

Amtrak's Coast Starlight still travels daily between Los Angeles and Seattle. Should we take it for granted?

### [The Sequester And Transportation](#)

Washington Post Feb26, 2013

The FAA's 47,000 employees would probably be furloughed one day in each two-week pay period until the end of the fiscal year in September — roughly 11 days...

Travelers' journeys could also be complicated by cuts at the Transportation Security Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, according to Secretary Janet Napolitano.

### [Amtrak, local transit and highways safe from sequester cuts](#)

Skift- Mar 1, 2013

Amtrak faces a cut of \$36 million from its federal operating grant of \$466 million and a \$78 million cut in federal funds for construction, vehicles, and debt payments.

### [Our View: Cut Amtrak's Harrisburg-Pittsburgh route](#)

The Sentinel- Feb 27, 2013

But it does mean the elimination of Amtrak service to Greensburg, Latrobe, Johnstown, Altoona, Tyrone, Huntingdon and Lewistown. The only Amtrak service in Pittsburgh left standing would be a singular route connecting the city to Chicago and Buffalo.

**Buffalo? On the Capitol Limited? NB**

### [Franken Urges Obama To Take On Freight Rail Monopolies](#)

The Hill Feb 25, 2013

In the letter, Franken cited analysis showing that only one freight rail company serves 78 percent of railroad stations within the United States.

**The question is how to create competition? Would this require Universal Trackage Rights for all carriers? NB**

### [X Train: a gamble from Fullerton to Las Vegas](#)

OCRegister- Feb 28, 2013

But there is the issue of money. A year ago, the company officials said in an SEC filing they needed \$35 million in capital to get started. After the company announced the Union Pacific track deal in November that figure rose to \$80 million to \$90 million. In a quarterly earnings report released last week for the period ending Dec. 31, the company says it now needs to raise \$150 million.

### [Sunnyvale's Lawrence Station Area Plan moves forward](#)

San Jose Mercury News- Feb 27, 2013

The station area plan looks at developing land within a half-mile radius of the train station into a transit-oriented center with a balance of office, residential and retail spaces.

### [RailPAC PHOTOS of the Month \(February, 2013\)](#)

Here are 5 photos by RailPAC photographers.

### [Take A Tour Of Abandoned Subway Tunnels Beneath Los Angeles \(photo-essay\)](#)

Business Insider Feb 25, 2013

The tour started at the Los Angeles Subway Terminal Building, now a luxury apartment building.

### [Rail undercrossing opens in Encinitas](#)

U-T San Diego- Feb 27, 2013

Mara Roberts, walking her dog Nella, was among the first to use the newly completed railroad undercrossing at the foot of Santa Fe Drive.

"We've been waiting for years," said Roberts, who was headed from her home to the beach. She, her family and their neighbors have been watching the construction with anticipation for months, she said. No longer will they have to walk a mile to the nearest legal crossing at Chesterfield Drive or scoot illegally across the tracks.

## [PLAN TO EASE TRAFFIC IN I-5 CORRIDOR RELEASED](#)

U-T San Diego-by Chris Nichols- Mar 2, 2013

Plans to ease North County's traffic-choked Interstate 5 corridor reached a milestone Friday with the release of a proposed package of rail, highway and environmental improvements totaling \$6.5 billion.

## We Get Emails

**Re: new name for Sacramento train station**

How about The Long Walk Transportation Center? Or, something equally descriptive and appropriate?  
ROBERT HEYWOOD

**Re: Why Trains need Buses**

To you and I and other transportation specialists, the above seems obvious. But many people including many officials just don't get it. In the Bay Area at least some of the bus operators don't like trains and try to ignore or avoid them whenever possible. BART has long been accused (whether fairly or unfairly) of making things difficult for bus riders. MTC, in his 40 year history, has unfortunately never seen the Bay Area's hundreds of bus and rail lines as its "network" in need of improvement. Instead, our regional planners appear to regard the tens of billions of transportation dollars flowing into the Region as pie, to be cut up and spread around to keep everyone happy. As a results there are gaps everywhere....dozens, hundreds!

I hope you will write more on this subject

Name withheld by request

**The problem with most organizations not just transportation ones is they believe they are competing with each other for funding and business when it isn't so. Even within the same organization different departments will fight over funding instead of working together for their best interests. I remember when Light Rail was first proposed in Los Angeles the supporters for "Heavy Rail" were opposed mostly because they thought it would compete for their funding. Instead Light Rail has been a major feeder for the Red and Purple Lines and demand for more Light Rail was responsible for Los Angeles County rescinding its ban on future subway construction after the many problems with building the Red Line. The same was true in San Diego in the late 1970's with the construction of the San Diego Trolley. The local bus operator were opposed to its construction complaining it would take money away from buses. The result from the beginning was it increased bus ridership with transfers. NB**

**Re: Why Trains need Buses**

This email is in response to "Why Trains Need Buses" posted by Noel T. Braymer on Feb. 22. The first paragraph contains the line "The buses connecting with these trains do so at a profit. If they don't the bus route is eliminated."

I have seen this claim on several blogs and would like to ask someone who knows how revenue is calculated for Amtrak buses. I am puzzled about this because Amtrak bus tickets are not sold in isolation; they are only sold as part of a bus/train combo ticket. In order to calculate profitability, one would have to have a method for assigning some proportion of the revenue from the ticket sale to the train and some to the bus. Do you know how this is done?

If my question doesn't make any sense, if you could send me a link to a report that establishes the profitability of Amtrak buses I would be very interested.

Thanks, Rob Cunningham

**I am not an accountant and wouldn't pretend to be one. What I do know is there is a ticket issued for every bus ride. When I ride from Oceanside to Sacramento I buy a ticket to hand to the bus driver at Oceanside, a ticket to hand in on the San Joaquin at Bakersfield to the conductor and a third ticket to hand to the bus driver at Stockton to Sacramento. I would assume that the tickets represent the revenue allotted to each segment of the trip by that mode of transportation. Since tickets are usually charged by miles I would assume the bus ticket value is based on mileage. In the case of a ticket on a trip on a route on the Surfliners which can be ridden by either bus or train the bus I assume would get the revenue is allotted when a passenger rides the bus and the train when a passenger is on train. Tickets have been used for a long time to keep a record of the revenue and ridership on a trip running by trains or buses.**

**The cost of the bus service is based on the billing from the private bus operator and the contract agreement. It would seem to me to be to be largely a question of adding up the revenue represented by tickets pulled on the buses and subtracting the cost of the bus service any other items included in the costs to find it there is a profit or loss. I do know Caltrans with a tight budget has quickly pulled bus service which was not doing well. Also the profits of the bus operations connecting to California supported trains go into the State Rail Program. In the past the profits from the bus program could be used to pay start up costs for new bus services and give the new buses some time to become established and to experiment with different routes. Those days are gone but what I was trying to say in my article is money will have to be found to greatly expand the bus connections to the new Express San Joaquin's' after 2017 if these trains are to be filled up with passengers and successful.**

**I am sure any Amtrak Conductor could do a better job of explaining train/bus ticketing than I can. I suggest contacting Caltrans Division of Rail to get more information on how the bus's profitability is calculated.**

### **Re: What happened to the Amtrak California Website?**

I've been looking for the California Amtrak website for over a week.

I've tried California Amtrak and Amtrak California with no success.

Do you know if it has been taken down or changed?

Specifically, what I'm looking for is the Thruway bus connection from Hemet to the SW Chief Eastbound departure and Westbound arrival.

There was a bus connection but I cannot locate any information about it any more.

My wife and I are going to travel to Philadelphia in May for the 50th high school reunion.

We're planning to take the train East on Monday May 13 arriving in CHI on Wednesday & taking the Capital Ltd to DC and a NEC train to Philly.

Return would be May 27 or 28.

The connection at Pittsburgh at 0430 and waiting until 0730 for the Pennsylvanian is just not convent at our age.

I even thought about the Cardinal, but its arrival & departure from Philly is not convent either.

We just didn't want to leave the car at the RIV station parking lot for 2 weeks.

Regards,

MSgt Robert Toole, USAF (Retired)

Hemet, Ca.

**I don't know what to tell you. I was surprised having no luck this week when trying to find AmtrakCalifornia.com. I can't find it when I try search engines and I keep getting directed to Amtrak.com. I tried the direct link from a Caltrans website to Amtrak California and it doesn't log on.**