

Subject:	Leahy wants Metrolink Job, SFV Nimbys oppose HSR
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Date:	Wednesday, January 21, 2015 12:00 AM

RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for January 20, 2015

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



Interior at night of the recently opened ARTIC, the new transportation center for Anaheim. On the left hand side are the Amtrak ticket counters while on the right hand side are the counters for Greyhound and ART, the shuttle bus service for the area around Disneyland. The stairs lead to the pedestrian bridge over the tracks to the platforms. The ceiling has different colored lights that can be turned on. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Is high-speed rail between Portland and Vancouver on track?](#)

Globalnews.ca - Jan 14, 2015

The new California line, which will run from Los Angeles to San Francisco, won't be completed for another 13 years, but it's renewing calls to bring a similar rail line that will connect Oregon, Washington state, and British Columbia.

It's an idea that's been around for a while. The B.C. government years ago signed a wide-ranging agreement to connect California to B.C. within two decades.

[2000 rally against plan to put high-speed rail in Angeles forest](#)

Los Angeles Times - Jan 14, 2015

The route would head north out of Burbank, go around the Hansen Dam Recreation Area and run through the forest before exiting near Lake Palmdale. About 18 to 20 miles of tunneling would be necessary. The California High Speed Rail Authority is studying the alignment along with two original proposals that would parallel the 14 Freeway. A decision on the route is expected this spring.

["I Don't Want to Ride My Horse Under the Rail:" Rural LA ...](#)

NBC Southern California-Jan 14, 2015

More than 1,000 rural residents voiced their opposition to the proposed route of the California high speed rail project Tuesday night.

They put on a united front at the meeting in Lake View Terrace, complaining about how the planned line will bisect the area and nearby Sunland and Tujunga, drive down property values and damage wildlife.

[Schiff decries proposal for high-speed rail tunnel below Angeles National Forest](#)

Glendale News Press-Jan 15, 2015

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) is speaking out against the proposed idea of having high-speed rail tracks run through underground tunnels beneath the Angeles National Forest to connect Palmdale and Burbank and calls the alternative a costly dead-end.

California's High-Speed Rail Authority plans to study having a section of the rail pass through the southwestern part of the forest — known as the East Corridor — but Schiff said in a statement on Thursday the group should stick to the plan of having rails running alongside the 14 Freeway, an option that he believes would come with a lower price tag.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich has proposed consideration of the route through 35 miles of the Angeles National Forest with 18 to 20 miles of tunneling.

The whole point of studying different alignments is to find the best one with the least impact. You'll never be able to please everyone. The whole point of tunneling under the Angeles National Forest will be to minimize impacts to people and the environment. NB

[Do HSR's foes have a better alternative? No](#)

The Bakersfield Californian - Jan 15, 2015

But project opponents offer no real alternatives to our growing cross-state transportation issues. Are we going to build more freeways? How much wider can the Interstate 405 get? Clearly Interstates 15 and 5 could stand to be widened, too. Are we going to invest in smart cars, with tighter driving laws to monitor them?

A lot of questions and not a lot of answers from those in opposition.

One opposition claim is that building a train is relying on old technology, and that's valid. However, couldn't the same be said for building new roads to service thousands of cars? Regardless, California needs a sensible plan for its transportation future. We may have to accept that it includes very fast trains.

[More properties eyed for high-speed rail condemnation](#)

Fresno Bee-Jan 12, 2015

Twenty-eight more pieces of property in Fresno and Madera counties are in line for condemnation by the state to make way for California's high-speed train project following a vote Monday in Sacramento.

The state Public Works Board, which oversees land acquisition for state projects, adopted 24 resolutions declaring a public need to take the properties — totaling less than 32 acres — through eminent domain on behalf of the California High-Speed Rail Authority for the proposed bullet-train route. Twenty of the resolutions call for taking parts of the affected parcels, while the other four seek full parcels.

[Rail authority to buy 5000 acres for mitigation](#)

Fresno Business Journal-Jan 13, 2014

The California High Speed Rail Authority plans to buy around 5,000 acres in the Central Valley as partial mitigation for ecologically sensitive habitat it will be buying in Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern counties. Expected to cost \$54 million, the mitigation covers the loss and modification of biological habitat caused by construction and operation of the proposed bullet train project.

[High-speed rail board OKs \\$1.36B contract for second phase](#)

Visalia Times-Delta - Jan 14, 2015

The board on Tuesday awarded the contract to a joint venture by three companies: Dragados USA Inc., Flatiron West Inc., and Shimmick Construction Company Inc.

It includes \$1.2 billion to design and build the 60-mile segment from Fresno to north of Bakersfield and

\$160 million for Pacific Gas & Electric to relocate existing gas and electricity lines there.

[Sacramento rail car builder excited at prospect of high-speed rail](#)

News10.net-Jan 16, 2015

Siemens Rail Systems has just received a \$210 million extension of its contract to build light rail cars for San Francisco, on top of a nearly \$650 million contract last year for 175 new cars.

Siemens has built light rail cars for Sacramento, other U.S. cities and other countries at its current plant for nearly 30 years. But now, as high speed rail becomes a reality in California, the company said it's ready for what lies ahead.

[Las Vegas casinos may be betting on high-speed rail](#)

SFGate - Jan 12, 2015

What it needs is a big infusion of federal loans.

One idea being floated to make the project more attractive to the feds would be to extend the Vegas line across 60 miles of desert to Palmdale (Los Angeles County) and hook it to the high-speed rail link planned between Palmdale and Burbank.

A Vegas-to-Burbank line — which has the backing of the casinos — could be a money-maker and thus attract the interest of the private investment that high-speed rail needs if it is ever to connect San Francisco to Los Angeles.

[Nevada misses train of opportunity](#)

Las Vegas Review-Journal-Jan 17, 2015

“The manufacturing of train sets and the establishing of maintenance facilities will mean more jobs, increased economic benefits, and allow for the possible development of a whole new high-speed rail industry here in California,” said California High-Speed Rail Authority CEO Jeff Morales in an October press release seeking to recruit train manufacturers to California.

Pay attention to that last part: The trains that will be running in California will be built in California. That could've been us. Why?

[High-speed rail station could displace Dallas Morning News, WFAA](#)

Dallas Business Journal (blog)-Jan 12, 2015

A high-speed rail station could dramatically reshape downtown Dallas, possibly taking over the Dallas Morning News and WFAA-TV station on Young Street, according to renderings produced by Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

The Dallas-to-Houston bullet train is going through an environmental review process and Texas Central Railway, the private company behind the project, won't comment on where a Dallas station could be built. But DART has gotten a head start with its own drawing for where the station should go.

[High speed rail debate continues](#)

Your Houston News-Jan 14, 2015

Tensions rose even higher in the Texas high speed rail debate on Jan. 5, as hundreds of residents crowded into an auditorium at Lutheran High North to speak out against the two train routes proposed by Texas Central Railway.

[Mexico Reopens High-Speed Rail Project for New Bids](#)

ABC News-Jan 14, 2015

Mexico began accepting new bids on a multibillion-dollar high-speed rail project Wednesday, two months after the concession was abruptly canceled amid allegations of favoritism.

The planned 130-mile (210-kilometer) line between Mexico City and the central city of Queretaro would be the first of its kind in Latin America, reaching speeds of up to 186 mph (300 kph).

[Channel Tunnel closed and services hit after lorry fire](#)

BBC Jan 17, 2015

Eurostar says all its services for Saturday have been cancelled and trains have returned to their stations. It has told people expecting to travel to postpone their journeys and not go to the station. Kent Police said the fire happened at the French end of the tunnel and that no-one was hurt in the incident.

Lorry is British for truck. Trains ferrying trucks between Britain and France are a major market for the Chunnel. Truck fires are also a major problem on the Chunnel. NB

[Eurostar delays continue amid new Channel Tunnel disruption](#)

The Telegraph Jan 18, 2015

Trains were expected to be delayed by up to an hour because of only one tunnel being open. A Eurostar spokesman said: "One of the two tunnels, however, remains closed all day. In addition, Eurotunnel experienced new power supply problems this morning, which meant that both tunnels were again closed for two hours."

[Buffett Trapped by Oil Plunge After BNSF Commits to Rail Upgrade](#)

Bloomberg - Jan 13, 2015

Warren Buffett joked two years ago about the good fortune of having an oil boom in North Dakota, near the tracks of his BNSF Railway Co. More recently, the gusher has become a mixed blessing. Even as the rout in crude prices spurs producers to curtail spending in the Bakken shale fields, BNSF is sticking to its \$500 million plan to expand service to the area. The work spotlights an enduring challenge for the rail industry: how to time long-term capital programs when short-term forecasts can so often turn out wrong.

[BNSF outlines \\$6 billion capex plan](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Jan16, 2015

BNSF on Jan. 15, 2015 announced details about the major capital projects it plans to complete in 2015 to maintain and grow its rail network.

These planned capital investments are part of BNSF's 2015 capital plan of \$6 billion, which was announced last November and is the company's largest planned capital expenditure in its history.

[Amtrak back on old schedule after months of middle-of-the-night service in Whitefish](#)

The Missoulian-Jan 12, 2015

Whitefish and Amtrak officials will be on hand at the historic depot here to welcome eastbound passengers due in at 7:26 a.m., rather than the 4:26 a.m. time Amtrak has been depositing them at since April. Running the passenger trains on time has been problematic since the Bakken oil field boom congested the BNSF Railway tracks Amtrak uses in North Dakota with freight trains.

All it took to return to the traditional schedule was \$1 billion.

[Amtrak winter travel is cheaper on Missouri River Runner](#)

Lake Expo-Jan 16, 2015

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Winter travel just got a little better.

Amtrak Missouri River Runner passengers can save 20 percent on adult fares for travel Jan. 5 through March 31. The Missouri River Runner route goes from St. Louis, through Jefferson City, to Kansas City.

[West Virginians support Indiana's Amtrak line](#)

Journal and Courier-Jan 11, 2015

A shot of encouragement from two states away has lifted the spirits of Indiana passenger rail advocates who've been watching the clock tick toward a Jan. 31 deadline to secure continued operation of the Hoosier State line.

Friends of the Cardinal, a group of passenger rail supporters in Charleston, West Virginia, last week approved a resolution urging continued funding for the train that stops in Lafayette on its run between Indianapolis and Chicago four days a week.

[Want regular train service to Chicago someday? Watch what happens in Indiana this month](#)

Cincinnati Business Courier (blog) - Jan 15, 2015

Why should anyone in Cincinnati care? Because the only way Cincinnati will ever see regular train service to Chicago, let alone high-speed rail, is for Indiana to continue its four-day-a-week service.

"For us to expand to Cincinnati, it's got to exist in the first place," said Derek Bauman, Cincinnati's representative at All Aboard Ohio, a statewide passenger rail advocacy group.

What is really needed is a daily Cardinal. NB

[Bamboozled: Amtrak passenger, 70, upgrades ticket for 'handicapped services' that don't exist at station](#)

NJ.com-Jan 12, 2015

"When I went to the window I was informed there were no handicapped services or Red Caps at Metropark," she said. "She told me I would have had to travel from either Newark or New York City to obtain services."

So why, Flanagan wanted to know, would the ticket agent on the phone sell her a more costly ticket for services that weren't available?...

When the train arrived I asked the conductor to help me and all he did was lift my luggage over the gap between the train and the platform," she said. "I told him my problem and his response was that his job was to get the train departed on time."

I rarely find mediocre service on Amtrak, it is either excellent or terrible. It is a shame that the good work of the outstanding employees is overshadowed by the ones who seem to dislike passengers. NB

[Southwest hit with record \\$1.6 million fine for stranding passengers on tarmac](#)

CNN Money Jan 15, 2015

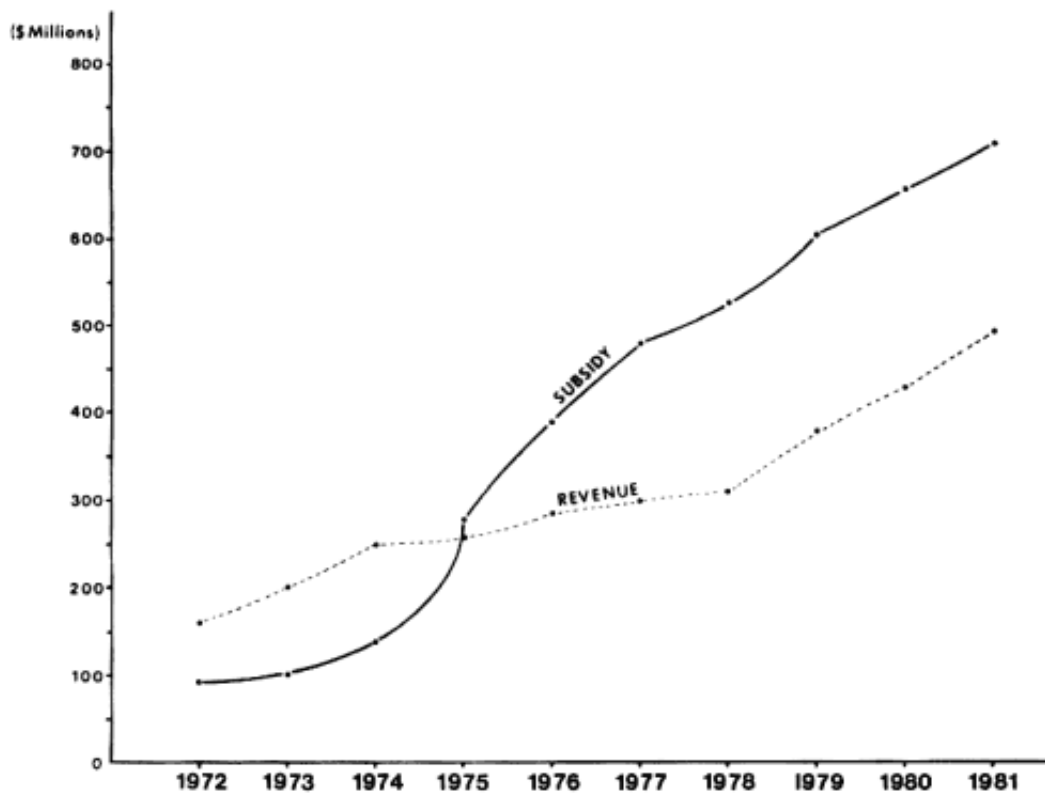
Southwest Airlines has been hit with a record \$1.6 million fine for keeping passengers trapped on the tarmac for hours at Midway Airport in Chicago.

The airline failed to clear 16 aircraft off of the runway in a timely fashion on the evening of Jan. 2, 2014, according to the Department of Transportation. Regulations require that flyers must be let off a plane within three hours of landing.

[More on the Amtrak Long Distance trains performance vs. the NEC](#)

Commentary by Andrew Selden, President, United Rail Passenger Alliance

Amtrak recently told a U.S. Senator in writing (from an Amtrak senior executive officer) that elimination of all of the long distance trains (after transition costs) would increase its need for annual federal subsidy, because the same costs would continue to exist but be spread over a much smaller base of activity. That means, quite clearly, that the long distance trains at least break even on operations. While the argument over incremental vs. fully-allocated accounting is entertaining but probably unresolvable, the fact remains that Amtrak itself says that NO federal subsidy is being used to support operation of the long distance trains.



What Mr. Selden says is not new. This graph is from the paper "Amtrak 90: A Route to Success" by Dr. Ronald Scheck, published in July 1982. This shows Amtrak's revenues and Federal subsidy from 1972-1981. In 1975 there is a sharp increase in Amtrak's subsidy when it was given ownership of the NEC. In 1980 under political pressure Amtrak cut 5 passenger trains (4 were Long Distance trains)" to cut costs and reduce the Federal subsidy". to Amtrak. As the graph shows cutting these trains had no effect on reducing its subsidy needs. NB

[Business Plan Draft and Public Meetings Week of January 20](#)

Capitol Corridor January 14, 2015

Capitol Corridor has updated its Business Plan for FY 2015-2017, and it can be found on our web site in draft form at: http://www.capitolcorridor.org/about_ccjpa/business_plan.php.

We encourage passengers and the general public to provide input on this draft by emailing bizplancomments@capitolcorridor.org or by mailing comments to CCJPA, 300 Lakeside Dr., 14th Floor East, Oakland, CA 94612. Comments are due by Friday, February 6.

[Joseph Szabo says goodbye to Federal Railroad Administration ...](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Jan 13, 2015

The first administrator with a rail labor background, Szabo completed a more than five-and-a-half-year FRA tenure that began in May 2009. Only Jolene Molitoris — who led the FRA for nearly eight years from April 1993 to January 2001, nearly covering former President Bill Clinton's two terms — held the administrator post longer.

"It's rare for an administrator to serve two terms," said Szabo during an interview held on his last day in office.

[Light rail enters the West's most sprawling metropolis](#)

High Country News Nov 24, 2014

I'm in downtown Tempe, Arizona, in the heart of the greater Phoenix metro area, and I just got off a public bus. That, alone, seems odd, here in one of America's most car-centric cities. But the scene before me is even stranger: A light rail train with silver and teal cars slides into the nearby station — a sort of

trellis with vines climbing on it, shaded by space-age, gleaming white sails.

[What Does Living 'Close' to Transit Really Mean?](#)

CityLab Jan 12, 2015

The question of how far people will walk to reach a transit stop has a pretty significant impact on the shape of cities. American urban planners conventionally draw that line at about a half-mile. Some guidelines pull it back to a quarter-mile, while others adjust the distance for bus stops (typically a quarter-mile) and train stations (typically a half-mile), but the consensus holds that no one makes it farther than half a mile on foot...

New research, set to be presented Monday at the 94th Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, suggests that some cities indeed might be selling their TOD footprint short. A study group led by planning scholar Arthur Nelson of the University of Arizona analyzed the impact that proximity to a light rail station had on office rents in metropolitan Dallas. They found that a quarter of the rent premium ("not a trivial amount," they submit) extended nearly a mile away from transit.

[Too Much Parking A Problem All Over](#)

CityLab Jan 14, 2015

"You see a huge amount of land dedicated to parking," said Karlin-Resnick, who presented the work Tuesday at the 94th annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board. "That land, particularly in downtowns, could really be dedicated to more active uses, economic generators, and by extension tax generators."

[1 dead, dozens hurt after Metro car fills with smoke](#)

Washington Post-Jan 13, 2014

It was a commuter's worst nightmare: a Metro train abruptly stops, goes dark and fills with smoke in a tunnel in downtown Washington. Before it was over, one woman was killed and more than 80 passengers were suffering from respiratory problems and other health issues.

[Electrical problem on smoky DC subway lasted 44 minutes](#)

News On 6 - Jan 16, 2015

WASHINGTON (AP) - An electrical malfunction that filled a Washington subway train with smoke, killing one passenger and sickening dozens more, continued for 44 minutes before the Metro transit agency shut off power to the affected rail, federal investigators said Friday.

[On Washington Metro, a Death Is Rare but Problems Are Almost Daily](#)

New York Times-Jan 14, 2014

The incident — the most calamitous on the Metro since a 2009 crash that killed eight riders and a train operator — was the most serious among a string of almost daily problems that befall riders of the system, like perpetually broken escalators, frequent delays and minor track fires. Earlier this week, the freezing weather cracked some aboveground rails in Virginia, causing extensive disruptions.

Riders, transit advocates and elected officials expressed concern and exasperation Tuesday with the response to Monday's incident, including what appeared to be a chaotic evacuation of the affected train, which was headed from downtown Washington toward Virginia.

[RAILWAYS: Police crack down on dangerous track-crossers](#)

Press-Enterprise-Jan 14, 2015

As a conductor on the railroad line passing through the San Geronio Pass, Lonnie Richardson said he witnesses it all the time: vehicles and pedestrians ignoring crossing signals and making a beeline across the tracks.

"I see it three or four times a day," he said from the engine compartment of a special two-engine train

running back and forth between two crossings in Banning on Wednesday. But unlike most days, when railroad workers hold their breath and violators go unpunished, the law was there with him.

[Free Metrolink to Auto Club 400 Speedway](#)

Media.com (press release)-Jan 12, 2015

FONTANA, Calif. (Jan. 12, 2015) – Race fans can take Metrolink for free to the Auto Club Speedway's Auto Club 400 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race on March 22, 2015. The free train ride will be offered to a limited number of race fans with the support of Clean Transportation Funding from the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC).

[Jane Parker: TAMC delivers on promise to plan, fund, deliver](#)

Monterey County Herald Jan 16, 2015

In this era of highly charged politics, people are sometimes surprised when government can get things done. While I have seen gridlock both locally and nationally, I would like to recognize one of our local agencies that has gotten a lot done for us in 2014 — the Transportation Agency for Monterey County...

- Significant progress continues to be made to bring new rail service between Salinas and Silicon Valley with the Capitol Corridor Extension to Monterey County.
- The Coast Daylight Train Project would add a second daily round-trip train ride between San Francisco and Los Angeles, stopping in Salinas. This year, TAMC worked with the Federal Railroad Administration and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments to publish a draft environmental document for public review.
- The agency held several Multi-Modal Corridor workshops which provided the public the opportunity to help plan for fast, frequent and reliable bus service, bike routes and safer pedestrian crossings between Marina and Salinas.

[California agencies seek public input on emissions reduction grant program](#)

Progressive Rail Rooding-Jan 16, 2015

The agencies announced two public workshops will be held Jan. 20 and 21 on the new Transit and Intercity Rail Capital grant program for rail and bus improvements. The workshops are part of a state effort to invest proceeds statewide from the Cap-and-Trade Program to reduce greenhouse gases as required under California's climate action law, Caltrans officials said in a press release.

[What is the Future of Passenger Rail Service in California?](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

In my opinion in one word: Good ! We have come a long way since 1979 when I first became involved in rail advocacy and no one was sure then that there would even be any Rail Passenger service in 2015. The question is no longer if there will be any Rail Passenger service, but how much and to where. The places where ridership and service are the strongest are in the most densely populated areas of California.

[A Metro man from a transit family wants the lines to keep growing](#)

Los Angeles Times-Jan 17, 2015

Leahy, rumor had it, might not be leaving transit when he steps away from MTA. He might not even leave the building, because Metrolink is looking for a new chief. The regional rail agency is a much smaller operation, but a less politicized one, too.

"I absolutely am going to apply," Leahy told me, saying he relishes the challenge of increasing Metrolink's efficiency and ridership.

[New chart: Metro on receiving end of record amount of federal funds](#)

The Source Jan 15, 2015

The New Starts application is going well. The Federal Transit Administration recently gave Metro

approval to begin the engineering phase of Section 2 for the Purple Line Extension — a very positive sign. Assuming the New Starts funds are approved, that would mean that Metro would be receiving more than \$300 million in New Starts funds annually.

As you can see on the above chart, \$300 million each year would be considerably more than Metro currently is receiving. The primary reason for that: the Measure R half-cent sales tax increase approved by nearly 68 percent of Los Angeles County voters enabled Metro to seek matching federal funds.

[WiFi Coming to DTLA Metro Stations in June](#)

DT News Jan 13, 2015

Come May, riders will have WiFi access on their mobile devices aboard the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Red and Purple line trains between Union Station and Seventh Street, according to a December Metro memo. In August, those same Downtown stations — Union Station, Civic Center, Pershing Square and Seventh Street/Metro Center — are slated to provide cell service

[San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee announces expansion of new Muni light rail fleet](#)

abc7news.com - Jan 13, 2015

Lee said the new 215 trains will be a big boost to the city's transportation infrastructure and wouldn't be possible without the \$500 million transportation bond measure approved by voters in the November election.

The expansion aims to address the city's growing population and Muni's increased ridership, Lee said. According to Lee's office, the first batch of 175 light-rail vehicles have been purchased from Siemens for about \$648 million and that the additional 40 light-rail vehicles are expected to cost about \$210 million.

[Coming to Caltrain: Longer Trains With More Room for Bikes](#)

Streetsblog San Francisco (blog)-Jan 13, 2015

Caltrain will add a third bike car to all six of its Bombardier trains, Executive Director Michael Scanlon announced at the transit agency's monthly board of directors meeting last week. With the new cars, bike capacity will increase from 48 to 72 on each of the Bombardier trains. But it could take up to one year to place the six-car trains into service.

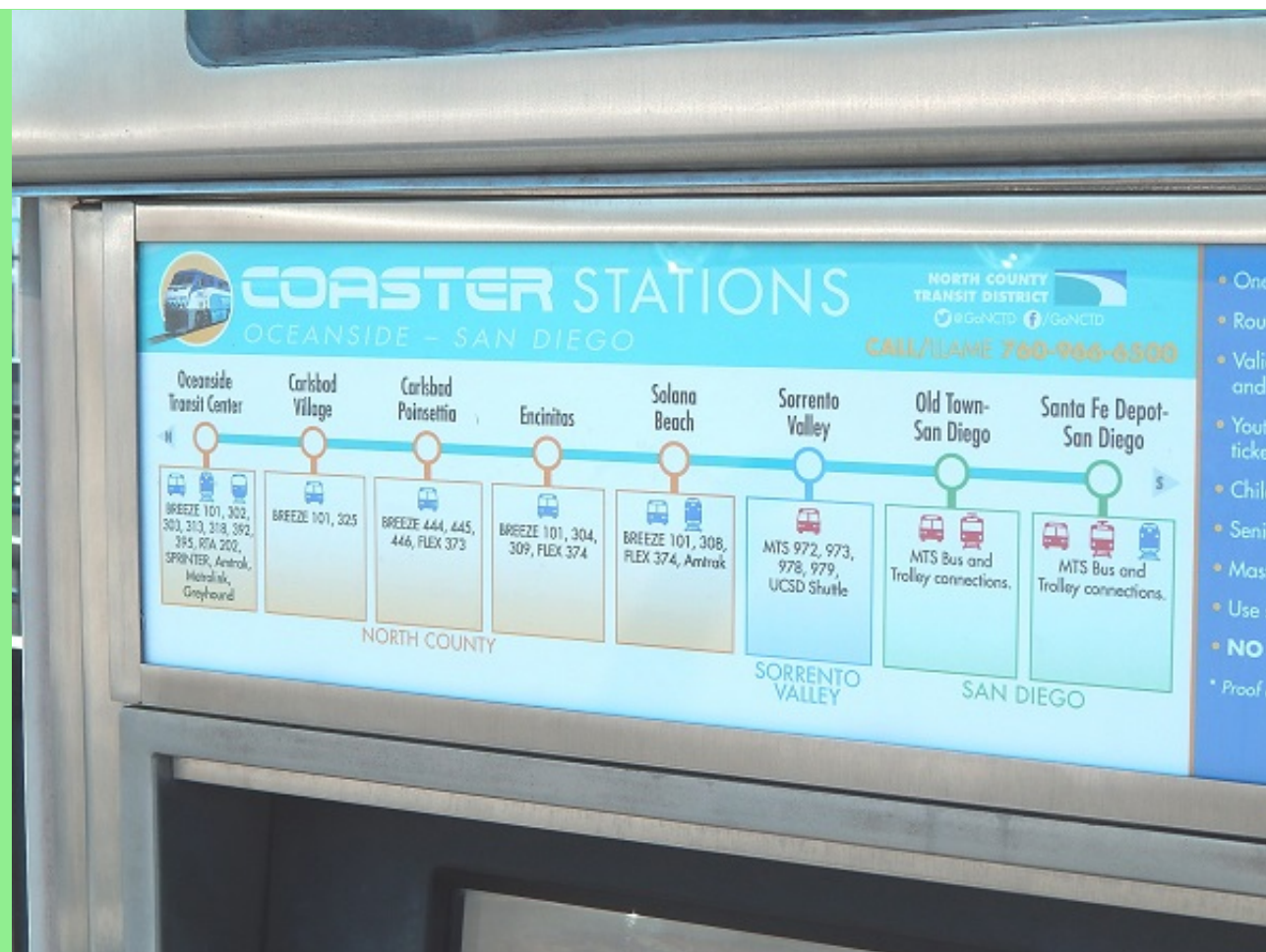
The new bike cars are part of a larger \$15 million project to acquire and refurbish 16 used rail cars from Los Angeles Metrolink, adding about 2,000 seats across Caltrain's fleet. The agency's 15 older gallery-style trains already carry 80 bikes each, since seats are not placed in the center of the two bike cars on those trains, and will not receive more bike capacity.

[Protesters plan to disrupt busy San Francisco rail station](#)

Reuters-Jan 16, 2015

SAN FRANCISCO _ (Reuters) - Activists protesting police shootings of young black men staged demonstrations at three San Francisco rail stations on Friday, forcing officials to divert trains and sending morning commuters miles out of their way.

No injuries were reported, and two people were arrested on misdemeanor charges of interfering with the operation of a rail system, Bay Area Rapid Transit police spokesman Jim Allison said.



View of the top of a Coaster Ticket machine. Recently a new graphic has been added which shows both the stations for the train, but also the connecting transit services at the stations. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

Re: Late Amtrak Trains

Wow the Lake Shore Ltd. 10 1/2 hours late leaving Chicago..and then had to get a new crew on the law. how lucky I was only 10 minutes late leaving, and 5 1/2 hours late into NYP, most of the delay held for several freights.[3:50 lost by Cleveland]

My first long-distance Amtrak trip was Sept 76, and most recent Oct 2014, and a few good trips but all these years later still chronically late. Does it ever become a real railroad? The Chicago el and NYC subways are.. [adjusted for shorter trips time wise] in recent years time keeping has been great.. but then so were New York Central and Penn when I rode them 50 years ago. Once after a blizzard!

People must still love train travel as I do, despite poor performance trains usually filled, or nearly so.. but why does a schedule have to be a farce?

Ed Davis

Boise ID

Re:Metrolink Board Chairman

Shawn Nelson for Metrolink Board chairman? What I know of Shawn Nelson, if anything, he would probably seek to dismantle the commuter railroad.

Mel Miller

I don't know that much about Mr. Nelson. I do know that all politicians love to dismantle programs that are not in the interest of their supporters. That way they can transfer the money to the projects their supporters want. Orange County has a major investment now in Metrolink and hasn't been happy with its management for some time. I doubt Mr. Nelson will want to buck all

the cities which have major investments in Metrolink stations by shutting it down. It remains to be seen what Mr. Nelson will support to improve Metrolink. NB

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

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