

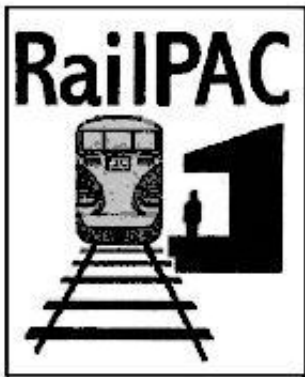
Subject: More on LAUS improvements! More Woes for the Empire Builder
From: Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)
To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;
Date: Monday, June 9, 2014 9:31 AM

RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for June 9, 2014

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

Feel free to forward copies of this E-Newsletter to your friends or someone who can use this information.

If you would like to subscribe to the E-Newsletter just send me your name and email address to nbraymer@railpac.org



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



Image of the most recent planning from LA Metro for the changes and new development in and around Los Angeles Union Station.

[More details and renderings on the evolving Union Station Master Plan](#)

The Source Jun 2, 2014

Here are some of the refinements to the Master Plan:

The new passenger concourse will greatly expand the existing passageway. The concourse will be significantly wider than the existing (and often crowded) pedestrian tunnel and there will be elevators and stairs accessing each of the rail platforms above. Those rail platforms will be spaced out differently and widened from their existing 23 feet to around 30 feet. The location of the current entrance to the Red/Purple Line will remain the same...

[Behold Union Station's Huge Plans: Sub-Train Concourse, New Terminal, Fred Harvey Revived](#)

Curbed Los Angeles Jun 3, 2014

Much of the impetus for the new plans is an expected increase in patronage; today's 70,000 daily riders could explode to 140,000 by 2040, assuming the high-speed rail line ever gets built. Should that happen, *California High-Speed Rail (not Metro!) will build a separate terminal for HSR behind Union Station, connecting it to the rest of the station with elevated pedestrian and bike bridges that will rise over the railyard.

[5 Rail Stations From America's New Golden Age of Train Travel](#)

Gizmodo- Jun 5, 2014

With a high-speed rail network slowly making its way towards reality, cities are commissioning grand stations for the 21st century to accommodate this new mode of transit. Here are five stations on the horizon that are bringing the drama and glamour back to train travel, while positioning it for a high-tech, high-speed future.

[Perspective: "The Northeast Corridor has nothing on us"](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Jun 4, 2014

California is not good at keeping secrets. Yet there is a quiet revolution going on in rail. Though high speed rail garners most of the headlines, the LOSSAN Rail Corridor is quietly changing the way millions of Californians commute. And this is happening for one simple reason. For now and well into the future, the LOSSAN Rail Corridor is the most efficient, most sustainable, and most effective means for transporting southern Californians where they need to go. For that reason, the LOSSAN Rail Corridor not only deserves critical attention, it merits our wholehearted financial and political support.

[What's So Great about Run-Through Tracks at LA Union Station?](#)

Story and Photographs By Noel T. Braymer

When the city of Los Angeles originally proposed building a Union Station on the current site, the railroads opposed it. One of their reasons was that site would have station tracks that would dead end as stub tracks. This would require departing trains to back in to the station and terminating trains to be backed out to go to the yards. These excessive moves would easily create congestion with trains needing to back in and out of the new station's throat. It also would create extra costs often requiring switching moves.

[SAP Arena Wants Parking Crater Around San Jose Diridon Caltrain Station](#)

Streetsblog San Francisco (blog) - Jun 8, 2014

SAP Center, the corporation that owns the 19,000-seat arena across Santa Clara Street from San Jose's downtown Caltrain station, doubts that the next 30 years of transit improvements will bring more visitors to events at the "Shark Tank." Instead, they insist that 20,000 new car parking spaces be built within its redeveloping neighborhood.

[Diridon plan: San Jose should heed recommendations of the community](#)

San Jose Mercury News - Jun 6, 2014

After several years of preparation, the San Jose City Council is about to vote on the Diridon Plan. At its core is the new Diridon Station, poised to become a world-class transit hub -- the Grand Central Station of the West Coast, where future transit investments, such as BART, meet current systems, such as Caltrain.

The plan also calls for creating a dynamic world-class community next to the station that's designed around people, rather than cars, to create an attractive urban village in the heart of San Jose. It envisions more homes, jobs and shops linked with bike lanes, wide sidewalks and linear parks -- all anchored by a grand civic plaza.

[Kings County files another suit against high-speed rail](#)

ABC Fresno Jun 6, 2014

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) --

The Kings County Farm Bureau is among those bringing the suit, claiming the High-Speed Rail Authority's environmental impact report didn't accurately state how much fill dirt it would need to bring in, and Farm Bureau Director Diane Friend says that dirt will create too much dust.

[Central Valley's Kern County Sues State Over High-Speed Rail Plan](#)

CBS Local-Jun 6, 2014

SACRAMENTO (CBS/AP) — Kern County is the latest Central Valley government to sue the state over its \$68 billion bullet train plan.

Officials say they filed suit Friday in Sacramento County Superior Court over the environmental review for the Fresno to Bakersfield section approved last month.

[California Primary Results: Jerry Brown, Neel Kashkari Win Top Spots In ...](#)

Huffington Post - Jun 4, 2014

Under California's new primary system, the top two vote-getters advance to the general election. Brown finished with 54 percent of the vote, while Kashkari bested fellow Republican Tim Donnelly for the second spot, 19 percent to 15 percent.

Doesn't look like bashing High Speed Rail by either Kashkari or Donnelly attracted many additional voters. Since this election had a low turnout this usually works to the advantage of Republicans. NB

[2014 Passenger Rail Planner's Guide](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Jun 6, 2014

Railway Age's annual compilation spotlights the ever-growing number of cities or regions adding or expanding passenger rail services and equipment.

[Changes possible around Sanford's Amtrak Autotrain station](#)

News 13 Orlando-Jun 3, 2014The Amtrak Autotrain travels between Sanford and Washington, DC.

Because the train is so long, driving around the train station can be very hard to do. That's why FDOT wants to add bridges to improve traffic flow.

SANFORD -- Officials with the Florida Department of Transportation discussed proposed changes surrounding Sanford's Amtrak Autotrain station at an open house Tuesday night. Some residents expressed concerns they have about the project, including fears the changes could force a few to have to move from their homes.

[Winter Park's old Amtrak station comes tumbling down](#)

Orlando Sentinel-Jun 3, 2014

The demolition of the brick-and-glass structure began during morning rush hour, with SunRail trains arriving and departing from the city's new, Craftsman-style station just a few yards down the track in Central Park.

Even in a city where historic preservation is a hot-button issue, the cramped, aesthetically unappealing example of mid-century modern architecture did not have many fans.

[Amtrak wraps up unexpected suspension of runs between St. Paul, Minot](#)

Minneapolis Star Tribune-Jun 5, 2014

Amtrak passengers traveling between St. Paul and Minot in far northwest North Dakota can board again after five days of disrupted service, but North Dakota promises to cause passengers headaches throughout the summer.

[Amtrak's Empire Builder line sees drop in ridership](#)

Sawyer County Record-Jun 6, 2014

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said it's been a frustrating year and ridership is hurting on the Empire Builder. He said late trains are also more expensive to operate.

"We're giving complimentary food and beverage service to try and apologize," said Magliari. "The train crews themselves are getting into overtime because their trains are running longer than they're supposed to run. So it drives costs up astronomically when trains are greatly delayed. It turns some one-time passengers into never-again passengers."

[Time to badger Congress for Amtrak expansion](#)

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel-Jun 4, 2014

With Congress preparing to rewrite the law that governs Amtrak, now is the time for elected officials to

listen to their constituents.

In Wisconsin, 85% of residents say they want Amtrak funding increased or maintained at current levels, according to the survey. Very few want to see its funding eliminated. Nearly three out of four Wisconsin residents want the option of additional service to Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago. There is overwhelming support for expanded service across all demographic groups, all of whom have no problem with the \$1 billion yearly federal investment in Amtrak, and many who would like to see it expanded.

[Amtrak will ditch cellular backhaul for its upgraded Wi-Fi service](#)

FierceWireless-Jun 2, 2014

Amtrak is taking a new approach to solve problems with its widely mocked Wi-Fi service. The railroad service is soliciting bids for a dedicated trackside wireless broadband network that will backhaul Wi-Fi service for Amtrak's Acela Fleet, the high-speed rail service along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) between Washington, D.C., and Boston.

[Train delays for Metro-North, Amtrak commuters](#)

NECN - Jun 6, 2014

(AP) - Metro-North and Amtrak train service in Connecticut has been disrupted for the second time in two weeks by a bridge failure in Norwalk.

[Tunisian man gets plea deal for Amtrak terror plot](#)

New York Post-Jun3, 2014

A Tunisian man charged in an unsuccessful plot to derail an Amtrak train en route from Penn Station to Toronto copped a plea Wednesday to less serious immigration charges.

[Amtrak makes low-key cuts on trains](#)

USA TODAY-Jun 2, 2014

The complimentary amenity kits on Amtrak's Empire Builder service from Chicago to Portland and Seattle and Coast Starlight from Los Angeles to Seattle vanished forever last week.

You'll still be able to buy the kits, which include an inflatable pillow, earplugs, blanket and eye shade. But it'll cost \$8.

[JR East to launch new luxury sleeper train](#)

The Japan News-Jun 4, 2014

A new luxury 10-car sleeper train has six passenger cars and one dining car. The passenger cars have two types—one deluxe suite car with two compartments, and five suite cars with 15 compartments. Each compartment is for two persons, so only a maximum of 34 persons can travel overnight on the train.

[Siemens would keep stake in Alstom trains combination: executive](#)

Reuters Canada-Jun 5, 201

Sources told Reuters in May that the rival Siemens plan to buy Alstom's power division would hand Alstom its trains business along with an amount of cash yet to be determined, creating a bigger transport group based around Alstom's TGV high-speed trains.

That business would be majority-owned by France and would have its headquarters there, the sources said.

[TEX Rail issues DMU RFPs](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Jun 5, 2014

Fort Worth Transportation Authority ("The T") has issued a request for proposals, RFP 14-T008, for an unspecified number of diesel multiple-unit (DMU) trains to cover proposed TEX Rail regional passenger

rail service, linking downtown Fort Worth, Tex., with Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.

[America's Invisible Trolley System](#)

Newsweek-Jun 5, 2014

In 1995, a nonprofit transit advocacy group in New York, the Brooklyn Historic Railway Association (BHRA), decided to construct a light rail service connecting the underserved neighborhood of Red Hook to downtown Brooklyn. After obtaining permission and funding through the city in 2000, the group laid down a half-mile of track. But a few years later, in 2003, New York City's Department of Transportation revoked the group's construction permit and ripped up its tracks without providing the BHRA with any explanation...

Why have so many light rail projects failed in the U.S.? "It's a combination of history, greed, politics and sprawl," says Duncan McFetridge, chairman of Save Our Forest and Ranchlands, who has been fighting for years to build a light rail line in San Diego.

[Congress detours from common sense on the Highway Trust Fund](#)

Washington Post Jun 4, 2014

BOTH PARTIES want to do nothing but squabble before this year's election. Not much will stop them — except, perhaps, this dose of reality: If political point-scoring is all they accomplish over the next several weeks, work on the nation's roads, bridges and rails will come to a halt.

[GOP's Lunatic Plan for Funding Transportation Draws Nothing But Scorn](#)

StreetsBlog USA Jun 3, 2014

House Republicans announced on Friday the latest in a long line of hare-brained schemes for funding the Highway Trust Fund, which is projected to become insolvent in August. Their ingenious proposal is to pay for transportation by making cuts at the post office.

[How to Make Mass Transit Financially Sustainable Once and for All](#)

CityLab-Jun 5, 2014

But the primary problem with transit operations funding is not that poor people are subsidized. Since the routes serving low-income travelers are often profitable (fares cover operating costs), it is that long-distance, inefficient suburban routes are very heavily subsidized by profitable or near-profitable urban routes. If the average farebox recovery is one-third, many routes are much higher and other routes are much lower. The lowest performing routes are typically in suburban districts, where transit dollars are spent as part of a political bargain to obtain some form of general revenue funding from suburban jurisdictions.

[When will the Las Vegas monorail expand to the airport?](#)

Las Vegas Review Journal Jun 1, 2014

The simple answer from Myles now is that it's still too early to tell if the extension, which would cost between \$400 million and \$500 million, is worth pursuing. A spokeswoman for the monorail said the company could raise money through investors or by taking on debt through bonds, but "it's too soon to discuss funding of any project and it would be part of the conversation involving the Regional Transportation Commission's transportation plan."

[Infrastructure Sticker Shock: Financing Costs More Than Construction](#)

The Market Oracle - Jun 3, 2014

California has over \$200 billion stashed in a variety of funds identified in its 2012 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), including \$58 billion managed by the Treasurer in a Pooled Money Investment Account earning a meager 0.264% annually. California also has over \$400 billion in its pension funds (CalPERS and CalSTRS). This money is earmarked for specific purposes and cannot be spent on

the state budget, but it can be invested. A portion could be invested as equity in a state-owned bank, and a larger portion could be deposited in the bank as interest-bearing certificates of deposit. This huge capital and deposit base could then be leveraged by the bank into credit, something all banks do. Since the state would own the bank, the interest would return to the state. Infrastructure could be had interest-free, knocking 50% or more off the sticker price.

By doing its own financing in-house, the state can massively expand its infrastructure without imposing massive debts on future generations. The Golden State can display the innovation and prosperity that makes it worthy of the name once again.

[Western Pacific Railroad Museum tells the story of the little company that could](#)

Plumas County Newspapers-Jun 4, 2014

The Western Pacific Railroad Museum, located in Portola, tells the story of a scrappy underdog railroad, the Western Pacific, and how it changed the industry through its innovation and grit.

["Sun Kinks" in Railways Join the List of Climate Change's Toll](#)

Scientific American-Jun 2, 2014

Sun kinks have already caused more than 2,100 train derailments in the U.S. over the past 40 years, or about 50 derailments a year, on average.

Sun kinks and other track buckling incidents are among the costliest the rail industry deals with today, with damage running roughly \$1 million per derailment, excluding injuries, fatalities and evacuations, Kish said.

[Sacramento Regional Transit to increase security on light-rail ...](#)

The Republic-June 3, 2014

SACRAMENTO, California — Sacramento Regional Transit plans to increase security presence on light-rail commuter trains during nights and weekends.

The Sacramento Bee reports Tuesday that the move is in response to feedback from rail riders who don't feel safe during those hours. The concern arose after two unusual shootings aboard trains this year.

[Sacramento downtown railyard on verge of sale with cleanup deal](#)

Sacramento Bee-Jun 4, 2014

Three key stakeholders in the downtown Sacramento railyard disclosed Wednesday they have reached an agreement in principle on final toxic cleanup of the 240-acre site, clearing the way for an anticipated sale this summer to a local development group.

[San Francisco transit 'sickout' in 3rd day](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Jun 4, 2014

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — San Francisco's city attorney filed a charge of unfair labor practices against the city's transit drivers' union Wednesday after some operators called in sick for a third straight day and left the famed cable cars idle as bus and light-rail service slightly improved.

[Muni's Absymal Breakdown Rate: One Reason SF Needs a Vehicle ...](#)

Streetsblog San Francisco-Jun 5, 2014

Muni vehicles break down far more frequently than in other cities, after years of the system being starved of the necessary funding to adequately maintain its fleet of trains and buses. Muni's heavily-used light rail vehicles, which serve 50 million riders every year, have a failure rate that's off the charts.

[With Caltrain in mind, city seeks larger sales-tax hike](#)

Palo Alto Online - Jun 4, 2014

City wants proposed tax measure to fund grade separations along rail corridor

Palo Alto's support for a countywide sales-tax increase to pay for an extension of Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and a host of other transportation projects could hinge on a single question: What's in it for Caltrain?

[Engine catches fire on Metrolink commuter train](#)

KTVN-Jun 5, 2014

IRVINE, Calif. (AP) - Officials say fire broke out in the engine of a Southern California commuter train and the nearly 60 people aboard were ..

[Breakdown of freight train delays Metrolink service to Riverside](#)

Los Angeles Times-Jun 5, 2014

The breakdown of a four-mile-long Union Pacific freight train Thursday afternoon has delayed Metrolink service to Riverside since 1 p.m., railroad officials said. Mechanical problems forced the Union Pacific train to stop on Metrolink's Riverside Line east of the Industry station, resulting in the cancellation of two commuter trains -- the 402 and 411.

[UCI charters Metrolink service to graduation commencement with President Obama](#)

Metrolink News Thursday June 5, 2014

LOS ANGELES – The University of California, Irvine (UCI) will hold its commencement on Saturday, June 14 at Angels Stadium in Anaheim. UCI has chartered Metrolink train service to get commencement attendees to and from the event.

More Metrolink News

SAN BERNARDINO CONNECTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY

Construction began earlier this year on two major projects — the Downtown San Bernardino Passenger Rail Project and the San Bernardino Transit Center – that will make commuting to and from the Inland Empire easier. Instead of ending at the historic Santa Fe Depot, the Downtown San Bernardino Passenger Rail Project will extend Metrolink's track one mile east and connect with the future San Bernardino Transit Center. As a result of the construction activity, Metrolink will be implementing modifications to schedules and train set sizes to accommodate the projects. Changes will begin this summer and last through the summer of 2015.

Major changes will be implemented at the historic Santa Fe Depot to create a grand entrance on the south side of the building, as well as a new rail-boarding area on the north side of the depot. A tall pedestrian bridge over the tracks will provide safe access for passengers boarding the trains going in either direction. The Transit Center is expected to be completed in early 2015, while the Metrolink extension and Santa Fe Depot modifications are scheduled to be completed by summer 2016.

The future Transit Center, to be constructed at Rialto Avenue and E Street in San Bernardino, will create intermodal connections between commuter rail, bus rapid transit, along with local and regional bus services. The Transit Center will provide enhanced benefits to current transit users and make these travel modes more attractive to future riders in the region. With 13 local Omnitrans bus routes, the new sbX Bus Rapid Transit service, Victor Valley Transit Authority, Mountain Area Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) bus service, and Metrolink trains all connecting at this central hub, connectivity within the Inland Empire will be more efficient than ever.

The Transit Center will include 22 bus bays, a 7,500 square foot building, a customer service and pass sales office, on-site security, restrooms, and passenger seating and shelters. The two projects represent a partnership between the Federal Transit Administration, San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), Omnitrans, Metrolink, and the City of San Bernardino.

A New Way to L.A.

Weekend Service on 91 beginning July 5!

Traveling to Los Angeles and Orange County on the weekends just got easier. Beginning July 5, Metrolink will offer weekend service from Downtown Riverside to L.A. with stops in between at La Sierra, North Main Corona, West Corona, Fullerton, Buena Park, and Norwalk.

Experience L.A. and beyond like never before with day trips to Knott's Berry Farm, Chinatown, Dodger Stadium, Hollywood Walk of Fame, Pantages Theatre, L.A. Memorial Coliseum, Universal Studios, L.A. Live, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Old Town Pasadena, and much more when you take the 91 Line to L.A. and connect on the Red, Purple, Expo, or Gold Lines. The 91 Line weekend service offers a new way to see L.A. and experience all that L.A. has to offer. For train times and more details, visit

[Union Station commemorative tile now available in Metro online store](#)

The Source Jun 4, 2014

The tile was extremely popular at the May 3 event at Union Station and sold out. Tiles can now be purchased in the Metro online store for \$7.60 apiece plus shipping.



This is the latest plan for the modernization of Los Angeles Union Station. This includes replacing the tunnel to the platforms with a new, large concourse largely sunlight, a new bus station on the northside of the station and creating a landscaped area in the parking lot in front of the station. A new HSR station is planned just east of the current station along with new commercial buildings.

We Get Email

Re: Empire Builder

On June 3rd I rode 808/807 (**temporary section of the Builder Chicago to Minneapolis/St. Paul**) from Minneapolis to Columbus, Wisconsin. Here are some observations.

The set was made up of two P42s, and three coaches and a Sightseer lounge. In both cases, one coach was locked off, and in both cases, the average load was in the range of 65-75. This is consistent with

past experience, and is a good measure of the rail potential for a local train between two large metro areas 421 miles apart with a modest intermediate population, well-served by air and especially I-90/94, and Bolt and Greyhound. On a normal transcon Builder, we usually have four coaches, and 3 1/2 sleepers, plus diner and lounge, and in early June probably 250 passengers. This has to be the highest horsepower-to-weight ratio in the entire system, on a par with the Acela's.

The crew consisted of the driver, two conductors, two coach car attendants and a lounge car LSA.

The engineer and conductors changed out at Winona, as is normal. 808 got out of St. Paul on time and got as far as Newport (i.e., about 5 miles) before stopping for 100 minutes for a westbound CP empty ethanol train, mainly because a track was out of service near St. Croix Jct., where BNSF and CP split, and all the intermediate sidings were plugged. We never recovered that time or any part of it.

Most, but oddly not all, of these stub trains have been blocked in Amtrak's system as "disrupted" so no information can be gleaned on line, and people were experiencing 30-45 minute waits to get to a live agent on the 800 line. Depot agents had good train performance info on their computers. One source reports that the "disrupted" status also blocks or prevents on-line reservations and ticket sales. For whatever reason, today's 807(04) shows in the system, and is OT into MKE. Amtrak has told passengers ticketed on 27 and 28, even for travel between CHI and MSP, that their train was cancelled with "no alternate transportation" available, without mentioning 807/808.

On 807, CP dispatched reasonably well, but two stop-and-wait meets at the end of the run put us into St. Paul 26 minutes late. Amtrak's new timetable took away about 25 minutes of recovery time between RDW and MSP, so westbounds have no margin, and will rarely if ever make St. Paul on time.

We walked to the Amtrak ticket counters after arrival at MSP and found the place locked up and dark. A handful of people were standing at the adjacent baggage claim area wondering about their checked bags (it takes a long time for bags, because the tractor has to drive nearly a half mile from the baggage spot on the platform to reach the ticket office/bag claim area). No Amtrak employee was present. We walked around to the back (in public space, part of the SPUD parking ramp) and found the two Amtrak agents (nominally "on duty") there, waiting for the bag wagon to come up from the train, and heard them say they were out there with the counter closed "so we don't have to deal with all those people."

The conductor said they did turn the train on the Division Street wye just east of SPUD right after arrival, rather than try to turn all the seats and run the power around the train. We heard a report from a very reliable source that through operation of 7/8 will resume Friday of this week, but with a cautionary advisory to expect regular delays to #8 of 6 or more hours for the foreseeable future.

Andrew Selden

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.

Join us! More memberships increase our strength in presenting the case for rail to policymakers at all levels!

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

For those who would like an additional copy of the eNewsletter with plain text (minus photos and graphics) just email me at nbraymer@railpac.org with

your name and email address. NB

If you are not a member, go to [RailPAC Membership...Join Us!](#) to get information about RailPAC and a FREE copy of our regular newsletter .

For information about RailPAC, contact the Membership Office

Write:

Rail Passenger Association of California

1017 L Street, PMB-217

Sacramento, CA95814-3805

Email us at info@railpac.org

Call at **(415) 7-TRACK-2**

(415) 787-2252

[Unsubscribe](#) from this list.

Copyright (C)Rail Passenger Association of California (RailPAC) All rights reserved.

[Forward](#) this email to a friend

[Update your profile](#)

MailChimp