
Subject: Comet Cars use start Oct 21 on San Joaquin 711 and 718

From: Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)

To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

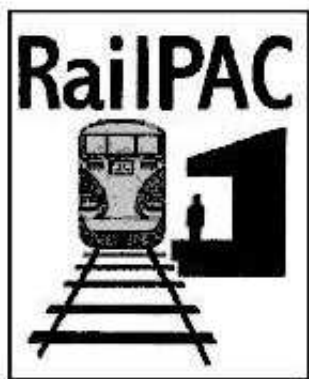
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for October 21, 2013

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Rail Passenger Association of California
www.railpac.org
Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!

A – Aviation Century Connection



Here's the problem. The vertical line represents the joint Green/Crenshaw Light Rail Line with a joint station near LAX shown at the white box at Aviation/Century which soon will start construction. The blue horizontal line is the proposed LAX People Mover. The nearest station to Light Rail on this plan is at 98th street east of Aviation. One proposal is an elevated walkway between the two stations which will require passengers to climb up and down stairs to get to the different levels of both stations. Other proposals call for expensive routing of Light Rail in or nearer to LAX. **What is not being proposed is the obvious solution.** That is to build a connection between the two lines with either a branch of the People Mover extended to the Light Rail Station or extending some Light Rail Trains to the airport sharing the People Mover right of way. The technology for the People Mover hasn't even been chosen yet. Most People Movers are fully automated and run continuously in a closed loop. Adding branches and mixing traffic appears to overtax most automated systems. When the Green Line was being planned in the 1990's there was talk of making it fully automated. However the planners complained it was too complicated to do that with a junction for trains to go to LAX or the South Bay. However the [fully automated Vancouver Skytrain](#) has no problems running with branches on their system.

[Mass transit, meet LAX. Maybe.](#)

Los Angeles Times Editorial Oct 13, 2013

The latest ideas from Los Angeles World Airports and the MTA may work, though planners still have a long way to go.



This is a Blue Line automated People Mover at San Francisco International Airport (SFO). SFO also has a Red Line; both lines run in a loop going in opposite directions to each other. For passengers riding BART most need to transfer to the People Movers to get around the airport. The People Movers don't serve Caltrain although you can see Blue Line trains from the San Bruno Caltrain Station. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Amtrak ridership increases again, but long-distance trains in doubt](#)

McClatchy Washington Bureau-Oct 14, 2013

Amtrak said Monday it posted another yearly increase in passengers as doubts loomed over the future of its money-losing network of long-distance trains.

The national passenger railroad said 31.6 million people rode its trains in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, with \$2.1 billion in ticket sales.

Amtrak first crossed the 30 million mark in 2011, up from 20 million a decade earlier.

State-supported Amtrak's corridor trains in the Northeast, Midwest, Northwest and California accounted for half the ridership total. Its long-distance routes also posted their best year in 20 years, said president and CEO Joe Boardman.

Amtrak's messaging comes back to haunt it. The Empire Builder alone is Amtrak's second largest revenue generator. The Long Distance Trains don't lose money, it is Amtrak's overhead that gets charged to the Long Distance Trains is where the money goes, NB

[Smaller Cities Propel Amtrak Ridership to a New High](#)

DC.STREETBLOG.ORG Oct 15, 2013

The Northeast Corridor still accounts for a huge share of Amtrak's total ridership, with 11.4 million trips, but the ridership on that segment was down slightly from the previous year. The major growth was in routes serving smaller cities...

News of the ridership high coincided with the release of a new poll of eight midwestern Congressional districts, showing support for Amtrak is much stronger than beltway political squabbles would indicate.

[Major steps being made toward rail](#)

The Desert Sun-Oct 20, 2013

Local transportation leaders have been pushing for daily train service between the Coachella Valley and Los Angeles for two decades.

[Amtrak's San Joaquin trains set ridership record](#)

Fresno Bee-Oct 15, 2013

Train ridership in the San Joaquin Valley grew faster than almost any place in the nation last year, according to figures released Monday by Amtrak.

[Capitol and other CA Corridor Statistics \(September, 2013\)](#)

By David B. Kutrosky, Managing Director

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Pacific Surfliners September 2013:

- Ridership: 207,310 passengers; -2.3% vs. Sept 2012; +2.5% vs. prior YTD
- Ticket Revenue: -1.2% vs. Sept 2012; +6.8% vs. prior YTD
- On-time performance: 83% (FY2013 on-time performance: 85%)

San Joaquin September 2013:

- Ridership: 91,129 passengers -0.9% vs. Sept 2012; +6.62% vs. prior YTD
- Ticket Revenue only: -1.5% vs. Sept 2012; +1.9% vs. prior YTD
- On-time performance: 84% (FY 2013 on-time performance: 78%)

[California to pay more for Amtrak in new agreement](#)

Sacramento Bee-Oct 15, 2013

SAN FRANCISCO -- California taxpayers will be paying \$19 million more a year to finance Amtrak service in a 19-state agreement announced .

[Agreements between Amtrak, 19 states push rail improvements ...](#)

Railway Track & Structures-Oct 16, 2013

Under the Section 209 policy, state partners will pay for approximately 85 percent of operating costs that are attributed to their routes, as well as for capital maintenance costs of the Amtrak equipment they use and for support costs such as safety programs and marketing. Amtrak will pay about 15 percent for backbone costs, such as centralized dispatching and services and back shops.

[Amtrak service between Indianapolis and Chicago to continue](#)

Indianapolis Star- Oct 15, 2013

Mike Pence announced Tuesday that the state has reached an agreement with Amtrak and local communities to keep the Hoosier State ...

[Amtrak ridership rebounds in Minot after flood](#)

In-Forum-Oct 16, 2013

MINOT, N.D. — Amtrak ridership in Minot has rebounded from travel and depot disruptions following Souris River flooding two summers ago.

[Faith keeps Sikh man off Amtrak bus](#)

News10.net-Oct 17, 2013

Singh is proud of his Sikh faith. Everyday, he wears the five mandatory articles of his religion, including his Kirpan, is a ceremonial sword...

Singh said he's been on that bus with that driver several times over the last two years - his Kirpan always at his side - and he's never been told to remove it.

[Passenger Trains and Buses Should Connect With Each Other](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

For years in the past the Greyhound Bus Company complained about how unfair it was that as a private business it had to "compete" with Amtrak which received a government subsidy. An example of this is a California State Law, Senate Bill 804 (Perata) for the year 1999 which Greyhound sponsored. This law forbids passengers from using Amtrak connecting buses if they don't also ride the train. It doesn't matter if there are no reasonable alternative bus services to the Amtrak connecting bus to where the passenger is coming or going.

[Union Station Doesn't Need \\$7 Billion in Repairs to Be Accessible](#)

Slate Magazine (blog)-Oct 17, 2013

Those people might be interested to read the National Disability Rights Network's generally scathing report on Amtrak accessibility issues (PDF) which finds that Union Station is one of the elements of the system with the least problems.

[Fresno firm wins \\$1 million consulting contract for high-speed rail](#)

Merced Sun-Star - Oct 15, 2013

The California High-Speed Rail Authority, meeting Monday in Los Angeles, awarded the consulting contract to Precision Civil Engineering, which is based in Fresno and has offices in Sacramento, Paso Robles, Bakersfield and Arizona.

[High-speed rail construction could provide hundreds of jobs to local ...](#)

KERO-TV 23-Oct 18, 2013

Rail officials said it will be a requirement to hire a certain percentage of workers in areas with low employment, such as the Central Valley.

[High-Speed Rail CEO: No Construction Yet, But Work "Under Way"](#)

Capital Public Radio News-Oct 14, 2013

Yet today, nearly a year after the governor's original promise, there's been no groundbreaking. We asked Morales about this discrepancy, and he says work is actually under way – just not construction work. He says the contractor's been hired to both design and build the project – and right now, it's in the design stage.

"They're also mobilizing, getting people on the ground, setting up hiring processes, buying equipment, doing all the things to really gear up for the full blown construction which will be coming shortly,"

Morales said.

[High-Speed Rail Meeting in Fresno on 10/25](#)

KMPH Fox 26-Oct 17, 2013

The California Department of Transportation and the California High-Speed Rail Authority will hold another meeting to discuss the high-speed rail project. It will be on Wednesday, October 23; the main topic: the realignment of Freeway 99 through central Fresno.

[With No Planned Depot, Local Officials Want High-Speed Rail to Bypass SCV](#)

SCVNEWS.com Oct 14, 2013

A Santa Clarita delegation led Monday by Santa Clarita City Councilwoman Marsha McLean was in Los

Angeles to discuss local concerns with the high-speed rail project.

Initial plans are for High Speed Trains to run through Santa Clarita but not stop there between Palmdale and Burbank. As more money is available the plan is to tunnel and bypass Santa Clarita to reduce running times to Palmdale. NB

[State says federal funds can be used to start bullet train work](#)

Los Angeles Times - Oct 12, 2013

The new spending strategy could bypass potential legal obstacles posed by the case in Kenny's court. Attorneys for the California High Speed Rail Authority asserted in Friday's court filing that legal restrictions apply only to state money and do not affect \$3.24 billion in federal grants awarded for the project.

[Bring the state's 'high-speed' rail project to a full stop](#)

Visalia Times-Delta-Oct 17, 2013

Recklessness is a dubious approach for a project already facing serious questions about its viability. But that word aptly describes the state's attempt to bypass taxpayer protections to evade an adverse court ruling over "high-speed" rail plans. Legislators should not tolerate that tack — and should bring this risky project to a full halt.

Most of the hyperbole about the High Speed Rail program is driven by old fashion partisan politics rather than sound transportation policy. The Prop 1A Ballot measure allows the State to sell 10 Billion dollars in bonds for Public/Private financing of a High Speed Railroad through California. The assumption was the bonds would be matched with Federal Funds. The ballot measure prevents the State from subsidizing operation of HSR Train service. But the intent of the project is that the majority of the funding will be privately raised and serviced by profits from the operation of the HSR trains. Most High Speed trains, most intercity passenger trains for that matter make an operating profit. The ballot measure does not require the train's profits to pay off all of the capital costs of the HSR project. Much of the hysterical opposition to the HSR project is either ignorant of what is in the Prop 1A ballot measure or is intentionally trying to mislead the public. NB

[Brown emerges from bill signings with a strong political hand](#)

Los Angeles Times Oct 18, 2013

The governor, who is receiving kudos for temperate lawmaking, seems virtually immune to an election challenge next year...

In a recent interview, Brown said he plans to stay his course. He'll focus on the nitty-gritty work of implementing policies he has already signed into law — on education and prisons, for example — **and will keep pushing for a state bullet train, he said.** *emphasis added*

[Supervisor David Rogers Talks High Speed Rail with Governor Jerry ...](#)

PR Web (press release) Oct 15, 2013

District 2 Supervisor David Rogers discussed an alternative plan for High Speed Rail with Governor Jerry Brown during a conference May 30 in ...

This press release is from a Supervisor for Madera County and is mostly for local consumption. A local concern is the loss of private farmland for right of way for the High Speed Rail project. The suggestion of Supervisor Rogers was that High Speed Rail be built mostly on existing rights of way and at lower speeds. NB

[Arriva proposes new Amsterdam – Brussels high-speed services](#)

International Railway Journal Oct 18. 2013

ARRIVA has called on the Dutch government to allow private operators to help fill the void left by the

withdrawal of Fyra high-speed services between the Netherlands and Belgium.

[China Stocks Climb to One-Month High as Railway Companies Surge](#)

Businessweek-Oct 13, 2013

China's benchmark stock index rose to a one-month high as railway companies surged on speculation they may help build Thailand's high-speed train system, offsetting data showing lower exports and faster inflation.

Railroad Stocks in a communist country? NB

[CSR and CNR vie for Asia's high speed rail market](#)

WantChinaTimes-Oct 20, 2013

During the recent high speed rail exhibition in Bangkok, both CSR and CNR both displayed their respective high speed rail locomotives CRH380A and CRH380BL, attracting widespread attention.

Two state-owned companies COMPETING over a contract in Thailand? Just think what other countries would be doing for business in California if we had a modern connections between Los Angeles and Bakersfield to the rest of the State! NB

[Freight rail makes staggering comeback](#)

Superior Telegram Oct 18, 2013

Take the Staggers Act of 1980. It was a law that largely deregulated a struggling railroad industry. Named after the late Democratic Congressman Harley Staggers, it was signed into law by — not Ronald Reagan — Jimmy Carter.

At the ceremony, President Carter points out the railroad deregulation act resulted from strong bipartisan support in both houses....

Allowing railroad companies to set their own rates and providing flexibility to respond to market forces has resulted in an industry that was in free fall coming back from the brink. In the 30-year period before 1980, railroad market share fell from 56.1 to 37.5 percent. Since 1980 it stabilized and has increased to 40 percent.

Inflation-adjusted rates have plummeted over 40 percent while productivity and volume have exploded. During that same period, the train accident rate dropped 80 percent.

[CTC allocates \\$167 million to California rail projects](#)

Railway Track & Structures- Oct 15, 2013

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocated \$359 million to 36 projects. The CTC says the funds represent an investment that will create jobs bolstering the state's economy, reduce traffic congestion, repair highways and bridges and improve rail service.

Of the funds, \$167.15 million will fund five rail projects in San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Fairfield and San Joaquin.

[Transportation projects get state funding boost](#)

Stockton Record-Oct 15, 2013

For rail passengers, \$20.5 million is headed toward building 3.8 miles of double railroad track between Stockton and Escalon. It will improve the on-time performance of Amtrak's San Joaquin routes using the tracks, according to the California Transportation Commission. The route connects Stockton to Sacramento, Oakland and Bakersfield.

[Festivities celebrating Caltrain's 150th anniversary set for Saturday ...](#)

InMenlo- Oct 16, 2013

On October 17, 1863, the construction of the rail line for the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad was completed from San Francisco to Mayfield.

[Caltrain celebrates 150th anniversary in Menlo Park](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Oct 19, 2013

The 150th anniversary of the oldest continuously operating passenger rail line in the West was celebrated in Menlo Park on Saturday with oratory, a brass band and a historical re-enactment.

[Outlook bleak for quick end to BART strike](#)

San Francisco Chronicle-Oct 19, 2013

On Saturday, there were few indications that either BART or its unions will be settling the strike anytime soon. Even the vote, which transit district officials had demanded, can't take place until sometime later in the week, Bryant said.

[Train kills 2 BART track workers amid strike](#)

CBS News-Oct 19, 2013

BART officials said in a statement that the manager who was operating the train was an "experienced operator," and the four-car train was being run in automatic mode under computer control at the time of the accident.

Officials from the unions representing BART's train operators and some of the system's other workers have warned of the danger that could come with allowing managers to operate trains...

The procedures for such maintenance require one employee to inspect the track and the other to serve as a lookout for oncoming traffic, BART officials said. They did not immediately say whether that procedure had been followed..

[Could Metro Build a Tram Down Van Nuys Boulevard?](#)

LA Curbed Oct 15, 2013

It seems like Metro keeps coming up with more options, options, options for the project along the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor, which will link up Ventura Boulevard with the San Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink station (it's already one of the most heavily-used bus routes).

[Here's a Look at the Potential Big Redesign For Union Station](#)

LA CURBED Oct 17, 2013

Yesterday, a Metro board committee signed off on a big new redesign of Union Station (which preserves the historic building, natch)--the recommended plan adds a new main passenger concourse running east/west, perpendicular to the station (which should free up the station itself for other, non-transit uses), and relocates the Patsaouras Bus Plaza to run north/south (to make for better connections to other kinds of transit).

[SDSU trolley-depot blaze prompts evacuation](#)

KFMB News 8-Oct 15, 2013

Transit administrators deployed buses to transport rail riders around the area and used a built-in ventilation system to clear the air in the train ...

[How can America pay for its roads?](#)

The Economist Oct 14, 2013

THE fuel efficiency of American vehicles has shot up in recent years, thanks to a blend of government mandates, environmental concerns and consumer fashion..... But it is deeply worrying for governments. Roads and highways are funded by the state and federal taxes that drivers pay at the pump. Fewer petrol purchases means a drop in tax revenue. Since 2008 the federal Highway Trust Fund, which takes in gas-tax revenues, has had to borrow \$41 billion from the Treasury to stay afloat. Officials warn it could go bust in 2015. State governments are facing similar shortfalls. How can they continue to pay for roads?

The Highway Trust Fund also pays for many rail transit projects. NB

[Railroads Shipping Oil Face New Rules After Quebec Fire: Energy](#)

Bloomberg-Oct 17, 2013

New rules will boost costs to transport crude by rail in North America as trains are forecast to carry as much as 2 million barrels a day, about equal to what flows daily from Norway.



The view from the train at the Surf/Lompoc Station. The Surfing is great, except for the Great White Sharks which have attacked surfers by this beach. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re: Would the Railroads want anybody besides Amtrak on their rails?

I'm surprised by Andrew Selden's comment advocating that states open up competitive bidding on state rail operations. Does Mr. Selden forget that the Host Railroads will unlikely allow just any company to operate on their rails. Am I missing something here? Herzog runs Caltrain on Caltrain rail and on UP with ACE, but Amtrak qualifies for much of the rest of the rails.

Bruce Jenkins

If anything the Railroads would welcome new operators. The Railroads are not happy with Amtrak. By law Amtrak gets a discount using the Railroad's tracks. The Railroads say they are not making money on what Amtrak pays on a per mile basis. By comparison on the commuter lines operated by companies other than Amtrak the Railroads get paid much more than what Amtrak has to pay. The Railroads are also annoyed with Amtrak's trains often being late and disrupting their train operations. For the Railroads if you pay them enough and have liability insurance to cover everything (even for things that are the railroad's fault) they are happy. Even

with higher payments to the Railroads these independent train operators are able to underbid Amtrak for contracts such as Caltrain and ACE. NB

Re: Do Passenger Trains have to make a Profit

Let's say I'm a long distance traveler. Why should I pay more so a short distance traveler pays less? And if a train is operating with many empty seats, why wouldn't it mean that either the service wasn't useful or the fares too high or both?

It seems to me that a better way to go would be to arrange the services and set the fares in a manner designed to win the loyalty and affection of both long distance and short distance travelers. This could take the form of longer distance trains with fares arranged to attract long distance travelers and other trains geared more to shorter distance travelers. And, as you say, to a more flexible method of assigning fares, as is common among the airlines.

The question as to how much each category of train should be subsidized should, in any event, be handled as a distinct and separate matter. We should be able to do better than sticking the long distance traveler in order to give the short distance traveler a break.

Jerry Cauthen

I doubt I can give you a short answer. But I'd point out that 40 years ago long distance phone calls were very expensive and local calls were a dime a call of almost unlimited time. Even before World War II the cost to the phone company for a long distance call wasn't much greater than for a local call. The reason for this was government regulations. The phone company was allowed to make a good profit on the long distance calls to subsidize local calls which the phone company made little or no money. The idea was the local calls should be subsidized because most people needed to make local calls in their daily life. Needless to say deregulation has changed all that. The reason long distance calls didn't cost much more than local calls is most of the expense of using the phone was the overhead cost of the phone system. The same is true for transportation. For short distance trains to do better economically, the longer the route the better. Even on a Surfliner going from San Diego to San Luis Obispo, there is no reason you can't buy a ticket from Oceanside to Los Angeles and be charged by the mile. If you charged everyone the same price regardless of the distance you would lose sales and not fill up seats in between endpoints. But the income from passengers going north of Los Angeles can make it easier to keep fares lower for travelers going shorter distances. The nice thing about trains is if you want to increase capacity you can always add more cars. We need longer trains with more people in more seats to improve the cost recovery of the trains.

In most of the world passenger railroads use yield management to fill up seats. The bus companies are doing it here now and bus ridership is on the rise. Yield Management is the use of online ticketing to price trips and even location of seats to get the most money. If demand is low the price is discounted and if demand is high it is what ever the market will bear. On a train, plane or bus once your close the door and start moving that seat if it is empty is a perishable item. In a business that is a total loss. For passenger train service to grow we need more riders and more of the public to want to use it. The more independent financially rail passenger service is the less vulnerable it will be to the extremes of politics. With yield management discretionary travelers can get good deals on travel with online ticketing while the operator will always get income with that seat. NB

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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You can send your comments to me at nbraymer@railpac.org

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