vancouver, B.C. This service will supplement the existing train that makes a round trip between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., departing Seattle in the morning.

The Washington State Department of Transportation is funding the construction of a set of high-speed crossovers at the Olympia-Lacey station to improve safety for passengers at the depot and allow passenger trains to move around freight trains. The station is a stop for Amtrak *Cascades* trains and the *Coast Starlight*. Construction began December 2006 and was scheduled for completion in June 2007. The project cost is \$3.875 million.

The depot is located at Centennial, MP 32.5, on the BNSF Seattle Subdivision. The Subdivision is 2 Main Track (MT) CTC from Nelson Bennett (MP 6.7) to Vancouver (MP 136.5). The nearest crossovers are Nisqually (MP 24.5) and Plumb (MP 37.5). The new crossovers are north and south of the depot, spaced about 2000 feet apart. The crossover north of the depot permits trains to move from MT 1 to MT 2; the crossover south of the depot permits train movements from MT2 to MT 1. The depot is adjacent to MT 2.

A set of crossovers south of Winlock is scheduled for completion in June, also.

Cascades service between Portland (PDX) and Eugene (EUG) was affected by the UP Dorris Tunnel project line closure. PDX-EUG Tr. Nos. (and their dates): 509 (June 8), 504, 507, and 509 (June 9) were cancelled. EUG-PDX Tr. Nos. (and their dates) 500, 504, 507 (June 10), and 504 (June 11) were cancelled. Alternate transportation was provided.

The three Washington-state owned Talgo trainsets are receiving extensive overhauls, with the project to be completed by the end of 2007. During that period one set a time will be removed from service. From April 10 through the year's end, a *Superliner* consist will replace an out-of-service Talgo on Seattle-Vancouver Tr. Nos. 510/517. The replacement train will consist of an F59PH locomotive, a 31000 series baggage-coach, a lounge car, and 34000 series coach. Because of the *Superliner* equipment substitution, the following services normally provided on the train will not be available during the period: checked baggage (except at Seattle and Vancouver), business class seating, sit-down dining car style meals (snack items only in the lounge), unboxed bicycles (can be carried in boxes as checked baggage), movies on the train (digeplayers can be rented at Seattle), the GPS display of the train's position, and electric outlets at seats.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

On July 9, two new *Acela Express* trains began operating between New York and Washington, D.C., stopping only in Philadelphia. The trains operate Monday through Friday only, except on Labor Day, Sept. 3. Tr. No. 2105 departs New York at 6:50 a.m., Philadelphia at 7:55 a.m., and arrives at Washington at 9:25 a.m. Tr. No. 2120 departs Washington at 3:55 p.m., Philadelphia at 5:23 p.m., and arrives at New York at 6:30 p.m. To accommodate the new one-stop *Acela Express* trains Tr. No 89, the Boston-Miami *Palmetto*, and *Regional* Tr. Nos. 134 and 181 received minor schedule changes.

DEPOT DOINGS

LOS ANGELES, Calif. The author made two visits to Los Angeles Union station recently. The latest was on July 3 to wish bon voyage to friends who were departing on the California Zephyr Railcar Charters tour to Santa Fe, Taos, and the Sangre de Cristo Country. While sitting and conversing near the Traxx Restaurant, we were approached by three contract security personnel who wanted to know if we had tickets. They did not state what type of tickets they were inquiring about. When one of our friends told them they were waiting to board the Zephyr Railcar tour and that we were there to see them off, they terminated their inquiry and walked away.

The other visit was on May 24 to observe the new GE Transportation Evolution@Hybrid locomotive. During the visit, the

writer noticed that the Traxx restaurant is offering outdoor seating adjacent to the restaurant on the north patio. Traxx is open for lunch Monday - Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Dinner hours are Monday - Thursday, 5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 5:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. The restaurant is closed on Sunday.

OCALA, Fla. (OCA) became an unstaffed station on July 3. It is served by a *Thruway* bus connecting with the *Silver Star*. There is still a waiting room which is opened and closed by a caretaker.

RATON, N.M. (RAT) became a staffed station June 7 and will remain so through Aug 28. The station is closed on Monday and Tuesday. There is no checked baggage service to Raton or Denver this year, except for Boy Scout groups arriving and departing from the station en route to the Philmont Scout Ranch. [Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

TRANSIT-FRIENDLY HOUSING

Billions of dollars have been spent on transit-friendly housing, but it appears people aren't leaving their cars behind. A dozen of L.A. County's civic leaders touted the latest and glitziest new developments in Hollywood: the planned W Hotel and apartments at the corner of Hollywood and Vine. "People could live here and never use their cars," declared MTA Chief Executive Officer Roger Snoble at the February event.

It's a vision expressed frequently by local government officials, who see building large mixed-use developments next to mass transit lines as a key solution for not just the region's traffic congestion but also its spread-out geography and reputation for being unfriendly to pedestrians.

In Los Angeles alone, billions of public and private dollars have been lavished on transit-oriented projects such as Hollywood & Vine, with more than 20,000 residential units approved within a quarter mile of transit stations between 2001 and 2005. But there is little research to back up the rosy predictions. Among the new academic studies of the subject, one that looked at buildings in the Los Angeles area showed that transit-based development successfully weaned relatively few residents from their cars. It also found that over time, no more people in the buildings studied were taking transit 10 years after a project opened than when it was first built.

Los Angeles, with its huge geographic footprint and its limited public transportation system, can't offer residents of these developments the kinds of sophisticated transit networks available in cities like Washington, D.C. - or even smaller ones like Portland - where transit-oriented projects are believed by many to be working.

The problem - reluctantly recognized by some of transit-based development's most influential boosters - is that public transportation in Southern California is simply not convenient enough. Either it takes too long to get places or, more importantly, doesn't take people where they want to go.

The region's transit system is limited, experts say, because it was built on two assumptions that have since proved untrue: that most traffic was generated by commuting trips, and that most people worked downtown. Nowadays, people nationwide are driving so much to take their children to school, run errands and engage in other activities that these trips far outstrip com-

muting, according to federal transportation statistics.

To make matters worse, almost all of the transit-oriented construction that has so far been approved in the L.A. area is for housing rather than job centers or the village-style shopping areas that planners had originally envisioned. Barring significant changes, this could mean that tens of thousands of residents will be clustered near railroad stations they only occasionally use. For most shopping, schools and jobs, they'll still get in their cars.

Two related studies, both conducted by UC Berkeley and Cal Poly Pomona, show that people who live near transit tend to use it more than people who don't. But the number is still minuscule compared with the number who drive. Residents were more likely to use transit only if it took less time than driving, if they could walk to their destinations from the transit stop when they arrived, if they had flexible work hours, and if they had limited access to a car. Otherwise, researchers said most people tend to drive - particularly if they get free parking at their workplaces. At the Pacific Court and Bellamar apartments in Long Beach, researcher found just 6.3 percent of residents said they used the Metro Blue Line to go to work in 2003. More than 78 percent of the residents of the transit-based projects said they never used the line.

"The dilemma we have is the destinations," said Robert Cervero, a UC Berkeley urban planning professor who is coauthor of the two studies of transit-oriented developments. Even though more people are living near transit stations, he said, in Southern California work and school sites are not necessarily near train and bus stops. That's different from the older East Coast cities, where the urban grid is closely connected to the local transit system. In other words, he and others said, in Southern California, the new denser transit-based housing projects could actually lead to more congestion rather than less.

There is another issue facing transit-oriented development. Regional statistics gathered by the Southern California Assn. of Governments show that job centers are moving away from transit lines rather than toward them.

That's exactly what happened for construction industry worker Eric Johnson, who moved to South Pasadena's Mission Meridian project, with the intention of taking the Gold Line to his job downtown. But a few months ago, his company moved to Sun Valley - far from a transit line. So now Johnson drives.

In Pasadena, a 350-unit building sits directly over the Del Mar Gold Line station, which was two-thirds leased when The Times did its recent survey. Of 225 people who got off the train on a recent evening, just one, Cheanell Henderson, headed toward the apartment complex. She loves the convenience of taking the Gold Line. But she's not so sure about her fellow tenants. "I save a lot of money on car expenses," Henderson said, "But I haven't met any neighbors on the train yet."

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

The 5,800-mile Trans-Siberian Railway, from Moscow to Vladivostok, will have a new train on its tracks. In early May, the *Golden Eagle*, a luxury private train with 21 coaches, including two restaurants and a bar car, will make its inaugural 14-night journey on that route, which has been in service since

1916. An English company, GW Travel (www.gwtravel.co.uk) plans to run two trains on the line from May to November. [Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

VIRGINIA & TRUCKEE STEEL RAIL ARRIVES

Rails for the future reconstructed Virginia & Truckee Railway are arriving at a construction site in Carson City, but it will be about a year before any of them are spiked into place. The 11-track miles of 119-pound rail will be hammered into place on the right-of-way from American Flat to the outskirts of Carson City. Track near the highway probably won't be laid until May 2008, said Gary Luce, a senior engineer with Geocon Consultants, who is working on the project.

The \$2.4 million rail purchase was approved by the Nevada Commission for the Reconstruction of the V&T Railway in January. The project is funded by private and public monies. When the Carson City depot is completed, the final price tag for the entire project is expected to be \$54 million. Project boosters are still about \$18 million short.

Rock Smith, superintendent of the Western Division for A&K Railroad Materials Inc., said the rail came from the Modoc Line, which used to be a Sierra Pacific track from Alturas to Wendel, California. Some 112-pound rail will be coming from Arizona and Washington.

[Info. from Railroad Newswire via Ken Ruben]

UNION PACIFIC TRAIN SPEED INCREASE

Union Pacific Railroad began operating its trains at 49 miles per hour through multiple grade crossings in Marion, Illinois, and across Route 13 in mid-May. Recent improvements on this section of track permit operating at higher speeds. UP has raised train speeds through numerous communities across its rail network over the last several years following track improvements. It has found that trains operate more efficiently and motorists are not delayed at the crossings as long.

Not only was traffic flow improved, but grade-crossing safety was not compromised. Government statistics show that train speed does not significantly affect the likelihood of grade crossing collisions.

[UP News via Ken Ruben]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by **DICK FINLEY**

**LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL
RIDERSHIP**

MAY 2007	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	128,087	75,032	39,785	19,093
Saturday Ave.	86,170	54,901	22,546	13,238
Sunday Ave.	72,721	41,818	18,309	11,316
Monthly Total	3,526,205	2,079,398	1,056,993	529,577

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION RIDERSHIP

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) reports that public transportation ridership nationwide increased by nearly 3 percent in the first nine months of 2006, as Americans took 7.8 billion trips on public transit. "Even as gas prices declined, more and more people decided to ride public transportation," said APTA President William W. Millar. "This continued increase in transit ridership demonstrates that when people have transportation choices, they use them."

Light rail had the highest percentage of growth among all modes of transportation with an increase of 5.4 percent. In Los Angeles, ridership on the Metro Blue Line increased 7.5 percent in the first nine months of 2006 over ridership during the same period of 2005. Green Line ridership grew by 12.6 percent, while ridership on the Gold Line ebbed slightly.

Subway ridership nationwide increased in the first nine months of 2006 by 2.8 percent. The largest increases in heavy rail were in Boston with 12.9 percent, and in Los Angeles with 12.2 percent on the Metro Red Line.

Nationally bus ridership increased by nearly 3 percent in the first nine months of 2006. Ridership on Metro's directly operated bus lines increased by 3.9 percent in the first nine months of 2006 over the same period in 2005. Total ridership grew from 278.3 million to 289.2 million in that period.

[Info. from Metro *Quarterly*]

BUDGETS

At the regular Board Meeting of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), several budgetary items were passed for the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Budget, commencing July 1, 2007.

Metrolink

Metro approved a \$48,147,200 financial contribution of Proposition C 10% local sales tax funding from Metro to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Fiscal Year 2007-08 Preliminary Budget for Metrolink.

The SCRRA's overall FY 2007-08 Preliminary Budget totals approximately \$632.5 million. This consists of \$145.1 million for operations, \$28.5 million for rehabilitation and renovation, and \$458.8 million for new capital projects. Farebox and other operating revenues offset approximately 56% of the operating costs. The remaining 44% of the cost is shared by the five member agencies by formula. Of the remaining operating cost, Metro's share is 52%.

Sunday service on the Antelope Valley Line is proposed for start-up in FY 2007-08. Additional service is also planned for Saturday on the Antelope Valley Line and Sunday on the San Bernardino Line within FY 2007-08. The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and the San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG) will continue to fund Metro's share of the expenditures for weekend services that were added during FY 2006-07 on the San Bernardino and Orange County Lines.

The Eastern Maintenance Facility project in San Bernardino was originally funded in the amount of \$7,886,000 in 2001. Design for the project is at the 85% stage. Protracted negotiations with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) for property on which to build the facility has delayed the project. BNSF's issues have been resolved and the SCRRA expects to execute an easement agreement during summer 2007. An invitation for bids is expected to be issued in Fall 2007. Construction is estimated at 18 to 24 months. The facility is needed to decrease non-revenue miles, house rolling stock now on order, and ease the capacity at the Central Maintenance Facility at Taylor Yard, which is currently over-utilized.

Metro

The Finance and Budget Committee recommended adopt-

ing the proposed FY 2008 budget. The budget is comprised of two primary funds. The Enterprise Fund includes all business-type activities such as bus and rail operations, capital projects and debt service and is proposed to be budgeted at \$2,109.2 million. The Government Fund includes activities such as Special Revenue administration (subsidies to others), Propositions A and C and TDA administration, and other General Fund activities and is proposed to be budgeted at \$988.8 million. The budget also includes an Agency Fund (Benefit Assessment District budget) at \$22.9 million. An Addendum to the Proposed FY08 Budget adds or subtracts several items to the budget.

The Capital Program will continue construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside extension including construction of six at-grade stations, completion of the East Portal, and installation of track on the 101 Freeway over-crossing bridge and in the tunnel. Complete construction in 2009.

Facilitate construction of Phase I of the Exposition Line, including substantial project design completion, utilities relocation, trench excavation, corridor improvements and Blue Line tie-in construction. Complete Phase I construction in 2010.

Receive up to 24 P2550 light rail vehicles.

Continue improvements at Division 21 including construction of a heavy repair shop for light rail vehicles.

Begin preliminary work on building a Rail Operations Training Facility including identifying and acquiring a site.

Commence overhauling subway rail cars. Establish a life-of-project budget for the mid-life refurbishment of Red Line heavy rail subway vehicles in the amount of \$202 million. The base structure and stainless steel exteriors are in good condition and should support the full 30-year life-cycle until the railcars are retired. However, the major systems such as brakes, propulsion, doors, couplers, traction motors, drive gearboxes, axle/wheel assemblies, pneumatics, air conditioning, heating, passenger seating, flooring, power distribution, communications, signaling, destination signs, windows, door panels, and interior linings are systems which will be refurbished or replaced through the mid-life overhaul process.

Procure 50 light rail vehicles for the Expo/Blue Line fleet by exercising option 1 on the P2550 rail car contract. Establish a life-of-project budget in the amount of \$174.5 million.

Commence construction on six new joint development projects, enter into seven joint development agreements, and issue bids for development of Metro property to enliven Metro station environments by providing housing and services adjacent to Metro stations.

Eastside Phase II Transit Corridor

It was approved to award a contract to provide professional services in a not-to-exceed amount of \$2,203,584 for an Alternative Analysis for the Eastside Phase II Transit Corridor. The Project study area is defined as a point approximately 14 to 16 miles east of the terminus of the Eastside Phase I Light Rail project (currently under construction) at Pomona and Atlantic in East Los Angeles. The task is to define a cost-effective fixed-guideway project connecting with the Phase I Eastside Light Rail Project.

Westside Extension Transit Corridor

It was approved to award a contract to provide professional

services in amount of \$3,654,061 for alternative analysis study, tunnel feasibility assessment, conception engineering, facilitation of community outreach, and future options. The preparation of an Alternatives Analysis Study is the necessary first step in the planning of any Westside extension, including the possibility of extending the Metro Red Line/Metro Purple Line to the Westside.

In October 2005, the American Public Transportation Association (ACTA) conducted a *Review of Wilshire Corridor Tunneling*. The panel evaluated advances in worldwide tunneling technology and the safety of building and operating transit tunnels in the identified hazard zone in the Fairfax District. The panel concluded that such tunneling would be feasible and could be undertaken at no greater risk than other subway systems in the U.S. As a result, legislation was introduced in Congress to repeal the federal prohibition on subway construction along Wilshire Blvd. This item was passed (repealed) by the House of Representatives on Feb. 7, 2007 and has now advanced to the U.S. Senate.

The anticipated repeal of the federal funding prohibition would open the possibility once again of federal funding support for this corridor.

GOLD LINE

The 2550 light rail vehicle (LRV) will debut on the Gold Line later this year, offering more flexibility in transporting riders along the agency's Blue, Green, Gold, and Gold Line Eastside Extension, currently under construction. [For photographs of the car see front page of Nov. 2006 and Sept. 2005 issues of *Wheel Clicks*.]

The 2550 LRV will be able to operate at speeds up to 65 mph. Metro has ordered 50 of the 90-foot-long vehicles from AnsaldoBreda of Naples, Italy. The 2550 contract includes two 50-car options.

Metro began testing a 2550 prototype rail car in June 2005. The first three of the \$2.9 million "production cars" were received from the manufacturer in January 2007. The last of the 50 cars from the current order will arrive in 2008.

Each car seats 76, including space for four wheelchairs. The cars feature a stainless steel body and eight doors compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Enhanced security features include six video surveillance cameras and two silent alarms. With a global positioning system and six interior public address speakers, each car will automatically announce its arrival at the stations.

[Info. from Metro *Quarterly*]

EXPO LINE

The Expo Line will travel along the Exposition right-of-way between downtown Los Angeles and Culver City. It will share tracks and two stations (7th St./Metro Center and Pico) with the Blue Line as it leaves downtown LA. It will then travel along the Exposition right-of-way (ROW) to the current terminus at Washington/National. Eight new stations will be constructed along the Expo Line route. In addition to the station at Washington/National, new stations will be located on Flower at 23rd St. and Jefferson, and on Exposition Blvd. at Vermont, Western, Crenshaw, La Brea, and La Cienega.

The Expo Line is scheduled to open in the summer of 2010.

The cost of the project to Culver City (Phase I) is \$640 million. Planning began early this year on a proposed Phase 2 project that would extend the Expo Line to Santa Monica.

Construction on the Exposition Line began in the fall of 2006. Work currently underway includes utility and corridor improvements on Flower St. from Washington Blvd. to 23rd St. in Downtown LA. Those activities include relocation of waterlines, gas, power, cable TV, sewer and storm drains as well as roadway improvements, traffic control and street lighting.

Utility relocation and trench construction from Jefferson Blvd. and Flower St. to Vermont Ave. and Exposition Blvd. will begin in the summer of 2007. Over the summer and into the fall of 2007, street closures will be required to perform the installation of the top deck of the trench. The entire trench construction will take over one year to complete. The west end of the alignment will be used as a work and storage area for the contractor and be the location where the pre-cast deck girders will be manufactured. All construction work will be performed in accordance with City of Los Angeles' rules and regulations.

Community meetings will be held on a monthly basis along the alignment (quarterly in each segment) to discuss upcoming construction activities and to address specific concerns of residents and merchants in the area. The meeting schedule is available on the Expo website at <http://www.BuildExpo.org>, or at the Hotline at (213) 922-3976.

The proposed Phase 2 extension of the Expo Line is in the early stages of the environmental planning process. A draft EIS/EIR is anticipated to be available for public comment in Winter 2008. Two primary ROW alignments between 6.9 and 7.8 miles are being considered.

The 6.9-mile alignment would follow the former Exposition Rail ROW for the full distance from the planned terminus at the Venice-Robertson Station in Culver City to 5th and Colorado in Santa Monica. The 7.8-mile alignment diverts from the ROW at the Venice/Robertson station in Culver City and follows Venice Blvd. to Sepulveda Blvd. where it turns north to rejoin the ROW near the 1-405 Freeway.

Similar to the 6.9 alignment, one-mile of the western end of the 7.8 alignment diverts from the ROW and will follow existing city streets and the edge of the 1-10 Freeway to reach the proposed terminus station in Santa Monica. Both LRT and Bus Rapid Transit are being looked at in the Exposition Rail ROW alignment. Light Rail is being studied for the Venice/Sepulveda alignment.

An additional station for the University of Southern California and Exposition Park is desired by many people, but funding has not been found yet.

SAN DIEGO

Effective July 2005 with the opening of the Mission Valley East extension, Rail Operations operates a 54.3-mile (108.6 total track miles) light rail transit (LRT) network that is part of the San Diego Regional Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), encompassing a 570 square mile area with a general population of 2.3 million people. The operation encompasses three separate operating line segments. The Blue Line operates from San Ysidro Inter-modal Transit Center through downtown San Diego and terminates at the Old Town Transit Center. The Orange Line

serves the East County communities from El Cajon (Gillespie Field) through downtown San Diego and along the Bayside route serving the Convention Center, local major hotel chains and PETCO Park – home of the San Diego Padres. The Green Line operates from Santee Town Center Station along Mission Valley and serves the campus of San Diego State University through a short tunnel section before continuing to Old Town Transit Center where service connects with the Blue Line.

The system operates and maintains a fleet of 134 light rail vehicles to provide transit service. The MTS Rail Operations is expected to carry over 34 million passengers annually. While daily ridership is approximately 100,000, the number increases substantially when major event service is provided (ridership typically increases to 125,000+).

During the latter part of FY2006, Rail Operations opened their new Operations Control Center, which provides operations oversight as well as security monitoring of 14 stations on the system.

A major contract for full implementation of a total network of Centralized Train Control (CTC) will be awarded in FY-08. This system will allow systemwide control, and monitoring of field facilities, including switches, signals, traction power substations, passenger service capability and expanded CCTV capability at facilities and stations.

PORTLAND, OREGON

Mayor Jim Bernard of Milwaukie has asked the South Corridor Policy Steering Committee for more time to give Milwaukie officials a chance to gauge public support for a rail alignment running down Southeast McLoughlin Blvd. or Main St., or south on Main St. and north on Southeast McLoughlin Blvd.

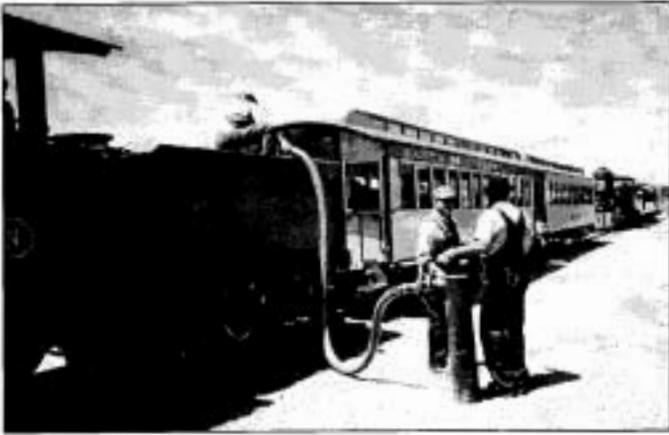
Nearly six months after the buses left downtown Portland in the first weeks of June, light rail tracks run down the middle of 16 blocks of Fifth Ave., and several intersections sport the new brick paving. The bus relocation from Fifth and Sixth Avenues to Third and Fourth Avenues is working so smoothly that downtown parking magnate Greg Goodman says TriMet should consider leaving them there when the mall reopens in 2009.

The biggest problem with Goodman's idea is that the mall is designed for buses and MAX to coexist. Both will stop on the right-hand side of the street. The rail tracks curve to the curb as each train approaches each station. Without buses, the light rail could go straight down the street.

There are other issues. Transferring from MAX to buses would be much harder if they weren't on the same street, says TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen. The mall plan is part of a \$557 million project to extend light rail transit (LRT) to Clackamas Town Center along Interstate 205, and downtown from Union Station to Portland State University.

One of the more difficult aspects of the project, the relocation of utilities, is nearly finished. Work has just started, with underground electrical installation for four stations. Still to come is the overhead rail electrical system, connection to the steel bridge, a south turn-around, shelters, art and street furniture, and testing.

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



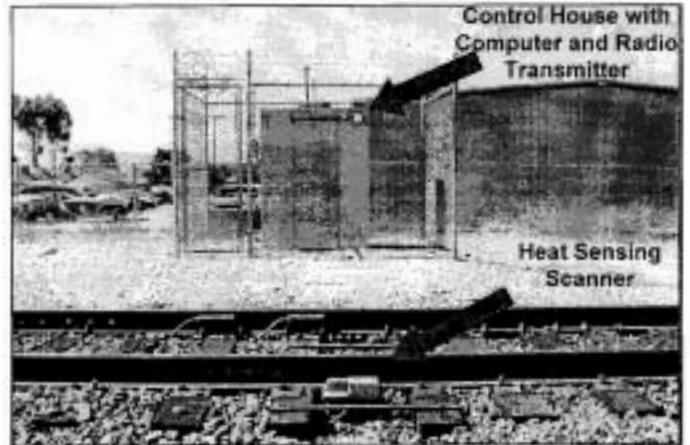
Pacific Coast Railroad No. 2 having her tank filled by crew members while 2-6-2, No. 3 Melodia, a Prairie type, stands-by in the background patiently awaiting her eventual highball on May 6, 2007.
 Photo by Margo D. Petros



Pacific Coast Railroad 2-4-0, No. 2, Roger Linn, at the Vinyard Station during the annual roundup at Santa Margarita Ranch near San Luis Obispo, Calif., on May 6, 2007. No. 2 was built by Vulcan in 1922 and originally served as a quarry engine in Lehigh, Illinois, until 1960.
 Photo by Margo D. Petros



Pacific Coast Railroad Melodia preparing to depart the Vinyard Station on May 6, 2007. No. 3 was built by H. K. Porter in 1897 as an 0-6-2T and used by Barker & Lepine Sugar Cane Co. in Louisiana until 1953. After being rebuilt as a 2-6-2, she worked in several amusement parks.
 Photo by Margo D. Petros



Currently 12 hot bearing defect detector systems are on the Metrolink system at three double track and nine single track locations. The detector system at each location includes a scanner next to the track, a control house with a computer; and a radio transmitter:
 Photo by Metrolink



The Defect Detector detects hot wheels or bearings on passing trains. The information is transmitted to the control house and analyzed in a module. If the temperature exceeds a prescribed limit, a synthesized voice radio message is transmitted to the train. The message provides crew with location of the axle and overheated wheel or bearing.
 Photo by Metrolink



A Yolo Shortline excursion at Sacramento Railfair in June 1999.
 Photo by Hal Rothenborg, Second Place-2006 Contest