

**Subject:** Amtrak's On-Time gets worse, Comfort Foodists of Union Station, China financing British HSR?  
**From:** Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)  
**To:** ntbraymer@yahoo.com;  
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## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for June 23, 2014**

**Edited by Noel T. Braymer**

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**Rail Passenger Association of California**  
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**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**



This is LA Metro's latest alternative for a connection between Metrorail and a future LAX People Mover to allow passengers to get to LAX. This is LA Metro's reply to LAX's solution to reroute Metrorail service to the ITF People Mover stop. LA Metro is proposing building an additional Metrorail station a half mile north of its future station at Aviation and Century where the People Mover would cross Metrorail. This is likely the most viable solution. But this still doesn't answer how passengers will get around LAX with only 2 People Mover stations which will be a half mile apart.

### [Amtrak Sees Delays Increase](#)

Wall Street Journal Jun 18, 2014

Amtrak is slowing down.

Even as airlines increasingly are getting to their destinations on time, the nation's passenger train system averaged only 73.1% on-time arrivals at endpoints in the six months ended in April. That's down from 85.8% in the same period a year earlier.

One particular Amtrak line, the Empire Builder, running between Chicago and Seattle, arrived within 30 minutes of schedule only 26% of the time in May, with delays averaging three to five hours.

**If you have trouble reading the full article, try using a link to this article with a search from Google News under Amtrak. NB**

### [Amtrak passenger tumbles from moving train in rural Missouri, authorities say](#)

STLtoday.com - Jun 16, 2014

ANNAPOLIS, Mo. • A woman traveling alone on an Amtrak train apparently put a small step stool in front of a window and climbed out as the train rushed through rural Missouri at about 50 mph late Saturday night, authorities say.

The woman, in her 70s, survived and was found sitting beside the tracks 16 hours later near the town of Annapolis, about 90 miles south of St. Louis.

### [More known about Amtrak incident](#)

Daily Journal Online-Jun 18, 2014

The elderly woman who went missing from the Amtrak train early Sunday morning has been identified as 80-year-old Rosie Madison from New York. According to her niece, Cynthia Burton of Dallas, Texas, Madison was making a routine trip to visit her.

### [Amtrak starts field testing first of four new passenger-car types](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Jun 18, 2014

The first car type in testing is a baggage car that will be used on all 15 long-distance routes across the national system, Amtrak officials announced yesterday in a press release. The updated design provides for improved reliability and maintenance, and better baggage loading and unloading procedures, they said.

### [Amtrak delays easing after 2 trains stuck in NY-NJ tunnel](#)

NorthJersey.com-Jun 17, 2014

NEW YORK (AP) - Amtrak says delays are easing ahead of rush hour after a pair of trains became disabled in the tunnels leading to New Jersey from New York's Penn Station.

A spokesman says the trains bound for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and New Orleans, Louisiana both experienced engine problems around 2:15 p.m., Tuesday.-

### [Photographer Struck and Killed While Trespassing on Railway Bridge](#)

Popular Photography Magazine-Jun 20, 2014

The blind corner combined with traffic noise may have explained why the individuals didn't hear or see the train coming in time. The Amtrak driver reportedly sounded all the warnings and put the train into an emergency brake, but it wasn't able to come to a stop in time.

**Blunt, honest and so true. NB**

### [Sounder, Amtrak trains running again after dispatch stoppage](#)

The Seattle Times (blog)-Jun 18, 2014

Sounder commuter trains won't be running this afternoon until the BNSF Railway fixes a technical problem at its dispatch center.

BNSF Railway spokesman Gus Melonas said the problems started at 2:26 p.m., and as of 4:40 p.m., it's unknown when regular train service will resume in the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma corridor.

### [Initial restroom renovation plan for Lancaster Amtrak station flushed](#)

Lancaster Newspapers-Jun 19, 2014

"I think maybe we can get something done here," Matthew Leonard, regional manager in Sen. Bob Casey's office, said after Amtrak's Marilyn Jamison promised to seek capital funds for the project in the next federal budget.

The original plan — using money designated to make Amtrak stations accessible to people with disabilities — fell through. Now Amtrak, with the help of Casey's office, hopes to find the money elsewhere.

### [New Amtrak stop movement gathers steam](#)

Emporia Gazette-Jun 21, 2014

Deep train whistles are heard about 80 times per day throughout Emporia. But none of them have stopped here carrying a load of passengers going through, returning home or stopping by for a visit since 1999, when the old train station burned down. A group that calls itself the Amtrak Task Force hopes to change that

### [Amtrak Riders say Parking Machines at Sacramento Station Plagued with](#)

## [Problems](#)

KTXL-Jun 19, 2014

A happy Father's Day bike ride to the Bay almost wasn't for Sacramentans Lisa and Mark Wright. It wasn't because their Amtrak train was late, but because they nearly missed their train fighting to pay to park at two machines in the city-run station lot.

## **August Issue of Trains**

Don Phillips

Amtrak is in a sad state

More staff cutbacks and deteriorating fleet put Amtrak into a downward spin

## [The Fallout from PRIIA 2008 – Unhappy States may look for alternatives to Amtrak](#)

Commentary by Paul Dyson

So the question is, why does PRIIA contain an arbitrary distance criterion to delineate between national network and other short haul trains? And why is the NEC exempt from this when clearly it is a corridor (453.3 miles) shorter than the cutoff point of 750 miles. How and why have we moved away from the original concept of a National Network as Amtrak's prime mission, to Amtrak being the owner and operator of the Northeast Corridor, the reluctant operator and apologist for the long distance trains, and a contract operator to the States for everything else?

## [The Triumphant Return of Private US Passenger Rail](#)

CityLab-Jun 17, 2014

MIAMI—Beginning in 2016, All Aboard Florida will run 32 departures a day between Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and West Palm Beach, with service extending to Orlando.\* With a maximum speed of 125 miles per hour, the trains will complete the 240-mile journey in less than three hours. In South Florida, around the three initial stations, the company will develop 4.2 million square feet of real estate. In Orlando, the terminus will be located at the airport and connect to a new commuter rail line at a sparkling, state-funded \$215 million transportation hub.

## [California to impose fee on crude oil rail shipments; funds to be used for spill ...](#)

The San Luis Obispo Tribune - Jun 17, 2014

Beginning in the coming fiscal year, the state will apply a 6.5-cent fee on oil companies for every barrel of crude that arrives in California on rail, or that is piped to refineries from inside the state. The resulting funds, estimated at \$11 million in the first full year, will be allocated for oil spill prevention and preparation work, and for emergency cleanup costs. The efforts will be focused on spills that threaten waterways, and will allow officials to conduct response drills.

## [Where Rail & Road Cross](#)

Santa Barbara Independent-Jun 16, 2014

Currently there is a Draft EIR in process that concerns oil-trains (crude oil) that UP would like to run from the north and as far south as the Santa Maria area (Nipomo). While not in Santa Barbara County, it is within the LOSSAN (Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo) Corridor.

Our county's representatives to LOSSAN should ask that if UPRR would like to operate oil trains within our region, then they should also allow commuter trains to operate between Oxnard and Goleta.

*By Dennis Story, who is chair of the Santa Barbara Rail Task Force and director of RailPAC (Rail Passengers Association of California).*

## [California State Budget Triggers Federal Spending On High-Speed Rail](#)

CBS Local - Jun 16, 2014

More important to rail supporters is the promise of 25 percent of all future cap-and-trade revenue each year. It signals the state's investment in the beleaguered project, which has been saddled by delays and court challenges.

Rail officials believe the ongoing revenue will be enough to leverage bond borrowing and start work on new parts of the project, such as a segment connecting northern Los Angeles County to Burbank

### [California High-Speed Rail Finally Finds the Funding It Needs](#)

CityLab - Jun 18, 2014

Now it's done just that. The state's new budget secures high-speed rail 25 percent of California cap-and-trade revenue each year moving forward — revenue described by the Sacramento Bee as "money polluters pay to offset carbon emissions." Reports estimate the deal could eventually deliver between \$3 billion and \$5 billion in annual funding to the country's most ambitious transportation project.

### [Early stage of high-speed rail kicking off in Madera County](#)

KFSN-TV-Jun 20, 2014

"We are still in the initial design phases. We are about five months into it and we hope to start construction activities here later on in the summertime," said Jose Camarena with the High-Speed Rail Authority.

The Authority says the future train's route will run parallel to an already existing track over the Fresno River Bed in Madera. Soon crews will drill here to conduct a geological survey before they build a new bridge.

### [Valley air district gets funds to offset pollution from high-speed rail ...](#)

Fresno Bee-Jun 19, 2014

The San Joaquin Valley will get up to \$35 million over the next 14 years to offset the pollution created by construction of the state's high-speed ...

### [Amtrak and California end plans for buying new trains jointly](#)

Philly.com-Jun 20, 2014

Amtrak and California have ended their efforts to jointly buy high-speed trains for the West Coast and the Northeast Corridor.

A meeting with train manufacturers in Philadelphia earlier this month convinced officials that the needs of the Northeast and California - including top speeds and route configurations - were just too different.

### [The Big Texas Plan to Copy Japan's High-Speed Rail Success](#)

CityLab-Jun 19, 2014

Richard Lawless, who as a C.I.A. officer posted in Tokyo in the 1980s was a frequent Shinkansen passenger, has long found America's failure to embrace high-speed rail "mind-boggling." But today the former Bush administration official is in a position to change things, as chairman and CEO of Texas Central Railway, a private company that plans to link Dallas and Houston with a 200-mile-per-hour bullet train as soon as 2021. The venture just might be high-speed rail's best hope in the United States.

### [Santa Clara VTA project to benefit from California's cap-and-trade ...](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Jun 19, 2014

The second phase of Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) BART Silicon Valley Project is well-positioned to receive unanticipated funding through a cap-and-trade program that was included in the 2014-15 state budget plan passed by the California Legislature on Sunday, VTA officials have announced.

### [The Los Angeles Times and its Disgraceful Reporting on High Speed Rail](#)

Streetsblog LA Jun 18, 2014

I asked the barista if that was Haute-Picardie station. She looked at the clock, gave a Gallic shrug, and said "probablement." I told her how I'd read in the Los Angeles Times that California's High Speed Rail project needs a re-design, citing Haute-Picardie as evidence that intermediate stations slow the whole system.

She chortled and said "did we slow down?"

### [Americans' Confidence in News Media Remains Low](#)

Gallup Politics Jun 19, 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Americans' faith in each of three major news media platforms -- television news, newspapers, and news on the Internet -- is at or tied with record lows in Gallup's long-standing confidence in institutions trend. This continues a decades-long decline in the share of Americans saying they have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in newspapers or TV news, while trust in Internet news remains low since the one prior measure in 1999.

### [Time is running out to solve our transportation-funding crisis](#)

Washington Post (blog) - Jun 19, 2014

Transportation secretary to Congress: We need more moolah, and fast. "Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said Tuesday that time is quickly running out for Congress to approve a new round of road and transit funding. Foxx said the latest projections from budget analysts show that the transportation department's Highway Trust Fund will run out of money in August, a full month before the scheduled expiration of federal transportation funding." Keith Laing in The Hill.

### [Congress hits new low: Only 7% have confidence in the institution](#)

USA TODAY - Jun 19, 2014

In some ways, it's not surprising that there's very little trust in Congress given the institution's low job-approval ratings in recent years. There's also the fact that just 8% of Americans believe Congress is honest and ethical.

### [Higher taxes do not kill jobs](#)

Al Jazeera America-Jun 20, 2014

To be sure, not all of the job growth in America took place in areas with high taxes or increased taxes. Nor am I arguing that higher taxes mean more jobs. But statements that higher taxes must or do destroy jobs are not supported by the facts....

When it comes to job growth, nearness to markets, reliable electricity and transportation for goods as well as a large labor pool with skills needed by specific industries may be much more important than tax rates or marginal tax-rate increases...

### [China wins stake in British nuclear power and high-speed rail](#)

The Guardian-Jun 17, 2014

China has been given the chance to take a decisive stake in the next stage of Britain's energy and transport infrastructure as Chinese companies won the right to own and operate a nuclear power station and to help build high-speed rail lines.

### [Full speed ahead? China wants to back £50bn HS2 project](#)

Manchester Evening News-Jun 18, 2014

The two countries signed a bilateral agreement covering all modes of rail – specifically including high-speed – with the scope of the partnership including the development of new infrastructure.

### [GREEN LIGHT FOR HIGH SPEED TRAIN PRIVATISATION](#)

The Leader Newspaper Online Jun 19, 2014

The Spanish Government has given the green light to the privatisation of the high speed train service between Madrid and the east coast, allowing for one more private operator to run on the line, thus providing competition for national train operator RENFE.

### [Kinkisharyo plans new Palmdale, Calif., site](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Jun 17, 2014

Transit car manufacturer Kinkisharyo-USA will construct a new, permanent manufacturing facility in Palmdale, Calif. The \$60 million dollar project to build the 460,000-square-foot plant is expected to create hundreds of construction jobs and when completed provide between 150 to 200 manufacturing jobs.

### [Metro staff recommends new light rail station at Aviation/96th Street to connect to future LAX people mover](#)

The Source Jun 16,2014

The new Metro Rail station would be about .4 miles north of the future Aviation/Century station that will also serve both the Crenshaw/LAX and Green Lines. The idea, according to the Metro staff report, is that the 96th Street Station would be the gateway for passengers headed to LAX while the Aviation/Century station would connect riders to the many businesses along the Century Boulevard corridor.

### [Report urges new light rail station, circulator for LAX travel](#)

L.A. Times Jun 16, 2014

The recommendation comes after decades of discussion over how to connect rail to LAX. Los Angeles will soon have two light-rail lines that stop less than three miles from the terminals of the country's third-busiest airport. Even if Metro votes on the 96th Street project immediately and moves to build it fast, it probably would not be done before the Crenshaw line, which is supposed to open in 2019.

### [The Comfort Foodists of Union Station](#)

The Source Jun 19, 2014

When the Southwest Chief pulls into L.A. after our overnight trip from Winslow, Arizona, it's pretty early to be waking up in a train station. My wife and I tumble out of our sleeper compartment and, faces still as wrinkled as our clothes, drag our bags in uncaffeinated silence off the platform and into the cavernous waiting room—taking in what Jonah's view might have been like if swallowed by a Mission Moderne Style whale.

While our eyes aren't yet completely open, and we've never been in this building before, we seem to just know where to go, as if American train passengers are just born with the ability to find their way to the front door of the Fred Harvey restaurant

### [Bergamot Station's tenants at odds over its future as Expo Line nears](#)

Los Angeles Times-Jun 16, 2014

Santa Monica city officials are now faced with deciding what kind of arts hub riders will step into — the funky-but-chic one that now exists or something a bit more elegant and likely to generate more substantial tax and lease revenues for the city. The question has put the art museum and the 40 other arts district tenants, most of them commercial galleries, on opposite sides of the tracks.

### [Valley Coalition Formed to Advocate for Rail](#)

Post-Periodical Jun 11, 2014

Last week, the business advocacy organization formed "Valley on Track" which supports converting the Metro Orange Line busway to light rail to ease overcrowding on the bus line. The 18-mile Orange Line runs from Chatsworth to Warner Center and then across to North Hollywood.

The group also supports creating a rail system along the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor and building the Sepulveda Pass Corridor as a rail system with a tunnel through the Santa Monica Mountains.



This is a view of new construction by the Chinatown Gold Line station in Los Angeles. It is hard to not see new construction around transportation centers. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [Huge Mixed-Use Project Could Change the Face of Chinatown](#)

Curbed LA-Jun 19, 2014

Why, the only thing it's missing now are some residential high-rises. Enter a new proposal by EVOQ Properties (as seen on Building LA), which has two visions—both huge—for a project called College Station on a Gold-Line-adjacent lot at the northeast corner of Spring and College. One plan has two 20-story towers rising on the 5.24-acre lot, along with retail, live/work units, market-rate apartments, a market, parking, and affordable housing for seniors.

### [A Photo Essay of a Tour of the Gold Line Foothill Extension](#)

StreetBlog LA Jun 19, 2014

This Wednesday, Aviv Kleinman and Damien Newton of Streetsblog joined a behind-the-scenes tour of the Gold Line Foothill Extension under construction in the San Gabriel Valley. We joined Albert Ho, head of Media Relations for the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority, and Jeff Rowland, the Community Relations Manager for the Kiewit-Parsons Joint Venture, the constructors of the project.

### [Pasadena light rail upgrades could trump 710 extension](#)

Valley Sun-Jun 19, 2014

The Pasadena City Council will soon vote whether to convene a community-based task force to further analyze light-rail system upgrades that would connect East L.A. and Cal State Los Angeles with Pasadena's Fillmore Gold Line station.

The light-rail option is one of the five alternatives currently under review by Metro officials. Another option, a 4.2-mile dual-bore tunnel, is being protested by several cities, including La Cañada, for its cost



and potentially negative environmental impact.

### [Bellflower to administer study on Eco-Rapid transit system](#)

Los Angeles Wave Newspapers-Jun 19, 2014

BELLFLOWER — The City Council here has agreed to administer a \$350,000 study on the planned Eco-Rapid light rail transit system through the area, a project of the Paramount-based OrangeLine Development Authority of which the city is a member....

The refinement study and analysis will include updated traffic demand figures, costs and ridership forecasts, and possible new alignments from the Pacific right-of-way site in Paramount north along the Los Angeles River through South Gate, Huntington Park, Bell, Maywood and Vernon into the Union Station in Los Angeles.

From there it would go north over an undetermined corridor to Glendale, Burbank and then to Santa Clarita.

**There are plans for a possible joint station with the Green Line. But no discussion yet of a branch connecting to the Green Line to LAX and West Los Angeles. NB**

### [Construction begins on busy Redlands intersection](#)

Redlands Daily Facts-Jun 16, 2014

SanBAG's contribution to the Redlands-Alabama-Colton project helped to fund the final design of the project and ensured coordination with the Redlands Rail.

SanBAG's portion of the project, which will come at a later time, will include the first steps to making the Redlands Rail a possibility. This project will include the construction of needed rail components to enable commuters to use the Metrolink to travel from Redlands to other areas in Southern California served by the Rail.

### [Officials change tracks to fund Metrolink station in Placentia](#)

OCRegister-Jun 18, 2014

The Orange County Transportation Authority's board of directors is expected to vote later this summer on a new plan to fund a Metrolink station in Placentia.

### [Trolley may be rolling into town](#)

Camarillo Acorn-Jun 19, 2014

Camarillo's public works department presented the trolley proposal to the City Council during a June 11 study session.

The trolley route would start at the Metrolink Station and stop at 10 shopping centers around the city, including the premium outlets, the Target Center, Las Posas Plaza, Carmen Plaza, Ponderosa Plaza and Old Town's Ventura Boulevard.

### [Riding the Bus that Could have Been a Train](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

The Sprinter is the 22 mile Light Rail service between Oceanside and Escondido in northern San Diego County. It operates every half hour with diesel multiple unit (DMU) cars. The Sprinter stops just outside of downtown Escondido at the Escondido Transit Center. Early planning for the Sprinter called for extending it roughly 5 miles to the south mostly along an existing highway median and terminating at a major shopping mall at the south end of Escondido. However the high cost of building a new right of way to serve Cal State University San Marcos for the Sprinter ended any plans to extend the train in Escondido.

### [Roadshow: Options for getting to Levi's Stadium](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Jun 17, 2014

VTA and Caltrain will offer a joint fare that would allow passengers to add on the cost of a \$6 VTA day pass to a round-trip Caltrain fare. Caltrain riders can purchase the VTA fare when they buy their tickets, allowing fans to make a smoother transition between the two systems.

VTA will also provide a mobile ticketing app to let users buy their tickets and show fares to inspectors on their mobile devices.

### [Milpitas Post editorial: Calling off transportation sales tax increase ...](#)

Milpitas Post-Jun 19, 2014

Lots of folks would like to see the voters enact a sales tax increase to push BART through to Santa Clara, widen some expressway congestion points and fill potholes around the county. Polls show that it would top the needed two-thirds vote hurdle. But if the primary turnout of barely 20 percent was an indication of the lack of interest in the November election, a successful passage would be dubious.

### [San Jose Approves Diridon Plan, With Creek Restoration and Reduced Traffic](#)

Streetsblog San Francisco (blog)-Jun 19, 2014

On Tuesday evening, the San Jose City Council finally approved the Diridon Station Area Plan. The final plan retains a creek trail restoration project that had been on the chopping block, while strengthening requirements for SAP Center to help reduce demand for driving to the arena and Diridon Caltrain Station...

No one at Tuesday's meeting asked for more parking spaces to be included in the Diridon Plan.

"Ultimately, the more parking you build, the less walkable the neighborhood is — and the harder it is to bike someplace," said resident Soren Spies.



One thing seen in many places are the ticket machines at trains stations are often placed where the sun shines making it hard to read the display when buying tickets. Theses are Coaster ticket machines in San

Diego, but this is true in many places. Despite there being plenty of shade at the station, the machines are in the sun in the afternoon. Even the roofs over the ticket machines provide no useful shade. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

## We Get Email

### **Re:Concerns about the Sunset Ltd.**

As you know, NARP sent out a note to its members to contact their representatives about the Sunset. I hope its not a case of too little too late. Every rail advocacy group in the country needs to respond to this undemocratic action. I think that RailPAC should raise the level of concern and ask its members to do more to support the Sunset. I liked the way that in NARP's call to action, once you clicked the button, your elected representatives automatically appeared along with a pre-written letter, each one slightly different and with the option to change the wording in it, so it was relatively easy to write my elected representatives congress person. Its deplorable when elected representatives take uninformed actions that can go against the public good.

Richard Bent

### **Re:The Economist's article on the secret of Japanese High Speed Trains**

Link from Robert Reynolds

#### [Why Japan's high-speed trains are so good](#)

The ability to build large developments alongside the high-speed railways is a boon to the Japanese bullet line, as is the ability to charge high ticket prices. (When Koichi Tanaka, a scientist, won the Nobel Prize in 2002 he was reported as saying he would use the money to buy a ticket on the Shinkansen, to loud cheers.) But even so, 71% of the revenue from passenger tickets at JR East comes from the conventional, slower railway. Countries looking to lay down speedy new tracks might want to consider investing in their existing railway lines as well.

**This is no secret, the money in transportation has always been in land development and freight, but not carrying passengers. A classic example of this is Florida East Coast Railway which was built by Henry Flagler to develop land in Florida back in 1892. The company owning the FECR is still a land management company. They are going back into the Passenger Rail business between Orlando and Miami primarily to develop property. They plan to make money carrying passenger, but the real money is in real estate. This is true of transit, regional and intercity service. I see elevators in a tall building as a form of public transportation. Nobody charges passengers to ride elevators, let along expect elevators to make money. But tall buildings can't function without elevators. The same is true of a healthy economy and good transportation. NB**

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

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