

**Subject:** HSR Burbank to Las Vegas before Merced? We get more email!  
**From:** Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)  
**To:** ntbraymer@yahoo.com;  
**Date:** Monday, August 18, 2014 9:31 AM

## RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for August 18, 2014

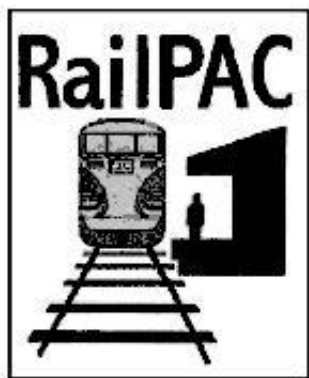
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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**Rail Passenger Association of California**  
**[www.railpac.org](http://www.railpac.org)**  
**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**



This is the trainset of Comet Cars now being used on the San Joaquins leaving Fresno for Oakland. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [What a Train Trip From LA to SF Can Teach Us About California's High-Speed Rail Future](#)

CityLab-Aug 12, 2014

I booked a sleeper on Amtrak's Coast Starlight to Oakland, an all-day trip that would not include sleep. The smallest sleeper rooms cost about \$100 more than a coach seat, though the free meals easily make up for half of that. Besides, if you want to travel cheaply, or quickly, you should just fly. A plane between L.A. and the Bay Area costs the same as the train—about seventy bucks—but the plane takes an hour and the train takes twelve

### [Federal board approves 144- mile high-speed rail route](#)

Sacramento Bee - Aug 12, 2014

The federal Surface Transportation Board on Tuesday made public its authorizing for construction of a 114-mile high-speed passenger rail line between Fresno and Bakersfield.

### [Lack of Land Delays California's High-Speed Rail Construction](#)

Governing - Aug 14, 2014

Jeff Morales, chief executive of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, said the agency has had to increase staff devoted to acquiring property. "We did get off to a slower start, but we are accelerating it," he said, adding that he believes construction started last year when the authority issued a building contract for the first segment to Sylmar-based Tutor Perini Corp.

The state has the legal power to take property from farmers, homeowners and businesses, but that process can be time-consuming. Morales noted that the rail agency is relying on a separate state entity,

the State Public Works Board, to condemn property for the project where needed. The board said last week that it had taken initial legal steps to seize 19 parcels.

### [California bullet train scores new victory](#)

KCRA Sacramento - Aug 14, 2014

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (KCRA) —By a unanimous vote Wednesday at the state Capitol, California now has authority to make bids on scores of new properties in the Central Valley. High Speed Rail already has authorized the purchase of more than 600 parcels -- and can now negotiate on 158 new parcels in the pathway of the bullet train. Those properties can be acquired through eminent domain.

### [Rail board awards \\$71M construction management contract](#)

Fresno Business Journal - Aug 12, 2014

The California High-Speed Rail Authority awarded a \$71.86 million contract to ARCADIS U.S., Inc. to manage construction of the rail from Fresno toward Bakersfield.

The Colorado-based design and consultancy firm vied against four other teams for Construction Package 2-3, which extends approximately 65 miles from south of Fresno to one mile north of the Tulare-Kern county line.

As part of the contract, ARCADIS will provide engineering and consulting services for the California High-Speed Rail Authority and the contractor that will be selected to design and build the Valley rail section.

### [The Truth About Obama's High-Speed Rail Program](#)

TIME-Aug 11, 2014

The administration hasn't spent anywhere near \$11 billion. The projects haven't gone mostly nowhere. There are legitimate questions about the high-speed rail initiative—and the administration's hype has outstripped its ability to deliver in an era of divided government—but the public debate over the program has been almost completely detached from the reality on the ground. Here's the real story.

### [Tippi Hedren's Big Cat Sanctuary Threatened By High-speed Train Plans](#)

Contactmusic.com-Aug 11, 2014

Actress Tippi Hedren and her partners at big cat sanctuary the Shambala Preserve in Acton, California are begging fans to help them protest plans for the state's new "bullet train", which will carve through their land.

**This animal sanctuary is right next to the railroad now with several Metrolink and freight trains a day running by the animals with seemingly no problems. NB**

## NEXT STEPS WITH CAP & TRADE



- Advance Multiple Segments of High-Speed Rail Concurrently
- Complete Planned Regional Transportation Improvements
- Establish an Interstate High-Speed Rail System with a Connection to Las Vegas from Palmdale

This is a graphic from a PowerPoint presentation for the California High Speed Rail Authority's Board meeting held on August 12, 2014

**TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members**

**FROM: Jeff Morales, Chief Executive Officer**

**DATE: August 12, 2014**

**RE: Consider Providing General Direction to Staff Regarding the Expenditure of Appropriated Proceeds from the Cap and Trade Program**

**excerpts NB**

Staff has specifically identified the Burbank to Palmdale project section as a key segment that could be accelerated by Cap and Trade proceeds as they become available. This strategy would allow the Authority to build from two directions simultaneously, thus accelerating delivery of the Initial Operating Segment. It also presents the opportunity to make the high-ridership Burbank to Palmdale corridor an operating segment of its own should it qualify as such. Finally, moving quickly on that segment could an earlier connection with the proposed XpressWest service from Las Vegas.

Other alternatives include using this new funding to move top priority projects forward, such as those outlined in the Authority's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). These projects too would create GHG reductions in the short-term while improving regional rail service in preparation for high-speed rail.

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**This includes speeding up grade separations in Southern California, particularly between Los Angeles and Anaheim as well as funding the LAUS run-through tracks. Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties are planning to build a new highway between Palmdale and Victorville with a median for passenger rail service. NB**

### [Caltrain electrification gets court boost](#)

San Mateo Daily Journal-Aug 12, 2014

With \$750 million hanging on the California High-Speed Rail Authority's ability to sell its voter-approved bonds, a project to electrify Caltrain — still in its environmental review stage — will benefit from a recent state Court of Appeal ruling giving the authority that go-ahead.

Improvements to the local tracks hinge on the authority's ability to fund the state's first \$68 billion bullet train that was stalled by two previous lower court's rulings that its funding plan was substantially different than what voters approved in 2008.

### [France's TGV All change](#)

The Economist (blog)-Aug 13, 2014

THEY are admired the world over for their sleekness, speed and sheer French chic. But the 480 high-speed trains (Trains à Grande Vitesse, or TGV) that radiate around France from Paris are struggling to remain in the black. Most of the lines are running at a loss and even the profitable ones are not earning enough to cover their cost of capital. This is forcing SNCF, France's state-owned railway, to consider taking the axe to what has been a rare symbol of French technical and business success.

### [The trouble with trying to make trains go faster](#)

BBC.Com August 14, 2014

As technology advances, transport gets ever faster, and trains are no exception. But with great speed come great drawbacks. Katia Moskvitch reports on the pitfalls facing train designers trying to reach even greater speed on rails.

### [One year later, Hyperloop remains a fantasy](#)

CNET-Aug 13, 2014

Elon Musk's tube transport concept unveiled a year ago remains just that: a concept. It also proves that even when the Internet falls in love, radical ideas rarely exit the realm of fiction.

### [Next phase of high-speed rail work to start this fall](#)

Bloomington Pantagraph-Jul 30, 2014

NORMAL — The next phase of high-speed rail work is expected to start in September or October and could mean some temporary crossing closings. The work will include upgrading the "siding" tracks in Normal, McLean and Lexington, said Scott Speegle, passenger rail marketing manager for the Illinois Department of Transportation

### [Letter: Relaxing Amtrak](#)

Lawrence Journal World-Aug 12, 2014

Recently, we took a great trip to Flagstaff on Amtrak.

### [Amtrak Makes New Gulf Coast Connections](#)

WJTV-Aug 13, 2014

CHICAGO - An expanded partnership between Amtrak and two bus carriers can take passengers to and from the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and Amtrak trains in Jackson, Miss., Tuscaloosa, Ala., and New Orleans.

## [Proposal: Bring Amtrak Trains to Center City](#)

Philadelphia Magazine (blog)-Aug 13, 2014

Bob Previdi thinks so. A transit expert — and former spokesman for retired Council President Anna Verna — Previdi points out in an opinion piece for Philadelphia Business Journal there's already a tunnel from 30th Street Station to Suburban and Market Street stations used by SEPTA. Just let a couple of Amtrak trains per hour use that tunnel, he says, and the results might be startling: Having Amtrak operating in the Center City Tunnel would not only be good for business and tourism, it could also make the housing stock of Philadelphia and its suburbs more commutable to NYC.

**At Amtrak's creation it was not allowed to be in the commuter rail business, because it was not profitable. NB**

## [The One Big Problem With Bringing Amtrak to City Hall](#)

Philadelphia Magazine (blog)-Aug 14, 2014

The problem with the proposal is this: Once Amtrak trains would exit the Commuter Tunnel's east portal, there would be no way for them to get back to the tracks heading to New York Penn Station. That's because the tracks feeding the tunnel from the north belonged to the Reading Railroad, and the Reading had no physical connections to its crosstown rival, the Pennsylvania.

## [New Harrisburg Line Will Add Amtrak Trips From Charlotte To Raleigh](#)

WFAE-2 Aug 15, 2014

Starting in May 2017, Amtrak passenger cars and freight trains will zoom above traffic in the town of Harrisburg at more than 90 miles an hour. This may change things a little. Project engineer Jeff D'Arruda lives just five miles away from the Roberta Road highway bridge project.

## [Amtrak could expand service from Memphis to Chicago](#)

Memphis Business Journal - Aug 14, 2014

Amtrak could consider adding a second daily train run between Memphis and Chicago, according to a news report. The Memphis City Council invited Amtrak to a recent public meeting to discuss the possibility of expanding its passenger service between ..

Before seriously considering an expansion, Amtrak told city officials they would need to work with the state to get a feasibility study, the report said.

## [The DEA Paid An Amtrak Secretary \\$854460 for Free Passenger Lists](#)

The Wire - Aug 11, 2014

The Associated Press reported Monday that according to a report by Amtrak's inspector general, an unnamed secretary received \$854,460 over nearly two decades to obtain confidential information that the DEA could have accessed through other law enforcement sources.

## [Idaho's Lone Amtrak Station Undergoing Renovation](#)

Boise Weekly-Aug 14, 2014

The Sandpoint train station, built in 1906, is the only Amtrak stop in Idaho.

For 98 years, passengers have shuttled east and west through the train station in Sandpoint—including President Theodore Roosevelt in 1911 during a stop recommended by Idaho Senator William Borah.

## [Man tried to strangle Amtrak passengers](#)

Flathead Publishing Group-Aug 13, 2014

Report of a man trying to strangle passengers aboard an Amtrak train as it came into West Glacier. The passengers were holding the man down.

## [Frac sand boom contributes to crowded tracks, Amtrak delays](#)

Madison.com-Aug 11, 2014

When it comes to traffic on Amtrak's main passenger line from Chicago, through Wisconsin and out to Seattle, Wash., and Portland, Ore., passengers are increasingly taking a backseat to freight traffic.

### [Amtrak's Broken Builder](#)

Flathead Beacon-Aug 13, 2014

Eighty-five years after its debut as one of America's premier passenger trains, the Empire Builder struggles to stay on-time and keep passengers aboard

### [Oil-Laden Freight Trains Delaying Amtrak, Commuter Trains Across U.S.](#)

Streetsblog Chicago Aug 14, 2014

BNSF also operates commuter trains along the same tracks, under contract to Metra, the regional commuter rail agency. It's Metra's busiest line, carrying 67,400 passengers each weekday from Chicago's west suburbs, like Aurora and Naperville, through dense city neighborhoods like Pilsen, and into downtown Chicago.

Metra's busiest line is also now seeing more delays than its other lines. In May, the BNSF line was the least punctual of all 11 lines, with just 82.2 percent of trains arriving on time — well below the system average of 94.5 percent. May's performance wasn't a fluke: the BNSF line also turned in the worst performance among lines in April, and third worst from January through May. Just as with BNSF's national performance, this is a huge decline from prior years: More than 95 percent of trains arrived on time in 2012 and 2013.

### [EIA Lowers Global Oil Demand Forecast for 2014, 2015](#)

NASDAQ - Aug 12, 2014

Government forecasters lowered their forecast for global oil consumption this year and next, the latest sign of weak demand that is pressuring prices. The U.S. Energy Information Administration, in its monthly short-term energy outlook released Tuesday, cut its .

**The Oil Train boom may soon start to fizzle out. The current shale oil boom was fed on the elevated price of oil which was the result of speculation not demand. Without higher oil prices it will soon be uneconomical to pump shale oil which is more expensive than conventional oils. If so train traffic may start to return to normal. NB**

### [Shoddy US roads and bridges take a toll on the economy](#)

Los Angeles Times-Aug 14, 2014

America's transportation structures look all the more frayed next to those in advanced economies in Europe and Japan, or in China, which has been busily constructing high-speed rail and new airports. U.S. spending for transportation and other infrastructure accounts for 2.4% of its economy versus about 12% for China, says economist David Dollar, a former China director for the World Bank. Europe's infrastructure spending is about 5%.

### [49ers fans, expect a time-sucking slog to Levi's Stadium](#)

SFGate - Aug 14, 2014

Caltrain will run two extra trains before the game - departing San Francisco from the station at Fourth and King streets - at 9:35 a.m. and 9:55 a.m. The trip is scheduled to take 1 hour and 14 minutes. The light-rail ride to the stadium takes an additional 25 minutes or so. Postgame trains will leave 45 minutes and an hour after the game or when full. Caltrain operates regularly scheduled trains through about 9 p.m. Sundays.

### [Feast Your Eyes on Beautiful Trip Data From Year-Old Bay Area ...](#)

Streetsblog San Francisco (blog)-Aug 12, 2014

The data themselves aren't too surprising. Bike-share users heavily use stations traveling to and from Caltrain stations, and between various points within the station areas during lunchtime. The visuals show how stations fill up and empty out at different rates, depending on factors like the time of day and year. The "Best Overall Visualization" winner, Virota Chiraphadhanakul, created an interactive map that displays trip patterns between any two stations.

These data should help inform the planned BABS expansion into the East Bay and beyond (the North Bay is a-knockin'). By now, it's pretty clear that bike-share is a vital link between transit, jobs, and everywhere else, and needs to expand throughout the region.

### [Amtrak investigates cause of damage to train window](#)

KTVU San Francisco - Aug 13, 2014

RICHMOND, Calif. —

Amtrak is investigating an incident that damaged one of its train cars.

The incident happened Tuesday afternoon as a northbound Amtrak train that originated in Oakland was hit by what one viewer called "small gauge gunfire," as the train passed by about 10 minutes east of the station in Richmond. The train was en route to Sacramento.

**FRA regulations require lexan windows on all passenger trains that are almost "bulletproof" because of incidents such as this in the past :including gunshots. Passenger train windows can't be broken with a sledge hammer. NB**

### [Metrolink Adds Train Service From Los Angeles County Fair](#)

LAist-Aug 14, 2014

Purchase a Metrolink Weekend Day Pass to get to the fair for just \$10 roundtrip. Metrolink riders can also receive a special \$11 admission ticket ..

### [Approved transportation project includes I-5 expansion](#)

KUSI - Aug 13, 2014

The California Coastal Commission has approved a \$6 billion transportation project that includes widening Interstate 5 to accommodate four express lanes between La Jolla and Oceanside.... In addition to the 27 miles of widening of I-5 by adding four lanes of express traffic, there's enhanced rapid transit bus service and 27 miles of bike lanes, paths and double tracking railroad tracks. All of this will take 30 to 40 years to complete.

### [OCTA opens another grade-separated crossing in Southern California](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Aug 14, 2014

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and city of Irvine officials on Monday marked the opening of the Sand Canyon undercrossing in Southern California.

The \$64 million project is among eight grade separations OCTA is advancing as part of its O.C. Bridges program. The Irvine project is unique because it's the only grade separation to be built in southern Orange County, OCTA officials said in a press release. The other bridges and underpasses are being constructed in Anaheim, Placentia and Fullerton.

### [What if the light-rail system tripled in size?](#)

Arizona Republic-Aug 16, 2014

What if the light-rail system tripled in size?

**Greg Stanton, Phoenix mayor:**

If we build on the success of light rail, and triple the miles of track in our city, we will grow a stronger long-term economy and plan wisely for our continued rapid population growth.

### [LRT and streetcars advance in tandem](#)



RailwayAge Magazine-Aug 13, 2014

Five years ago, only the U.S. Pacific Northwest sported new streetcar lines, dismissed by many as an Ectopia fixation, or of a sepia-tinted past per New Orleans' venerable fleet. Many, even within the rail industry, simply deemed streetcars as a mode not worthy of North America's serious consideration. Last year the debut of Utah Transit Authority's Sugar House streetcar line shattered that notion.

### [Construction notice: 2nd Street partial closure on Saturday in DTLA for Regional Connector work](#)

The Source Aug 14, 2014

The Regional Connector is a 1.9-mile underground light rail line that will connect the Gold Line to the Blue and Expo Lines, allowing a one-seat ride for most riders through downtown Los Angeles. The project is partially funded by Measure R, the half-cent sales tax increase approved by L.A. County voters in 2008. The project began construction this year and is currently scheduled to open in 2020.

### [One Day in LA video looks into the future of Union Station](#)

The Source Aug 14, 2014

A nice, short video on beautiful Union Station by FORM follows FUNCTION. The video interviews Metro Deputy Executive Officer Jenna Hornstock, who provides a brief overview of the Los Angeles Union Station Master Plan.

### [What is Metrolink's Problem?](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

Metrolink's problem is money; or rather the lack of money. Metrolink is in the red because ridership is below projections. Metrolink blames this on declining commuter ridership to downtown Los Angeles. What Metrolink needs to do is increase its ridership to more places in Southern California for more revenue.

## We Get Emails

### **Response to Mr. Drew Jacksich**

I believe in the right to speak ones mind, but there are boundaries!

Drew Jacksich's comments about Sen. Feinstein crosses over those boundaries by referring to her as Fxxkstein and Freakstein. This guy should be able to make his point without the abusive references..

Chuck Robuck

### **Response to Mr. Drew Jacksich**

That guy is a little too harsh. I suggest you remove the reuse of the Senator's name.

Thanks,

Geoff McLennan

CCRider and Member

### **Response to Mr. Drew Jacksich**

I want to extend my congratulations to you for your measured, logical, civil, thoughtful response to Mr. Drew Jacksich's vulgar (however, you really needed to do some censoring of his use of four letter expletives embedded in the names of elected representatives).

Mr. Jacksich's hate filled commentary is an example of an attitude that has ground this country's political process to a halt and turned the nation into one of the most dysfunctional, non-representative governments in the world. We need analytical, thoughtful, non-partisan, civil commentary like yours, Noel, if we are ever going to move this country forward. Bravo!

Charles Hoover

### Response to Mr. Drew Jacksich

I figured you would not publish my email, hell someone might even agree with me which would be anathama

Drew Jacksich

**I wouldn't count on many agreeing with you. You have the right of freedom of speech, but others also have the right to criticize what you said. NB**

### Re: California High Speed Rail

If the powers that be can dig a tunnel from Glendale to Palmdale, why don't they dig one from San Fernando to Grape Vine and the San Joaquin Valley. The High Speed Milk-stop Train they are promoting is an oxymoron and a sad joke. If they really want to compete with the airlines it should be a through run point to point. The existing track, if it was improved, could handle the frequent stop trains at 120 MPH that they really seem to want. Ideally just lay another 100 plus MPH Passenger only track along side the existing track in trade for a tax break for the class #1 owners. That would be a win, win for all. Is there a politician out there smart enough to see this ???

Earl Nickles, Santa Ana, Ca.

**California High Speed Rail plans call for both express trains and all stop locals. But what most people don't understand is the main purpose and largest impact of this projects isn't to run fast trains, it is redevelopment and economic growth. This is why cities like Palmdale, Fresno and Merced are so involved in High Speed Rail, they could use a boost to their local economies . California also needs more affordable housing which can only be built inland. If you don't believe me, check out this graphic from the CHSRA from 2007 of what they envisioned Fresno will look like with High Speed Rail service.NB**



### Re: More Stations for Surfliners in Ventura County

Just to follow up, I did email Mr. MacDonald at VCTC and he was very helpful. I don't know if anything durable will come of it, but from his reply and quoted emails it sounds like VCTC had already asked Amtrak/Caltrans about the same issue, and they are awaiting the results of Amtrak's modeling for adding "both stops in both directions" -- perhaps they are considering adding the Moorpark stop to one of the

northbound trains which skips it, otherwise I'm not sure what is meant by "both directions" as 761 in the morning already stops at both MPK and CML and my question to him was about 761 and 790/796.

Thanks again,  
Andy MacKay

### **Re: The California Zephyr Extension to LA?**

Has Rail PAC given up on efforts. To get the California Zephyr Train Service. Extended to Los Angeles as an over night service?

Before I saw it was an issue Rail PAC was pushing for. And now I do not see anything on that on the website now. I remember seeing a study on it.

So my question is. Is Rail PAC still pushing for this extension?

Jerry Martin

**A higher priority is just getting one round trip of the the Surfliners to San Luis Obispo extended to the Bay Area. This has been ongoing for almost 20 years with no signs of progress. The UP shows no interest in additional passenger train traffic on most of the Coast Line. UP's attention now is focused on the expectation of increased oil train traffic north of Santa Barbara.**

**Extending the Zephyr to Los Angeles is a good idea. But there is opposition within Amtrak because this could move the maintenance base for the Zephyr to Los Angeles. As it is one additional trainset would be needed for this extension while Amtrak is short on equipment. As it stands just holding on to the Long Distance trains is a bigger issue right now. NB**

### **Re: San Diego to Phoenix and back by Greyhound**

I recently traveled from San Diego to Phoenix, and after evaluating my options, I decided to travel by Greyhound Bus. A one way plane ticket is about \$240 (with no advance purchase), and the Southwest Chief is also about \$153-\$220 (or \$393 for a roomette), with some sold-out days. I didn't wish to drive, and the Greyhound checked in at a reasonable \$75 one way. So, feeling adventurous, I thought I would give it a try.

One thing I noticed right away is that there is a fair amount of passenger traffic on Greyhound. Each bus seats 49 passengers, plus freight and luggage, and 3 out of my 4 buses were mostly full.

Another thing I noticed is that Greyhound operates on a hub-spoke/transfer system. At San Bernardino, buses leave for Los Angeles, Las Vegas, San Diego, Palm Springs-Calexico, Anaheim-Santa Ana-Oceanside, Phoenix-El Paso-Dallas, as well as connections to the Central Valley and Bay Area. Similarly, at Phoenix, one can travel to Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Tucson-El Paso-Dallas, San Diego and Los Angeles. This is similar to the connections one finds for the San Joaquins at Bakersfield.

I also noticed that travel on a particular bus was not guaranteed with a ticket purchase. Once a bus became full, it left. Remaining passengers were given a priority boarding slip for the next bus. I overheard the sales agent tell one passenger that all seats for that day were taken and that the next available seating was the following day.

So, would I make the same trip again? Perhaps. It did satisfy my urge for some adventure. I also realized that not everyone would be willing to use this form of transport, and that the train takes even longer and includes a bus trip from Flagstaff. But, if I found a less-expensive airline ticket, I would probably do that instead.

Axel Vogt

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those of the Rail Passenger Association of California.

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You can send your comments to me at [nbraymer@railpac.org](mailto: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](mailto:nbraymer@railpac.org) with your name and email address. NB

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