

# Project Objectives

- Support the State's goal of an integrated, multimodal transportation network;
- Provide alternatives to other travel modes and relief to highway and air travel congestion;
- Improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, conserve fuel, and contribute to sustainable land use;
- Integrate the planned California High-Speed Rail system with conventional train systems;
- Prepare Service Development Plans for certain intercity rail corridors; and
- Consider freight rail needs and benefits as part of the State's investments in rail facilities.



## [California State Rail Plan Public Open Houses – Sacramento, Oakland, San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno](#)

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is pleased to host a series of open houses for the California State Rail Plan (CSRP). Caltrans will be presenting the Draft of the CSRP, which establishes a statewide vision, sets priorities, and develops implementation strategies to enhance passenger and freight rail service in the public interest.

Your Input is Important to Us!

To review the Draft Plan and comment, please join us at one of the five events listed below. Comments may be submitted at any of the Open House meetings. The public comment period will begin on February 8, 2013 and end on March 11, 2013.

The open house schedule is as follows:

### **Sacramento**

February 12, 2013 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  
California State Railroad Museum, Stanford Gallery  
111 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

### **Oakland**

February 14, 2013 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Elihu M. Harris State Office Building, Room 1  
1515 Clay Street Oakland, CA 94612

### **San Diego**

February 19, 2013 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  
Caltrans District 11 –San Diego Office Building  
1stFloor Conference Room

4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110

**Los Angeles**

February 20, 2013 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Junipero Serra Building

320 West 4th St. Los Angeles, CA 90013

**Fresno**

February 21, 2013 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Hugh M. Burns State Building, Assembly Room 1036

2550 Mariposa Mall Fresno, CA 93721

**Online Webinar**

February 26, 2013 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Re:Starlight Richmond stop being dropped**

I have just learned Amtrak is dropping the Coast Starlight stop in Richmond CA effective 14-15 January. A service alert pops up when trying to make a reservation on those trains. As you know, Richmond is considered by many people to be an important stop in the Bay Area because of the Amtrak-BART connection. Until now, I believe all Amtrak, Capitol corridor and San Joaquin schedules have a stop there. Do you have any information as to why Amtrak made this decision? I personally have seen no public notice or discussion about it.

Conjecture among several of my friends is that there have been passenger safety issues on the unstaffed Richmond Amtrak platform, made worse if train 11 (scheduled for 10:20 PM departure) runs late enough to arrive after the BART station closes at midnight.

Thanks. I very much enjoy and appreciate your weekly RailPac E-newsletter.

David Foote

**Re: The Coast Starlight and Richmond Station**

The Richmond Amtrak station is served by dozens of Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin trains and is also a terminus for two BART lines, which have trains to the rest of the Bay Area every 7 to 20 minutes. However, after January 14th, the Coast Starlight will no longer stop there. Though Richmond has been my station of choice for many years and I'm going to miss this convenient connection, this is somewhat understandable. There's been some speculation on various forums that it's because Richmond is scary, though I've never had a problem there - the stairs down from the Amtrak platform go right into the staffed BART station concourse, and even around midnight the station has at least a dozen people waiting for BART.

However, there is a schedule issue. Train #14, the northbound Starlight, is scheduled into Oakland at 9:32pm and Richmond (which is 12 miles away) at 10:20pm. When the train is on time it is faster, though less convenient, to off board in Oakland and take a local bus to the nearest BART station. When the Starlight is late there is a small but real chance of missing the last BART, which leaves at 12:17am. Last time I was on the Starlight a week ago the train was sold out but there were only 4 of us ticketed to Richmond. With the train running 90 minutes late, two of the passengers opted to off board in Emeryville. Of the remaining two, I was the only one to actually make use of the BART connection - the other person was getting picked up at the station.

In the future I'll most likely book a ticket to Oakland or Emeryville with Thruway connection to the Hyatt in San Francisco. The Hyatt is on the same block as the Embarcadero BART station and the bus stops right outside one of the station entrances (yet this is not advertised in Amtrak literature - why not?) and transferring there will get me home more or less the same time as the old Richmond connection.

Alfred Twu

Berkeley, CA

**To answer the issue of why the Starlight will no longer stop at Richmond the answer is I don't know. I have heard that low ridership and the desire of UP to skip the stop to eliminate what is**

**often a bottleneck at Richmond when the Starlight stops are the most plausible reasons. NB**

### **Re:Additional Western Trains**

I have a question that you have addressed, well sort of. You address the situation of adding more sleepers and coaches to the Western trains but also mention the added cost for coach attendants.

Now I realize that Amtrak doesn't have the additional equipment to accomplish this, but just suppose they did, what would be the added cost of operating an additional train 12 hours opposite the current trains.

I remember in pre-Amtrak days the railroads operated this theory so that those cities/towns that had service during the night would also have a day train?

I realize this is a down the road situation, but I just wondered your thoughts?

My wife and I are planning a trip in May for my 50th high school reunion and are going to take the SW Chief from Riverside - CHI - Philadelphia.

One of the problems I see in the schedule is detraining in Pittsburgh, PA at 0435 and must wait until 0720 for the Pennsylvanian to complete the trip. That is one heck of a 3 hour wait to connect.

I would prefer to ride all the way to Washington, DC and connect with the train up to Philly. Back in the 80s and the Broadway Ltd was in operation, it was a more convenient trip.

Now, I would like to see maybe a low level sleeper added to the rear of the train and just detached in Pittsburgh and towed behind the Pennsylvanian.

Thanks,

Robert Toole

Hemet

**I am not an accountant, so I don't pretend to know what it would cost Amtrak in labor costs to add additional equipment. The problem is Amtrak's accounting can't tell you either because they allocate costs based on a train's share of Amtrak's total costs not on the incremental cost of an individual train which is the real cost of doing something. Amtrak accounting usually assumes that if it costs X to run a train it will also cost X to run a second train. This is true even if no new equipment, crews, stations or staff will be needed to run a second frequency. Of course what is missing in the equation at Amtrak is how much more revenue will be generated by expanding service above the extra incremental costs. Ideally we should have 2 or 3 Long Distance Trains a day (not a week) on all major routes because that would serve the major periods people travel and added frequencies increases ridership on all trains. Back in 1979 I rode the National Limited from Washington by way of Philadelphia to Kansas City to connect on the then Southwest Limited to Los Angeles. Something like that using a daily Cardinal would make sense. From New York to Washington and then rerouting or splitting a section in Indiana to St. Louis and Kansas City on the Cardinal would greatly improve the performance of that train and greatly increase the connections to several trains. NB**

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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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