

<b>Subject:</b>	Ca HSR Groundbreaking-Fresno Jan 6th. RailPAC will be there!
<b>From:</b>	Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)
<b>To:</b>	ntbraymer@yahoo.com;
<b>Date:</b>	Monday, January 5, 2015 9:31 AM

## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for January 5, 2014**

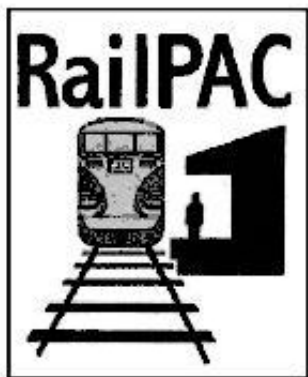
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**



This is a LA Metro graphic showing just what is budgeted now for current projects under construction. The rail transit projects are for the Gold Line extension, the Expo Line extension, the downtown Regional Connector for the Blue and Gold Lines, the Purple Line extension to La Cienega and the Crenshaw Line with LAX connections.

### [Landslide halts Amtrak trains moving between Seattle and Everett](#)

OregonLive.com-Dec 28, 2014

A landslide Sunday closed a stretch of BNSF Railway tracks north of Seattle, stopping passenger train service between Seattle and Everett, according to an alert on Amtrak's website.

The tracks, used by Amtrak's Cascades and Empire Builder trains, are expected to be cleared for travel by Tuesday, Dec. 30.

### [Fred Frailey-Amtrak's new look](#)

Trains Dec 18, 2014

Amtrak is downsizing practically every one of its long-distance trains, between January 12 and February 28 and in some instances longer. This is what railroads routinely did in pre-Amtrak days, in those times of the year when business drops off.

Several people have sent me the preliminary changes, and of course it's subject to change and even cancellation. But here is the plan, as of last week:

### [Amtrak's Coast Starlight routes will use buses between Portland and Eugene ...](#)

OregonLive.com-Jan 2, 2015

Amtrak passengers on four Coast Starlight trains will be switched to buses between Portland and Eugene during track work in mid-January and half of February.

## [Amtrak's 2014 – The Real Stats](#)

Posted by Jarrod Dellachiesa

Amtrak continually tells us about how many passengers they put into seats in the Northeast corridor. What many suspect because of far longer travel distances, but never can get Amtrak to say, is that in passenger miles (passenger mile = one passenger riding for one mile), and is said by some to be the most proper measure of how much transportation is being produced ... the Northeast Corridor is the least productive part of the company. Here are the statistics that Amtrak doesn't tell us for FY 2014.

## [Rail improvements help Amtrak deal with delays](#)

Flathead Publishing Group - Dec 31, 2014

The Empire Builder travels between Portland, Seattle and Chicago. Whitefish is the passenger train's busiest stop in Montana, with about 65,000 riders boarding there in 2013.

The train's on-time arrival rate in the past year, however, has been a dismal 23.9 percent. Amtrak officials blamed the delay primarily on train interference.

As a result, ridership at Whitefish was down 27 percent through the first 10 months of the 2014 compared to 2013, according to data from the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana.

BNSF Railway spokesman Matt Jones says the company has invested \$1 billion on the line to improve traffic flow for both freight and passenger service. Improvements included 55 miles of double track between Glasgow and Minot, N.D., 17 miles of double track in Washington, and siding extensions and yard expansions.

## [Rival China trainmakers merge to boost high-speed rail push abroad](#)

Reuters-Dec 30, 2014

Dec 30 (Reuters) - China's top two trainmakers said on Tuesday that they will merge, creating a \$26 billion company able to compete with the likes of Germany's Siemens and Canada's Bombardier for global rail deals.

## [Lack of English language skill costs China high-speed contract](#)

Economic Times - Dec 30, 2014

BEIJING: Amid China making a strong pitch for export of its bullet train technology to India and the world, Chinese officials said inadequate English language skills have become a serious disadvantage for the high-speed rail exports resulting in loss of a lucrative contract in Northern Europe.

## [California High Speed Rail Groundbreaking Ceremony to be Held Jan.6](#)

www.TurlockCityNews.com - Jan 1, 2015

Despite its controversy on the State and Federal levels, a groundbreaking ceremony for the California High-Speed Rail (CA HSR) project will be held Jan. 6 in Fresno to commemorate the beginning of its construction in part by Governor Jerry Brown and the California High Speed Rail Authority.

## [California bullet train getting on track](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Jan 3, 2015

SACRAMENTO -- After a decade of controversy and skepticism that threatened to derail California's bullet train, the state is finally ready to break ground on the San Francisco-to-Los Angeles rail line.

The ceremony scheduled Tuesday in Fresno will be largely symbolic, since planning and demolition for a 130-mile stretch of track in the Central Valley began several months ago, but one thing is certain: Once construction begins, the \$68 billion bullet train will begin steaming ahead.

**I never thought I'd see that headline in the Merc! NB**

## [Black firms on winning team for \\$1.5 billion California High-Speed Rail contract](#)

San Francisco Bay View -Dec 30, 2014

A consortium of 19 minority and women owned firms of all types – 13 Black – is part of the winning team for the \$1.5 billion contract. Construction Package 2-3 is a 60-mile route located within the counties of Fresno, Tulare and Kings and the cities of Hanford, Corcoran and Allensworth, California's first Black town.

## [More condemnations ahead for high-speed rail](#)

Fresno Bee Jan 2, 2015

The California Public Works Board will hit the ground running to start 2015, with condemnations of 29 properties in Fresno and Madera counties on tap for the board's first meeting of the year.

## [Worldwide manufacturers jockey for position in high-speed rail project](#)

Merced Sun-Star - Dec 30, 2014

So next spring, when the California High-Speed Rail Authority hopes to start the long process of buying rolling stock for its statewide rail system, it might just touch off a bidding frenzy as firms jockey for a contract to build dozens of the sleek, all-electric vehicles. An initial order could be 15 to 20 trains, and the contract could potentially call for as many as 95 trains over the next decade. A hint of the enthusiasm surfaced in late October, when nine manufacturers responded to the rail agency's request for expressions of interest in building its trains and initial specifications.

**The best news is the CHSRA is planning to buy existing "off the shelf" equipment and avoid the problems Amtrak had with the original ACELA order. The CHSRA expect to save money and have the equipment delivered on time. NB**

## [Year in Review: Transportation](#)

Fresno Business Journal - Dec 31, 2014

Long mired in delays before judges and government boards, high-speed rail planners cheered victories this past year, even as opposition lingered. Two years after approving environmental documents for the first 65-mile section of the bullet train from Merced to Fresno, the California High-Speed Rail Authority came back in May this year to clear the project 114 miles further south to Bakersfield.

## [Graffiti artists work on buildings condemned for High Speed Rail](#)

ABC30.com-Dec 31, 2014

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) --On Tuesday, young artists worked on the old Baz Brothers building on G Street. The old brick structure is slated to be torn down to make way for the High Speed Rail project through Downtown Fresno.

John Paz says it was all his idea. "I was hosting this building to get a bunch of graffiti artists to keep the graffiti off the streets."

## [Central Valley Hoping for High Speed Rail Jobs Boost](#)

KQED Dec 16, 2014

The unions signed an agreement with the High-Speed Rail Authority to hire workers from federally designated impoverished census tracts for about a third of the project's work hours. Most of Fresno County fits that bill, with some of the highest unemployment rates in the state. The agreement also includes hiring a subset of disadvantaged workers, including the chronically unemployed, veterans, single mothers and former inmates.

## [California's high housing costs drive out poor, middle-income workers](#)

Los Angeles Times Jsn 1, 2015

California's high cost of living has pushed hundreds of thousands of low- and middle-income workers to

other states, federal data show.

The trend points to a challenge for the state's economy: how to attract workers of moderate means to some of the nation's most expensive housing markets.

**Rail service is needed to create more affordable housing in California. Cars and parking wastes a great deal of valuable urban land. Rail transit works with high density housing which is most economical in dense urban areas. Commuter rail allows housing development in outlying areas with open land. High Speed Rail will create development inland where there is cheaper open land for more housing and commercial development. NB**

### [San Diego must embrace urban future](#)

U-T San Diego-Jan 3, 2015

Like most California cities, San Diego has traditionally been a suburban place — adding population primarily by expanding outward onto raw land. But San Diego today is the largest city in the United States that has run out of raw land. Except in the largely industrial Otay Mesa area, it is simply not possible for San Diego to continue growing in this traditional way. In order to enhance both prosperity and quality of life, San Diego must learn to grow gracefully by adding new residents, jobs, and other activities in existing locations.

### [Kansas derailment raises vital rail safety questions](#)

CBS News Jan 3, 2015

The collision in September between two Union Pacific freight trains in Galva, Kansas, may have come down, in part, to a light bulb.

In a news release Friday, the NTSB said a green LED light was so bright it out-shined the old-fashioned, incandescent red stoplight nearby. The engineer accelerated, plowing into an oncoming train.

### [Aging Railway Infrastructure Raises Safety Concerns As Bay Area Readies To Receive Dramatic Increase Of Bakken Crude Oil, Part 1 Of 3](#)

CBS Local-Dec 29, 2014

As the train rumbles its way across the 115-year-old Alhambra trestle in Martinez, loud creaks and rattles can be heard. And unlike more modern bridges, dozens of its bolts and bridge supports are rusted.

The trestle was originally built in 1899 and reinforced in 1929. The railroad replaced the rail deck in 2003, but the trestle's support structures are 85 and to 115 years old.

"The railroad told us, actually, that the rust strengthens it," City Councilman Mark Ross told KCBS, but he isn't buying it.

### [Sub-\\$55 Oil Forces U.S. Drillers to Idle Most Rigs in 2 Years](#)

Bloomberg Dec 30, 2014

Rigs targeting oil declined by 37 to 1,499 in the week ended Dec. 26, the lowest since April, Baker Hughes Inc. (BHI) said on its website yesterday, extending the three-week decline to 76. Those drilling for natural gas increased by two to 340, the Houston-based field services company said.

### [Saudi Arabia's Playing The Oil Market The Right Way For The Lowest Cost Producer, Almost Like Standard Oil](#)

Forbes Dec 30, 2014

As indeed Standard Oil under Rockefeller did. He knew that he was the lowest cost producer. He could therefore, by lowering prices, knock out of production that oil that was more expensive to produce. This would increase his revenues because although he was getting less per barrel (and no, he never did raise prices again once he'd killed the competition, not on the grand scale he didn't) but he was selling more barrels at prices still above his production cost...

This can indeed be seen as entirely rational. The fall in crude oil prices means that certain high cost oil



projects might not go ahead. The Brazilian deep deep ocean project, certain of the Arctic ones, perhaps some of the Canadian tar sands will be shuttered. The American tight wells (shale) will continue to produce from wells that have been drilled but there's obviously going to be a decline in new wells drilled.

### [Low oil prices unlikely to hurt railroads much](#)

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) Jan 2, 2014

But even with oil prices falling off a cliff, industry analysts and railroad executives point out that crude shipments still make up just a sliver of the overall freight delivered by rail. What's more, because fuel is such a huge cost in the industry, railroads are a direct beneficiary of those falling prices.

Crude oil shipments remain less than 2 percent of all the carloads major U.S. railroads deliver. Sub-\$60 oil might force producers to rein in spending but railroads — which spend hundreds of million of dollars every quarter on fuel— will see their costs fall away.



This is Santa Barbara in April 1979 and that is the Coast Starlight with steam heating. Some things have gotten better. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [Boxing Day Metrolink passengers hit by delays after yobs smash windows ...](#)

Manchester Evening News-Dec 27, 2014

Two trams had windows smashed between the St Werburgh's Road and Barlow Moor Road stops on the Manchester Airport line between 3pm and 3.30pm on Friday afternoon

**I shall attempt to translate this headline. Boxing Day is the day after Christmas, when employees traditionally received gift boxes. Metrolink is the name of the Light Rail service in the city of Manchester, England. And yob, which is boy spelled backwards is an ancient British term for juvenile delinquent. NB**

### [What's Ahead for California Rail Passenger Service in 2015](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

Construction is the big news for 2015. Construction is needed before we can expand service in many places. The year starts out with the Official Ground Breaking for the California High Speed Rail Project in Fresno on January 6th.

### [Paid parking program at Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink exceeds expectations](#)

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin-Jan 1, 2014

RANCHO CUCAMONGA >> A paid parking program put in place at the Metrolink station six months ago has beat revenue expectations with minimal impact on ridership, officials said.

In the last couple of months, the program has generated more than \$20,000 a month in parking fees, well ahead of the projected \$13,000 a month, said Mark Steuer, the city's director of engineering.

### [Metrolink offers train route to Rose Parade Thursday](#)

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin-Dec 29, 2014

The first train on Metrolink's San Bernardino-Los Angeles line will operate on a modified Sunday schedule, leaving San Bernardino at 6:10 a.m., making all regular stops and reaching Los Angeles's Union Station at 7:45 a.m.

Riders can then transfer at no additional charge to the Metro Gold Line and get off at the Del Mar, Memorial Park, Lake or Allen stations in Pasadena and walk a short distance to the parade route.

### [Metro Offers Free Rail and Bus Rides New Year's Eve](#)

Patch.com-Dec 31, 2014

Metro will again offer free rides on buses and trains tonight for New Year's Eve, and provide all-night service on its rail lines and Orange and Silver bus lines.

The free fares will be in effect beginning and 9 p.m. and continue until 2 a.m. Thursday, according to Metro. After 2 a.m., regular fares take effect.

All-night service will be offered on the Red, Purple, Blue, Expo, Green and Gold rail lines, along with the Orange and Silver bus lines. Bus lines that normally offer late-night service will also continue to do so.

### [Caltrain offers free rides on New Year's Eve](#)

The Almanac Online-Dec 29, 2014

Caltrain and SamTrans have announced their schedules for the New Year's holiday.

Starting at 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve, Caltrain will offer free rides as a way of encouraging party-goers not use use their cars for late-night transportation.

Extra trains will leave the San Francisco station at 12:45 a.m., 1:15 a.m., 1:45 a.m. and 2:15 a.m., making all local stops to the San Jose Diridon station.

Caltrain will operate on a regular weekday schedule on New Year's Eve, in addition to the extra trains.

On New Year's Day, it will operate on a Sunday schedule.

### [Free rides in Silicon Valley for New Year's Eve](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Dec 30, 2014

If you are worried about celebrating New Year's Eve and then driving home after imbibing too much, the AAA, Valley Transportation Authority and Caltrain have a suggestion -- free rides.

The auto club will offer drivers and passengers free rides home, while VTA and Caltrain also will extend service with free rides as well.

### [A guide to SF transit on NYE](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Dec 31, 2014

Muni will be free, BART is running late and taxis are offering steep discounts. And of course, Uber promises scorching surge prices for revelers, detailing in an email that trips would be at least \$100 after 2

a.m. Also, pay extra-close attention to the BART schedule, as certain trains will only be serving specific stations late at night and early the next morning.

### [Caltrain Freedom Train, Commemorating 1965 Selma March, to ...](#)

.KQED-Dec 30, 2014

One of the Bay Area's most recognizable tributes to the civil rights era is ending next month. Organizers of the Freedom Train, a Caltrain ride from San Jose's Diridon Station to San Francisco on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, say the ride in January will be its last.

### [BART scraps Wi-Fi contract, prompting threats of legal action](#)

SFGate-Dec 31, 2014

BART has terminated an agreement with its Wi-Fi provider, but while the transit agency says it is simply ending a trial period, the company's CEO accuses officials of illegally backing out of a long-term contract.

BART signed what was billed as a 20-year contract with Sacramento's WiFi Rail in 2009. In exchange for BART providing the "horizontal real estate," the company would install the infrastructure and create the service. WiFi Rail would eventually get to charge for the service.

But problems began popping up as early as 2012, when WiFi Rail's CEO, Cooper Lee, said he had difficulty raising money for the project and was struggling to deal with BART officials about when and where WiFi Rail could begin work.

### [Here Are The Metro Trains That Could Get Wi-Fi And Cell Service](#)

Laist Dec 31, 2014

A report from Metro indicates that you may be able to get cell service and wi-fi on your phones on some underground trains as soon as spring of 2015.

The news comes from a Metro memo issued on December 24. In February 2013, the Board signed onto a 20-year contract with InSite Wireless LLC to provide service in the underground stations and tunnels, according to the memo.

### [World's filthiest seats are gone: BART removes final cloth cover](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Dec 30, 2014

More than two years after BART piloted vinyl in place of fabric on the seats of 100 train cars in 2012, the agency today will remove the last of the wool seats in its fleet. BART has been replacing wool seats on each of its 669 rail cars since March 2012 after the first batch of vinyl seats rolled out to positive reviews from riders. The vinyl seats are easier to clean and have a longer life expectancy than the cloth seats, lasting up to 10 years compared to just three years for wool seats, according to BART.

### [Windy City: Trees Toppled, Power Lost, BART Disrupted](#)

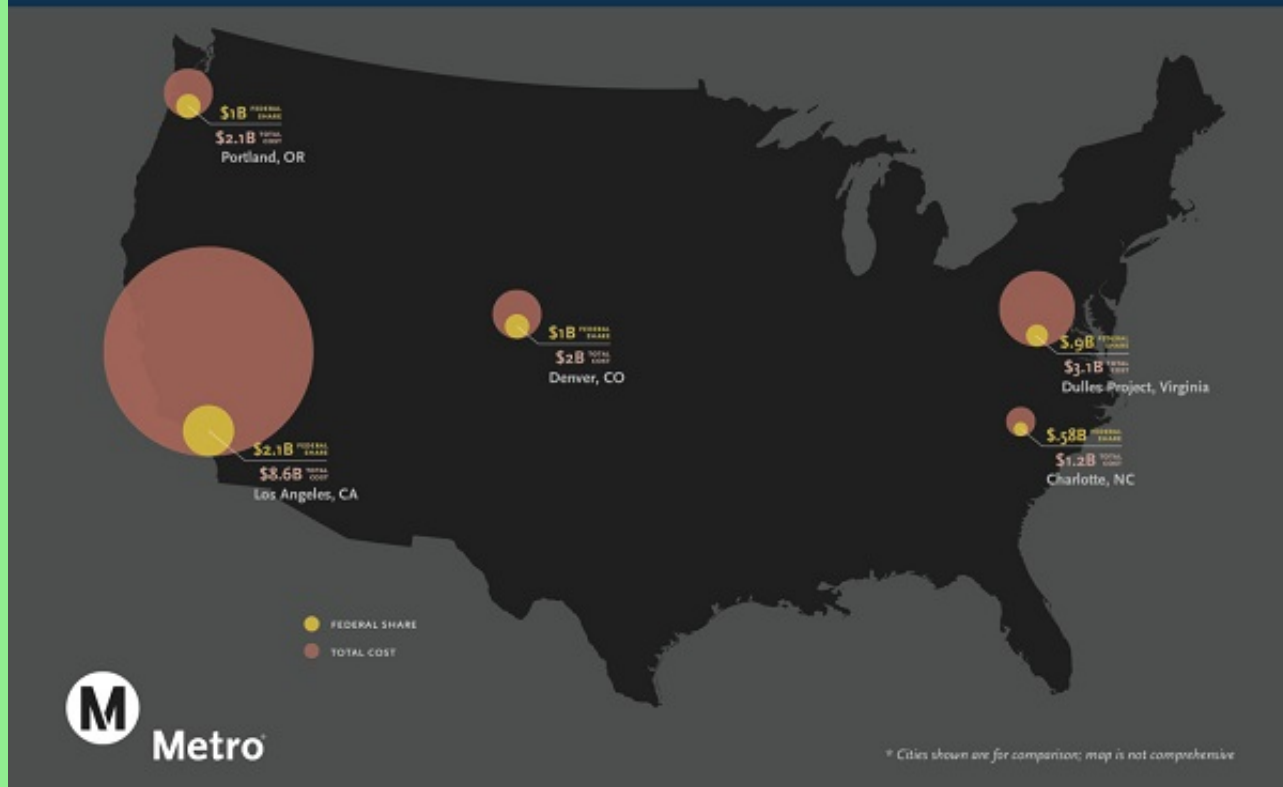
SFist-Jan 1, 2015

As ABC 7 reports, BART was equally afflicted. Tuesday's first service interruptions took place at 1:15 p.m. between the 24th Street and Daly City. A large tree fell on the tracks between the Balboa Park and Glen Park stations, said BART officials, and crews finally finished removing the 30-foot long tree shortly before 4:45 p.m. Some poor commuters were forced to wait out the nearly four hour delay.

And, over in Oakland, BART was also plagued with problems. At around 4 p.m. the brand new BART Oakland Airport connector, earlier the victim of a PG&E outage, was stopped between Coliseum Station and the airport because of another electrical problem.



## IN THE WORKS 2014 Rail Transit Under Construction Across America\*



This graphic from LA Metro shows just how much more transit construction is going on in Los Angeles compared to the rest of the country. The yellow circles show the Federal share of funding compared with the larger circles which show the total cost of each project.

**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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