

The Perris Valley Line remains on hold as promoters wait word from the Federal Transit Administration on a crucial \$75 million grant for the \$247 million, 24-mile passenger railroad.



This is a photo of a sign at the San Diego Santa Fe Depot of the current loading areas for the San Diego Trolley. Of the 3 lines only the Green Line from Petco Park to Santee runs through at the Depot. The Orange Line to El Cajon terminates at the Depot while the Blue Line now terminates across the street at the America Plaza Trolley Station. For passenger getting off the Coaster they have to walk to the crossing in front of the Depot then double back north of the Depot since the gate by the Depot is closed by Amtrak most of the time. Parked trains block the closer crossing most of the time needed to avoid this detour. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re: Funding for the Dumbarton Rail Bridge

You asked, perhaps rhetorically, "What ever happened to the plan to rebuild the Dumbarton Rail Bridge to create passenger service from the East Bay to both San Francisco and San Jose? It would sure come in handy when BART or a road bridge is out of service and the rest of the year."

Well, a few years ago the Bay Area's MTC took the planning money away from Dumbarton Rail and gave it to BART, meanwhile they support wasteful projects like the new BARTish tram to Oakland Airport (this connection was already served well by bus and it isn't eliminating the need to transfer).

This region really needs to improve heavy rail options by expanding Caltrain across Dumbarton as well as south to Salinas, sooner rather than decades from now. Also, in the next few years, it needs to be determined whether a HSR connection will be built between SF and Oakland; if not, then a second BART

tube must be built. The Bay Area cannot afford to just sit on its duff.

Thomas Travers

Your comments confirm what I believed was the case. It is never a good idea to place all your eggs in one basket, particularly for transportation. But politics is like dinner for a large family: it's those with the sharpest elbows who usually get the most. NB

Re: better signage needed at stations

I'm glad to see that the problem I addressed with the lack of sign info regarding locations to board trains has been rectified. I hope these signs will also display the train #, where it came from, and what its final destination will be, too. Announcements controlled by satellite connections could help, too. I found the later helpful at Cary, NC just a few months before the station became fully staffed when it notified passengers of a train delay and gave info on exactly what time the train would arrive and where to be waiting on the platform. I commend NC for doing this at a station that was then-unstaffed at the time. Cary, NC has two different platforms, since the rail lines split just north of the station, similar to Greensboro, where they split south of the station. I've used them both, and for both the Piedmont trains and the long distance trains at both locations! The folks in NC told me they did a lot of their planning for this taking in mind what was done in California.

Steve Crosmer

We still have more work to do on this in California. The changes at Oceanside and other LOSSAN stations came about after RailPAC President Paul Dyson raised hell after he tried to use the Oceanside Station and was frustrated by the lack of useful information. It is easy to be complacent when you use a station regularly so you know your way around. Stations need to be evaluated by people who have never been there before and who are more likely to see problems than the agencies that operate them. A common problem at many stations are the ticket machines which often face towards the sun so that their display screen are hard to read with the glare. This doesn't affect regular riders with monthly passes but is a problem for first time and occasional riders that you need to win over to ride again. NB

Re: Amtrak Policy on cancelled trains?

Thank you for making the RailPac newsletters, I always enjoy them and find them to be very informative. On Sunday, August 25 my wife and I were scheduled to board train #4, The Southwest Chief, in LA but it was cancelled for at least the next two days due to a track washout in the desert caused by heavy rains. I hope that this can be mentioned sometime in a future newsletter. And, do you know how long it took to get trains back to running on this section? And does Amtrak pay for the cost of a hotel when a train is cancelled?

David M. Miller Jr.

This is what I found on the Amtrak website: *Amtrak further specifically disclaims liability for any inconvenience, expense, or damages, incidental, consequential, punitive, lost profits, loss business or otherwise, resulting from errors in its timetable, shortages of equipment, or due to delayed trains, except when such delay causes a passenger to miss an Amtrak train guaranteed connection. When a guaranteed Amtrak train connection is missed, Amtrak will provide passenger with alternate transportation on Amtrak, another carrier, or provide overnight hotel accommodations, at Amtrak's sole discretion, but only when such circumstances resulted from the actions of Amtrak and this shall constitute Amtrak's sole liability and passenger's sole and exclusive remedy. Some states may not allow the exclusion of incidental or consequential damages, so the above limitation or exclusion may not apply to you.*

I've also ask for the opinion of RailPAC's resident Long Distance Train expert Russ Jackson about what Mr. Miller can do about his cancelled trip. NB

Mr. Miller, in answer to your questions: The line reopened within a few days, as it was on the BNSF's main line that carries heavy freight movements 24 hours a day. Were you able to reschedule your trip on Amtrak? Were you informed of your rights? To my knowledge Amtrak

does not provide a hotel in this circumstance, since you did not board a train. They can do so if your trip is delayed en-route and you miss a guaranteed connection, or a train is annulled en-route. I would recommend if you have had any problems you check with Amtrak by phone and then write to them regarding refunds, etc. I do hope they explained everything when your trip was canceled.

Russ Jackson RailPAC

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