
Subject: Express San Joaquins on the BNSF to Richmond by 2020!

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To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for February 18, 2013

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Rail Passenger Association of California
www.railpac.org
Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!

California State Rail Plan – Draft Chapter 6 – Existing Freight Rail System



Exhibit 6.7: Class I Main Line FRA Density, 2006

This graphic from the draft of the 2013 California State Rail Plan shows the level of rail freight traffic in California as of 2006 by the thickness of the different major rail lines. What is interesting is how thin, how little freight traffic there is on the UP Coast Line between Los Angeles and San Jose. Yet the UP contends it will require millions of dollars of track improvements to extend one existing train from San Luis Obispo to San Jose. NB

[What will California Rail service be like by 2020?](#)

Analysis and opinion by Noel T. Braymer

The short answer is nobody knows for sure. The revised draft of this year's California State Rail Plan (CSRP) was suppose to report on planning for a Blended High Speed Rail System using both conventional and high speed railroads. The current draft of the CSRP says by 2025 there will be 34 daily High Speed Trains between Burbank and Merced with connections at Burbank of 34 trains from Metrolink and Amtrak. **This for a project that is not yet funded. But by 2018 there is funding for 130 miles of new railroad built for high speeds though not funded for electrification.** This new railroad will be used by some express San Joaquin trains at 125 mile per hour speeds until there is money to build an electrified High Speed Railroad between Merced and Burbank no sooner than 2022. **So how many San Joaquin Trains will use this new railroad with only one station, a new one at Fresno between Madera and Bakersfield? It could be 9 or 14 or any number in between.** The current draft of the CSRP doesn't have information about what the running times will be for the express trains from Bakersfield to either the Bay Area or Sacramento or about what connections this service will have. What plans are known is that of the now 4 Bakersfield to Oakland trains, 3 of them will be expresses with only one San Joaquin making all stops. At Madera some express trains will catch up with new local San Joaquins which after stopping at all stations north of Bakersfield on the BNSF will terminate at Madera so passengers can transfer to the express. To achieve 14 daily express San Joaquin trains will require the cooperation of the Union Pacific. Union Pacific cooperation will also be needed if there are 5 Bakersfield to Sacramento express trains and not just the current 2. **So what could happen if the UP doesn't cooperate? Four round trips are being considered running past Madera all the way on the BNSF to Richmond. There is no discussion of at least in the current draft of the CSRP of how passengers will make connections at Richmond to other places in the Bay Area....**

The biggest problem with improving rail passenger service in California is the UP. Despite minor freight traffic on the Coast Line, a line the old SP in the 1990s would have loved to sell to the State, the UP has dragged out negotiations for years to extend one existing round trip from San Luis Obispo to San Francisco. Even where there is heavy freight traffic other railroads are able to mix passenger service on their main lines...

[Caltrans Seeks Feedback on State Rail Plan](#)

Patch.com-Feb 15, 2013

Hearing is scheduled for Feb. 20 in downtown L.A. to hear vision for freight, passenger and high-speed rail in California.

[Metrolink executive quits after report cites accounting problems](#)

Los Angeles Times-Feb 11, 2013

A high-ranking Metrolink executive resigned over the weekend following a scathing report that revealed accounting irregularities, poor management and record-keeping that made it difficult for board members to understand the railroad's financial situation....

Some of the accounting problems, Katz said, date back to the tenure of former Metrolink Chief Executive David Solow, who resigned after the deadly 2008 Metrolink crash in Chatsworth. Solow's replacement, John Fenton, identified some of the problems before he stepped down in May.

[Report slams Metrolink's financial management](#)

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER Feb. 12, 2013

In the past few years, though, Metrolink has begun to front the money for big construction projects, and then bill the counties for reimbursement, the financial review found. The problem with that: "it is not clear that Metrolink staff even has a clear idea about what funds member agencies owe," the finance committee's report said.

[Metrolink explains why it hasn't fixed its longstanding accounting ...](#)

89.3 KPCC- Feb 15, 2013

Metrolink board member Richard Katz said it's not a matter of money gone missing, but rather a case of funds being switched around without proper record keeping.

[Editorial: What Is It With Metrolink?](#)

StreetsBlog LA Feb 14, 2013

In the late 1990s Metrolink's first CEO Richard Stanger resigned amid what the LA Times describes as "... an audit criticized agency leaders for the way they handled contracts, billings, employee relations and planning." Sound familiar? Stanger fell on his sword, things were hushed up as to who really was to blame, the Board ducked any questioning of its falling flat in undertaking its fiduciary duty for oversight and instead of launching a search for a new CEO they handed the job PDQ to Stangers's #2 David Solow. Yee ho, away we go!

[Letters: Metrolink doesn't work](#)

Los Angeles Times Feb 14, 2013

It is still not possible to take a train between most of Los Angeles County ... The writer is president of the Rail Passenger Assn. of California and ...

Many of the problems at Metrolink stem from previous management which lacked leadership and failed to understand the mission of Metrolink which is stated in the name of the body running it: Southern California Regional Rail Authority. A better name for Metrolink would be SoCal Rail. Previous management was under the illusion that Metrolink was a traditional commuter railroad with its principle task to serve downtown Los Angeles during rush hours. The invention of the Model T destroyed this business model. The result has been Metrolink has missed many opportunities to increase revenues and efficiencies by running additional service on weekends and off peak periods with regional service from one side of Los Angeles to the other for non-commuting travel. Management also failed to promote itself to economically expand service on new lines or connect more with local rail transit. If management's attitude is we can't do anything about it, then as we have seen nothing gets done. NB

[Permits approved for rail line between LA and Las Vegas](#)

KTNV Las Vegas-by Molly Waldron-Feb 12, 2013

Las Vegas, NV (KTNV) -- Plans for a high-speed rail line between Las Vegas and California are still on track. Express West presented a status ...

[High-speed rail project waiting on \\$5.5 billion government loan](#)

VEGAS INC-by Richard Velotta-Feb 12, 2013

Andrew Mack, chief operating officer of XpressWest, told the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority board of directors that his company is still awaiting word on approval of a \$5.5 billion loan.

[SF to LA in 2:40?](#)

San Mateo Daily Journal-Feb 15, 2013

The memo from Frank Vacca, the rail authority's chief program manager, also indicates that high-speed

trains can travel from San Francisco to San Jose in just 30 minutes under the "blended" approach where Caltrain mostly shares the tracks with HSR within its current corridor....

Vacca reviewed an analysis by PB America using the Berkeley Simulation software known as Rail Traffic Controller and concluded the blended approach could meet the Proposition 1A time requirements.

"Further improvements may be achievable through improved train performance, use of tilt technology, more aggressive alignments and higher maximum speeds," Vacca wrote in the memo.

[Modesto approves rail station study](#)

Modesto Bee-Feb 12, 2013

MODESTO -- City leaders Tuesday night imagined a vibrant district surrounding a passenger rail station proposed for downtown Modesto.

The City Council voted 6-0 to accept a \$100,000 feasibility study on the station, which could start out serving Bay Area commuters and eventually could join the state's high-speed rail system.

[Support sought for current Amtrak route; Memorials call on push ...](#)

Raton Range-Feb 11, 2013

A pair of New Mexico legislators is calling on the governor and the state's congressional delegation to support "the continued viability" of Amtrak's Southwest Chief passenger train service that passes through Raton and other northeast New Mexico communities twice each day.

Similar memorials introduced in the state House and Senate seek to garner the support to push for federal funding to improve the railroad tracks on which the Southwest Chief travels through Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico.

[Major Amtrak improvements scheduled for Spring](#)

Michigan Radio-Feb 15, 2013

Foren says, "It's important for the state of Michigan to have control of this route now and we'll be able to make the upgrades that are necessary to keep this ridership in tact and also protect it for freight business."

Improvements are expected to begin as early as this spring between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek where trains will be able to travel as fast as 110 miles an hour.

[Amtrak seeks new CFO as it looks to raise \\$7 billion for Union Station Upgrade](#)

Washington Business Journal (blog)-Feb 12, 2013

Amtrak is seeking a new CFO to help the District-based rail operator raise cash for projects including its planned \$7 billion upgrade to D.C.'s Station upgrade

[New Beltway Express Lanes losing money](#)

Washington Examiner February 10, 2013

The new Beltway Express Lanes lost \$11.3 million in their first six weeks of operation, new documents shown to investors from operator Transurban show.

The lanes raked in \$800,000 in tolls and \$200,000 in fees and other revenue but had \$3.2 million in operating costs, as well as depreciation of \$2.1 million and financing costs of \$7 million...

Toll Roads don't make money and it is hard to make money on any form of transportation by rail, road, air or sea without government paying for the infrastructure. NB

[Dump The Surfliner Express? Report Says Ridership On New Route Is Dismal](#)

StreetsBlog LA Feb 13, 2013

I was startled at the headline for the Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada (RailPAC) latest e-newsletter blast: "Caltrans says dump the Surfliner Express". This is based on a presentation made at the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency Technical Advisory

Committee meeting last week.

[Capitol Corridor ridership, revenue results mixed for January](#)

Progressive Rail Roding- Feb 14, 2013

Capitol Corridor and California intercity passenger-rail services continued to show mixed performance results in January.

Capitol Corridor ridership slipped 2.6 percent year over year to 136,201 riders in January, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority Managing Director David Kutrosky said in a prepared statement.

[Palo Alto looks to Hill to soothe high-speed-rail concerns](#)

Palo Alto Online- Feb 15, 2013

California's high-speed rail project may have left the station last year, when the state Legislature approved funding for the first segment by a single vote, but Palo Alto officials still have plenty of concerns about the locally unpopular project, and they hope their newest representative in Sacramento can help.

[Caltrain hits big rig in San Bruno](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Feb 11, 2013

SAN BRUNO -- A Caltrain hit a big rig that got stranded on the tracks Monday in downtown San Bruno, causing a significant amount of damage, .

[Employers See Massive Success with Caltrain Go Pass](#)

Patch.com- Feb 15,2013

Would you ride Caltrain if it was free? That's the lure of Caltrain's Go Pass, which allows employers to purchase an annual pass for unlimited rides throughout ...

[BART Considers Rebuilding 2 SF Stations](#)

San Francisco Chronicle February 12, 2013

Two of BART's busiest San Francisco stations could be on track for a \$900 million expansion, complete with new tunnels, elevators and extra platforms to boost rider capacity.

[What's The Deal? The Trolley And The Airport](#)

Voice Of San Diego Feb 11, 2013

The good news? Connecting trolley passengers to the airport may not be all that hard or expensive at all. In fact, it could happen by 2015.

[Security Breach: Are You Safe On SD Trains and Trolleys?](#)

KPBS-Feb 12, 2013

The KPBS and inewssource Investigations Desk looks into whether private security officers hired to patrol San Diego's trains and trolleys are trained to do the job.

[New LAX Plan Lays Out Details For Airport People Mover](#)

Curbed LA Feb 11, 2013

Pinch yourself: the approved plan calls for a people mover to run from Manchester Square along an elevated guideway, mostly along 98th Street, to the central terminal area, where it will travel on a path between the terminal buildings and parking garages.

[New video focuses on Regional Connector construction on Flower Street](#)

The Source Feb12, 2013

Here's the new video from the Regional Connector team that provides a timeline of how construction will proceed along Flower Street. The Connector, of course, will tie in with the Blue Line and Expo Line just

north of the existing 7th/Metro Center Station.

[More construction slated for Glendale railway corridor](#)

Glendale News Press-by Brittany Levine- Feb 15, 2013

Glendale plans to begin construction on two railroad crossings in the San Fernando Road corridor in March, continuing a years-long effort to create a section of railway in which trains won't have to blow their horns.

[OCTA Directors To Closely Review Anaheim's Streetcar Project](#)

Voice Of OC Feb11, 2013

Anaheim's proposed 3.2-mile streetcar system is in for a ton of scrutiny.

[California city creates quiet zone](#)

Progressive Rail Reading- Feb 13, 2013

Tomorrow, train horns no longer will sound in Dana Point, Calif.

Press Release

Highway 4 Transportation Improvement Projects Mark Important Milestone

Antioch, CA: Today the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 4 celebrated the start of construction on the final segment of the Highway 4 corridor projects, which includes the construction of the eBART station facilities in Antioch. This marks an important step in the \$1.3 billion endeavor to improve transportation in eastern Contra Costa County between Pittsburg and Brentwood.

eBART will be a self powered diesel rail car for connecting services to existing BART Stations.

What would be better would be an extension of eBART to the Antioch Station for the San Joaquin trains.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Rail Passenger Association of California.

The RailPAC Mission: Passenger Rail advocacy, Publications...both print and electronic, Representation at regional meetings, and Rail education.

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You can send your comments to me at nbraymer@railpac.org

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