

AGENDA

TAMC RAIL POLICY COMMITTEE

Meeting of Monday
October 3, 2011

Transportation Agency for Monterey County
Conference Room
55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas

3:00 P.M.

Complete agenda packets are on display at the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) office and at these public libraries: Carmel, Monterey, Salinas Steinbeck Branch, Seaside, Prunedale, and King City. Any person who has a question concerning an item on this agenda may call the TAMC office to make inquiry concerning the nature of the item described on the agenda. Please recycle this agenda.

1. **Quorum Check, Call to Order and Introductions.** A quorum for the voting TAMC Rail Policy Committee members consists of a minimum of 6 of the following voting members: Potter (Chair), Sollecito (Vice-Chair), Armenta, Bachofner, Calcagno, Parker, Delgado, Craig, Matarazzo, and Chavez.
If you are unable to attend, please make sure that one of your two alternates attends the meeting. Your courtesy to the other members to assure a quorum is appreciated.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON TRANSPORTATION MATTERS NOT ON TODAY'S AGENDA.**
Any member of the public may address the Rail Policy Committee on any item not on the agenda but within the jurisdiction of the Rail Policy Committee. Comments on items on today's agenda may be given when that agenda item is discussed.

BEGINNING OF CONSENT AGENDA: Approve the staff recommendations for **items 3.1-3.3** below by majority vote with one motion. Any member may pull an item off the Consent Agenda to be moved to the end of the **CONSENT AGENDA** for discussion and action.

- 3.1 **APPROVE** minutes of August 1, 2011 Rail Policy Committee meeting.
– Zeller

Pages 7 - 9

- 3.2 RECEIVE** the call for nominations for the tenth annual Transportation Agency Excellence awards to honor individuals, businesses, groups or projects for their efforts to improve the transportation system in Monterey County. – Hoschouer
Pages 10 - 14

Transportation Agency would like to encourage and appreciate efforts made by Monterey County residents, businesses and employees to improve transportation in Monterey County by awarding Transportation Excellence Awards. Staff encourages committee members to submit nominations, which are due by December 5, 2011. The awards ceremony will take place during the regular January 2012 Transportation Agency board meeting.

- 3.3 APPROVE** 2012 schedule of Rail Policy Committee meetings. – Watson
Page 15

The proposed schedule of Rail Policy Committee meetings for 2012 follows the existing pattern of meetings on the first Monday of the month at 3:00 p.m. except July and December, when all committee meetings are cancelled due to holidays, and January and September, when the meeting is on the second Monday of the month due to New Year's and Labor Day holiday conflicts.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

- 4. RECEIVE** update on the Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County project. – Watson
Pages 16 - 19

Progress on the Commuter Rail Extension project since the last report to this Committee on May 2, 2011, includes the submittal of the Cultural Resources Technical Report to the State Historic Preservation Office and the submittal of the fourth Administrative Draft Environmental Assessment to the Federal Transit Administration, as well as meetings with responsible and stakeholder agencies.

- 5. RECEIVE** update on Monterey Branch Line project schedule. – Hoschouer
Page 20

The Federal Transit Administration is currently reviewing the Alternatives Analysis for the Monterey Branch Line Project. Next steps are to complete the Environmental Review.

6. **RECEIVE** update on the Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County Project Fall Rail Tour. – Gavin **Pages 21 - 23**

Staff is coordinating a Fall Rail Tour on the Amtrak Coast Starlight, which will provide an opportunity for the Rail Policy Committee and other interested persons to discuss and directly experience the proposed Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County service.

7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS** and/or **COMMENTS** from Rail Policy Committee members on matters that they wish to put on future Committee agendas.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Rail Policy Committee meeting:

Monday, November 7, 2011

3:00 p.m.

Transportation Agency for Monterey County Conference Room
55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, California 93901

Light refreshments will be provided

**If you have any items for the next agenda, please submit them to:
Christina Watson, Rail Program Coordinator
by Tuesday, October 25, 2011
Christina@tamcmonterey.org**

Documents relating to an item on the open session that are distributed to the Committee less than 72 hours prior to the meeting shall be available for public inspection at the office of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, 55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, CA. Documents distributed to the Committee at the meeting by staff will be available at the meeting; documents distributed to the Committee by members of the public shall be made available after the meeting.

**Transportation Agency for Monterey County
55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, CA 93901-2902
Monday thru Friday
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
TEL: 831-775-0903
FAX: 831-775-0897**

The next Rail Policy Committee agenda will be prepared by Agency staff and will close at noon Tuesday, October 25, 2011 nine (9) working days before the regular meeting. Any member may request in writing an item to appear on the agenda. The request shall be made by the agenda deadline and any supporting papers must be furnished by that time or be readily available.

If requested, the agenda shall be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC Sec. 12132), and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. Individuals requesting a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, may contact Transportation Agency at 831-775-0903. Auxiliary aids or services include wheelchair accessible facilities, sign language interpreters, Spanish Language interpreters and printed materials, and printed materials in large print, Braille or on disk. These requests may be made by a person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in the public meeting, and should be made at least 72 hours before the meeting. All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the request.

CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS, MEDIA CLIPPINGS
Online at www.tamcmonterey.org

CORRESPONDENCE

None this agenda

REPORTS

- C-1** July 2011 Capitol Corridor and California Intercity Passenger Rail Performance Results
- C-2** August 2011 Capitol Corridor and California Intercity Passenger Rail Performance Results

MEDIA CLIPPINGS

- C-3** August 7, 2011 article in *Auburn Journal*, “Placer on track for share of fed rail funds, new passenger train car”
- C-4** August 18, 2011 article in *Gilroy Patch*, “Public gets glimpse of high-speed future, suggesting tweaks; Members of the Gilroy High-Speed Train Visioning Project shared simulations of what future development might look like around a station in Gilroy”
- C-5** August 18, 2011 article on *SFGate.com*, “Caltrain could share tracks with high-speed rail”
- C-6** August 19, 2011 article in *The Mercury News*, “Caltrain may drop Amtrak, switch to new conductor provider”
- C-7** August 19, 2011 article in *The Gilroy Dispatch*, “Caltrain nets federal funds for maintenance”
- C-8** August 19, 2011 article in *Belmont Patch*, “Caltrain execs: Transition to Be Seamless; Changeover and high-speed rail proposal ‘are unrelated’ spokesman says”
- C-9** August 23, 2011 article in *The Huffington Post*, “California High-Speed Rail faces trouble in Palo Alto – and more in Washington”
- C-10** August 24, 2011 article on *Rail.co*, “Caltrain recommends new operator to run rail system”
- C-11** August 30, 2011 article in *Palo Alto Online*, “Plan for ‘blended’ rail system gains steam; Rail Authority’s peer review group latest panel to support Peninsula lawmakers’ proposal to blend Caltrain, high-speed rail”
- C-12** August 31, 2011 article in *The San Clemente Times*, “Grants to Boost Rail Safety”
- C-13** August 31, 2011 article in *The Mercury News*, “Caltrain rejects lowest bidder to operate system”

- C-14** August 31, 2011 article in *Sign On San Diego*, “Caltrans awarded \$55M to improve Surfliner operations”
- C-15** September 1, 2011 article in *The Sacramento Bee*, “Caltrain selects new company to run rail line”
- C-16** September 2, 2011 article in *Foster City Patch*, “Caltrain approves operating contract with TransitAmerica; Amtrak will continue to run Caltrain through a five-month transition period”
- C-17** September 6, 2011 article on *KION Right Now*, “MST Introduces Rapid Transit Service to Monterey County”
- C-18** September 7, 2011 article in *Metro Magazine*, “Monterey, Calif., partners with music festival to launch BRT”
- C-19** September 7, 2011 article in *RailwayAge Magazine*, “Railhead Corp. tapped for Caltrain project”
- C-20** September 8, 2011 article on *Streetsblog Capitol Hill*, “House GOP’s 2012 Transportation Budget: Deep Cuts, Especially for Livability”
- C-21** September 12, 2011 article on *Streetsblog Capitol Hill*, “House and Senate Agree on 6-Month Transpo Extension”

AGENDA Item: 3.1

**TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY (TAMC)
RAIL POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
DRAFT Minutes of August 1, 2011
Transportation Agency for Monterey County
55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas**

	AUG 10	SEP 10	OCT 10	NOV 10	JAN 11	FEB 11	MAR 11	APR 11	MAY 11	JUN 11	AUG 11
F. Armenta, Dist. 1 (J. Martinez)	C	P	C	E	P	P	P(A)	C	P	C	E
L. Calcagno, Dist. 2 (H. Gowin)	A	P(A)	A	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)	A	P(A)	A	-
J. Parker, Dist. 4 (K. Markey)	N	P	N	P	P	P	P	N	P	N	P
D. Potter, Dist. 5, Chair (K. Lee)	C	P	C	P	P	P	E	C	P	C	-
B. Delgado, Marina (F. O'Connell)	E	P	E	E	P	P	P	E	P	E	P
F. Sollecito, Monterey – Vice Chair (C. Della Sala)	L	P	L	P	P	E	P	L	E	L	P
K. Craig, Salinas (R. Russell, J. Serrano)	L	-	L	P	P	P	P(A)	L	P	L	P(A)
S. Matarazzo, Sand City (R. Simonitch)	E	P(A)	E	P(A)	P	P	P	E	P	E	P
F. Bachofner, Seaside (D. Ingersoll, S. Bloomer)	D	-	D	E	-	P	P	D	P	D	P
A. Chavez, Soledad (F. Ledesma)		P		P(A)	P	P	P		P		E
J. Doughty, AMBAG (R. Deshazo)		-		-	-	-	-		-		-
M. McCumsey, Caltrans District 5		-		P (TC)	-	-	-		-		P (TC)
C. Sedoryk, MST (H. Harvath)		-		-	P(A)	-	-		-		-
B. Sabo, Airport		P		P	-	P	P		P		P
STAFF											
D. Hale, Exec. Director		P		E	P	P	P		E		P
D. Bachman, Dep. Exec. Director		P		P	P	P	P		P		P
C. Watson, Sr. Transp. Planner		P		P	E	P	P		P		E
K. Hoschouer, Assoc. Transp. Planner		P		P	P	P	P		P		P
A. Cook, Assoc. Transp. Planner		P		P	E	P	P		P		E
H. Myers, Assoc. Transp. Planning Engineer		-		P	-	E	-		E		-
M. Zeller, Assoc. Transp. Planner		P		P	P	E	E		E		P
E – Excused A – Alternate	VC – Video Conference TC – Teleconference										

1. QUORUM CHECK AND CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Sollecito called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. Introductions were made and a quorum was established.

OTHERS PRESENT

Dave Mansen	Parsons	Bob Scales	Parsons
Charlie Hargood	Federal Rail Admin	Chris Flescher	Rail Pass. Assoc. of CA
Deanna Smith	MST	Tim O'Halloran	City of Seaside
Debby Platt	City of Marina	Sam Teel	Mo. Co. Hospitality Assn.
Eric Peterson	Salinas Resident		

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Committee Member Bachofner thanked Transportation Agency staff for including notes from a meeting with the City of Marina in the agenda packet.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

M/S/C Matarazzo/Parker/unanimous

3.1 Approved minutes of the May 2, 2011 Rail Policy Committee meeting.

3.2 Received list of questions and answers on the Monterey Branch Line to the Marina City Council.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

4. CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT SAN JOSE TO MERCED STATION

The Committee received the Alternative Analysis Report findings for the San Jose to Merced section of the California High-Speed Rail project.

Dave Mansen, consultant to the California High-Speed Rail Authority, reported that the California High-Speed Rail project is a statewide project to connect Los Angeles and San Diego to San Francisco and Sacramento via the Central Valley.

Committee Member Bachofner asked why the project was starting in the central valley. Mr. Mansen explained that the central valley is the core of the system and allows the Authority to test the trains at their maximum speed of 220 mph on the straightest part of the rail line. Mr. Mansen also noted that ridership estimates show that 41% of riders will be located in the central valley.

Committee Member Delgado asked if there was opposition to using farmland. Mr. Mansen confirmed that there is opposition, and noted that the Authority is trying to keep the rail line as close to existing roadways as possible to minimize the impacts on farmland.

The two proposed locations for the Gilroy High-Speed Rail station were discussed: downtown Gilroy vs. Leavelsey Road. Committee Member Bachofner and Vice Chair Sollecito suggested that a letter or resolution supporting the downtown Gilroy station be brought for consideration by the full Board of Directors.

5. MONTEREY BRANCH LINE UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the Monterey Branch Line project schedule.

Kristen Hoschouer, Associate Transportation Planner, reported that the key milestones in the project are approaching, most significantly the Federal Transit Administration approval of the Alternatives Analysis and environmental documents. She noted that key dates for the project will be the public review of the environmental documents in February and March. Public outreach for the project will be very important during this time. TAMC Staff will be visiting community groups and city councils during this time.

6. COMMUTER RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT VISUAL SIMULATIONS

M/S/C Parker/Delgado/unanimous (Matarazzo recused)

The Committee reviewed and accepted the Commuter Rail Extension project visual simulations.

Don Bachman, Deputy Executive Director, reported that VBN Architects have created four draft visual simulations for the Salinas station and one for the Pajaro/Watsonville station for the Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County project.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND/OR COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Sollecito adjourned the meeting at 3:54 p.m.



Memorandum

To: Rail Policy Committee

From: Kristen Hoschouer, Associate Transportation Planner

Meeting Date: October 3, 2011

Subject: **Transportation Excellence Awards Call for Nominations**

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

RECEIVE the call for nominations for the tenth annual Transportation Agency Excellence awards to honor individuals, businesses, groups or projects for their efforts to improve the transportation system in Monterey County.

SUMMARY:

Transportation Agency would like to encourage and appreciate efforts made by Monterey County residents, businesses and employees to improve transportation in Monterey County by awarding Transportation Excellence Awards. Staff encourages committee members to submit nominations, which are due by December 5, 2011. The awards ceremony will take place during the regular January 2012 Transportation Agency board meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Transportation Agency for Monterey County would like to show its appreciation to the local community for its outstanding efforts to improve transportation in Monterey County. Modeled after similar transportation awards programs in Santa Cruz County and the San Francisco Bay area, the program has award categories for individuals, businesses/groups, programs or projects. Examples of potential awards include but are not limited to:

- Transportation employees who excel at their jobs and go the extra mile to promote the most efficient use of the transportation system.
- Innovative activities that promote more efficient use of the local transportation network.

- Citizens or organizations that have made significant efforts to inform and educate the public about transportation issues.
- Successful efforts to improve transit services and encourage the use of alternatives to driving alone.

Committee members are encouraged to distribute nomination forms and nominate projects, groups or individuals to be recognized for their contributions to transportation in Monterey County. Staff will be vigorously promoting this appreciation program by a mass mailing, ads in the Herald and Californian and follow-up Board reports. The list of 2010 awards recipients can be found in **attachment 2**.

The nomination form is **attachment 1** and is also available on the Transportation Agency website. The form can be mailed to Transportation Agency offices or faxed to the attention of Kristen Hoschouer. The deadline for nominations is December 5, 2011.

The Transportation Agency Executive Committee will select the awards recipients at its January meeting.

Approved by: _____ Date signed _____
Debra L. Hale, Executive Director

Regular Agenda

Attachments:

1. Nomination form
2. 2010 Awards recipients

Transportation Excellence Awards



Awards Program Nomination form (Please fill out form completely)

1. Name of Nominee

Give name and address of individual (provide title), firm, group, or organization.

Nominee: _____

Category: (circle one) **Individual** **Business/Group** **Program** **Project**

Address: _____ Email: _____

City: _____ Zip _____ Phone: _____

If Nominee is a firm, group or organization, provide contact name: _____

Title: _____ Phone: _____

_____ Email: _____

2. Description:

Describe the individual, business, group, program or project that is being nominated. Include any specific information that may apply, such as the number of people who worked on the project, number of hours spent on the project, number of people served or affected, cost to those served, and annual cost of operation. Indicate whether the nominee is a volunteer or paid. Enclose any photographs or other materials that will contribute additional information to the nomination. Use extra pages as needed.

3. Date or duration of program:

When did this program take place? When was it completed? If ongoing, when did it start?

4. Significance/Result:

State how this person, group or project has contributed to improving transportation in Monterey County in current calendar year. Describe the impact on those served and value created by this activity, as well as any savings provided to users, taxpayers or providers by the nominee. Use extra pages as needed.

5. Person Submitting Nomination:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Title: _____ Email: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Please return by **noon, December 5, 2011** via fax: 831-775-0897; or mail to:
Transportation Agency for Monterey County, Attn: Kristen Hoschouer
55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas CA, 93901

For additional information, please call 831-775-4403. This form is also available on TAMC's website at: <http://tamcmonterey.org/programs/excelaward/index.html>

2010 Honorees

Programs:

- **Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Alliance:** The Electric Vehicle Alliance has been successful in partnering with local agencies on different grant opportunities to help secure funding for a total of approximately 23 Level II charging stations in the Monterey Bay region. They are providing local leaders valuable information on electric vehicle producers, infrastructures, needs, challenges, and technical issues to enable local leaders to make sound decisions related to electric vehicles and its infrastructure needs.



Individuals:

- **Richard Krumholz: Director, Caltrans – District 5:** In 2010 Mr. Krumholz worked tirelessly to obtain the Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit for the US 101 Prunedale Improvement Project. This critical permit will allow TAMC's highest priority project to start construction in 2011. For the past several years Mr. Krumholz has been a strong supporter of highway safety and capacity improvements in Monterey County. He took the lead in acquiring state interregional funds to reinstate the US 101 San Juan Road Interchange Project Study Report, and worked hard with TAMC to obtain state bond funding.



- **David Murray: Senior Transportation Planner, Caltrans – District 5:** During his 34 years with Caltrans, Dave Murray has assisted with the creation of the Monterey County Regional Development Impact Fee Program, and has coordinated with the Transportation Agency to negotiate mitigations for major land use developments, which will protect and improve regional transportation. He has also taken the lead in making Caltrans contributions to the development of Monterey County's Regional Transportation Plans.



- **Megan Tolbert: Transportation Planner, California State University – Monterey Bay:** Ms. Tolbert has been a strong advocate for alternative transportation in Monterey County. Not

only has she been an asset to the Transportation Agency as a Transportation Planner with CSUMB but her work with Monterey Green Action has been key to promoting the use of bicycles as a viable transportation alternative. She has taken a lead role in educating the public on the importance of rail projects in Monterey County.



Projects:

- **East Laurel Drive Improvement Project: City of Salinas:** This federal stimulus funded project was not only completed within budget it was completed on a very aggressive construction schedule. It provides improvements to a 1.25-mile segment of East Laurel Drive, a major corridor that links residential areas, retail shopping areas, and major job destinations north and south with its connection to the US 101 highway. East Laurel Drive carries an average daily traffic of 36,000 vehicles per day.



- **US 101 Prunedale Improvement Project Team: Caltrans – District 5:** The Prunedale Improvement Project team has been key to the upcoming delivery of this top priority safety project for the Transportation Agency. The project faced numerous hurdles, including finalizing the complex environmental document, holding numerous public briefings, securing over \$200 million, acquiring over 100 right-of-way parcels, preparing over 500 engineering plan sheets, and finding new funds.





TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

Memorandum

To: Rail Policy Committee
From: Christina Watson, Senior Transportation Planner
Meeting Date: October 3, 2011
Subject: 2012 Committee Meeting Schedule

RECOMMENDED ACTION

APPROVE 2012 schedule of Rail Policy Committee meetings.

SUMMARY

The proposed schedule of Rail Policy Committee meetings for 2012 follows the existing pattern of meetings on the first Monday of the month at 3:00 p.m. except July and December, when all committee meetings are cancelled due to holidays, and January and September, when the meeting is on the second Monday of the month due to New Year's and Labor Day holiday conflicts.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None

DISCUSSION

Please review the following dates for the 2011 meeting schedule:

January 9 (due to New Year's conflicts), February 6, March 5, April 2, May 7, June 4, (no July Meeting), August 6, September 10 (due to Labor Day conflicts), October 1, and November 5, (no December meeting).

Please mark your calendars accordingly. Adjustments have been made in July and December for holidays and January and September for the New Year's and Labor Day holidays. Meeting time and location will remain the same: 3:00 p.m. in the TAMC conference room.

Approved by: _____
Debra L. Hale, Executive Director

Date signed: _____
Consent agenda
Reviewed by Counsel: N/A



Memorandum

To: Rail Policy Committee
From: Christina Watson, Senior Transportation Planner
Meeting Date: October 3, 2011
Subject: **Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County Project Update**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

RECEIVE update on the Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County project.

SUMMARY

Progress on the Commuter Rail Extension project since the last report to this Committee on May 2, 2011, includes the submittal of the Cultural Resources Technical Report to the State Historic Preservation Office and the submittal of the fourth Administrative Draft Environmental Assessment to the Federal Transit Administration, as well as meetings with responsible and stakeholder agencies.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The project is estimated to cost \$110 million in year-of-expenditure dollars for the planning, design, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction of the three stations and improvements to the mainline track. Various factors, including designs and negotiations with the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Agency and Union Pacific, could change this estimate, but it is unknown to what degree or in which direction.

DISCUSSION

California Transportation Commission

In May, the California Transportation Commission approved a reallocation and schedule update for a total of \$17 million in Traffic Congestion Relief Program funding for the project. This action fully funds the design phase, underway with a previous allocation of state funds, and the right-of-way (ROW) phase, which is also underway with the successful acquisition of one parcel under a hardship finding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Federal Transit Administration

On July 18, staff submitted the draft Cultural Resources Technical Report and the Finding of Effect Report to the FTA with a request that they submit the reports to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). On August 4, the FTA forwarded the documents to SHPO.

On August 18, staff hand-delivered the fourth Administrative Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to the FTA at the New Starts Engineering Workshop in San Francisco (see **attached** summary of the workshop). FTA staff is currently reviewing the document. The project schedule assumes that any comments from the FTA on this version will be incorporated into a public review draft EA for

circulation to the public this fall. Now that the environmental documents are out the door, staff is working on the Small Starts grant application, including the “Make-the-Case” document, a ranking analysis, the templates on land use, and the financial plan.

California Public Utilities Commission and Union Pacific

On June 30, staff hosted the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and Union Pacific (UP) on a “diagnostic tour” of the rail line from Salinas to Gilroy, stopping at every public at-grade crossing. Comments received from the regulator and owner of the rail line will be incorporated into the project designs.

Negotiations: Capitol Corridor, Caltrain, VTA and Caltrans

Staff held multiple meetings with staff of the Capitol Corridor, Caltrain, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), and Caltrans to discuss the proposed extension of Capitol Corridor passenger trains to Salinas. A schedule is being finalized, and the next step is to re-run the ridership model to examine the ridership impacts of a passenger train from Salinas to Oakland and Sacramento, with a cross-platform transfer in San Jose to Caltrain for passengers traveling up the peninsula. Agency staff also drafted and distributed support letters and resolutions of support for the partner agencies to send to FTA in support of the application for Small Starts funds.

Caltrain resolved its agency budget without any cuts to service, maintaining service to Gilroy at the existing three daily round trips. However, their budget will again be in the red in a few years, and Gilroy service will once again be on the chopping block, unless they are able to enact a regional funding source for the train service.

California High-Speed Rail Project

Staff attended numerous meetings related to the High-Speed Rail project, including a meeting with Supervisor Wasserman, a meeting of the Diridon Station Joint Policy Advisory Board, Gilroy Visioning workshops and stakeholder meetings, and High-Speed Rail Authority public outreach and stakeholder meetings. Staff reiterated the Agency’s support for a downtown Gilroy High-Speed Rail station as opposed to the alternate station location proposed to be located by the outlet malls on Leavesley Road.

Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center

On June 15 and July 27, the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center Project Development Team met to finalize the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the station. The MOU is now circulating to the attorneys for each jurisdiction. Staff anticipates bringing the MOU to this Committee in November.

County Project Development Team

On June 1, July 19 and July 25, Agency staff met with representatives of County departments to review the design plans for the stations in Pajaro/ Watsonville and Castroville and to discuss issues, including the concept of adding turn lanes on Salinas Road at the Pajaro train station and the layout of Del Monte Avenue by the Castroville train station. A traffic study of the Pajaro station area was completed at the request of the County Public Works department. Results of the traffic study showed no new impacts compared to the 2005 traffic study. On July 27, County and Agency staff presented the project to the County Planning Commission.

Approved by: _____ Date signed: _____
Debra L. Hale, Executive Director Regular Agenda
Reviewed by Counsel: N/A

Attachment: September 28, 2011 TAMC memo re: FTA New Starts Engineering Workshop



TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

Memorandum

To: Don Bachman, Deputy Executive Director
From: Christina Watson, Senior Transportation Planner
Date: September 28, 2011
Subject: FTA New Starts Engineering Workshop

On August 17 and 18, 2011, I attended the New Starts Engineering Workshop hosted by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in San Francisco. This workshop was an informative overview of the application process for New Starts or Small Starts funding for a transit project. I attended the workshop to hear the latest news and guidance on the program, since the Transportation Agency is applying for this funding source for its two rail projects, the Monterey Branch Line Light Rail Service and the Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County.

Speakers discussed both the New Starts program and the Small Starts grant program, which was designed to have a more streamlined application process for less expensive projects. Small Starts grants are for projects costing under \$250 million and applying for less than \$75 million in federal funding. Unfortunately, several speakers acknowledged that the process has not really been as streamlined for the Small Starts projects as had originally been imagined. The evaluation criteria are somewhat simplified for the Small Starts grants, in that the ridership forecasts need only look at the opening year estimates, and the financial plan is simplified. However, FTA still needs to be assured that the project can be implemented and operated, so they still look at many of the same criteria as for larger New Starts projects. The key word repeated in this regard was “scaling” – as in, yes, the sponsor agency still needs to do the same analysis, but it can be scaled to the size of the project, with input from FTA.

Another way the review process is streamlined is that there are only two points for FTA approval for the Small Starts program (Project Development and Project Construction Grant Agreement), as compared to the New Starts’ three approval points (Preliminary Engineering, Final Design & Full Funding Grant Agreement). In practice, however, FTA has found that sponsor agencies applying for Small Starts funds generally do not have the level of technical capacity for implementing a major capital project as compared to the larger agencies that implement New Starts projects, so the FTA has found that Small Starts grantees require more oversight than had been anticipated.

Issues that were addressed at this workshop included:

- New and Small Starts application process roadmaps (checklists), procedures, guidance and law
- Project Management Plan (PMP) – required prior to entry into Project Development
- Technical capacity and capability of sponsor agencies
- Financial plans and local financial commitment
- Project schedules
- Risks and contingencies
- Real Estate Acquisition and Management Plan (RAMP)
- Safety and Security Management Plan (SSMP)

Pertinent to this Agency's rail projects, one interesting discussion pertained to the question of whether the sponsor agency needed to have the technical capacity for project implementation on staff or if it was acceptable to hire consultants to fill the necessary roles. FTA says that consultants can fill most of the roles for developing the application and implementing the project, but recommends having sufficient capacity on staff to be able to review and verify the adequacy and accuracy of the plans as well as oversee the construction and operation of the service. For the Transportation Agency, our staff includes Don Bachman, Deputy Executive Director, who is an Engineer and has experience implementing transit projects in California. The rail project managers, Christina Watson and Kristen Hoschouer, both have Masters degrees in transportation planning, but this is the first major transit project for each of them to see through to implementation. For the technical capacity analysis, the Agency will be calling on consultants or contracted staff for many of the environmental, design, right-of-way acquisition, relocation, and construction roles. The operations of the service would be performed by established transit agencies – in the case of the Monterey Branch Line light rail service, Monterey-Salinas Transit would be the operator; for the Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County service, the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Agency is expected to be the operator. The key to establishing the Agency's technical capacity is to show that it can maintain control of the project's costs, schedule, quality management, safety and security, approvals and key decisions, and technical reviews. Prior to the Project Development phase, the FTA will assign the grantee agency an independent Project Management Oversight Consultant (PMOC) to review the application documents and agency technical capacity.



TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

Memorandum

To: Rail Policy Committee

From: Kristen Hoschouer, Associate Transportation Planner

Meeting Date: October 3, 2011

Subject: **Monterey Branch Line Update**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

RECEIVE update on Monterey Branch Line project schedule.

SUMMARY

The Federal Transit Administration is currently reviewing the Alternatives Analysis for the Monterey Branch Line Project. Next steps are to complete the Environmental Review.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The capital cost estimate for light rail is \$164.4 million. The annual operations and maintenance estimates for light rail is \$3.7 million.

DISCUSSION

Staff is working with the Federal Transit Administration to seek approval of the project Alternatives Analysis and ridership estimates. Once approved, the environmental documents must be reviewed by the public and approved by the Federal Transit Administration. During this time staff will continue to refine both the capital and operating financial plans for the project. This will include furthering the progress of the Transit Oriented Development at 8th Street in Marina. Revenue from the mixed-use commercial and residential development will aid in funding the operations of the light rail line.

Staff will also be working with the peninsula cities on developing policies to encourage transit-oriented development and walkability around stations. Transit oriented policies will increase the economic development ranking on the federal small starts application and may also provide alternative funding for station development.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Debra L. Hale, Executive Director

Regular Agenda

Reviewed by Counsel ___N\A



Memorandum

To: Rail Policy Committee
From: Sharon Gavin
Meeting Date: October 3, 2011
Subject: **Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County Project Fall Rail Tour**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

RECEIVE update on the Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County Project Fall Rail Tour.

SUMMARY

Staff is coordinating a Fall Rail Tour on the Amtrak Coast Starlight, which will provide an opportunity for the Rail Policy Committee and other interested persons to discuss and directly experience the proposed Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County service.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Staff estimates that the direct cost for the Fall Rail Tour will be approximately \$1,500, depending on the participation level, including shuttle, train and bus transportation costs to and from San Jose. The cost per passenger for the Fall Rail Tour will be \$30 to cover shuttle service from Salinas to the San Jose Diridon Station and the Coast Starlight ticket.

DISCUSSION

Staff is in the process of planning another rail tour to provide key stakeholders with an opportunity to experience what the commuter rail service to Monterey County would be like. The field trip will include a trip on the existing Coast Starlight (the Coast Starlight now maintains a nearly 90% on time performance) between San Jose and Salinas. Shuttle transportation will be provided from Salinas to connect with the Coast Starlight's scheduled 10:07am departure from San Jose, and return from Salinas on the Amtrak Thruway bus for anyone meeting the group in San Jose.

The tour will use Amtrak's Coast Starlight and will start at the San Jose Diridon Station. The route will go past the new planned commuter station sites at Pajaro/Watsonville and Castroville, ending at the Salinas Station. The date for the Fall Rail Tour has not been finalized; staff is still waiting to hear back from several key stakeholders on preferred dates.

The Agency will be inviting County Planning Commission and Salinas City Council members and staff, as well as other interested parties, for the field trip, which will offer valuable first hand insight on the challenges and benefits of both the Coast Daylight rail service and the Agency's planned Commuter Rail service between Salinas and San Jose.

Approved by: _____
Debra L. Hale, Executive Director

Date signed _____
Regular Agenda
Counsel Review: N/A

Attachment: Fall Rail Tour flyer



The Transportation Agency for Monterey County invites you to a

DATE TBD, 2011

Rail Tour on Amtrak's Coast Starlight

Planned Itinerary:

- Shuttle departs Salinas Amtrak Station: 8:15am
- Shuttle arrives at San Jose Diridon Station: 9:45am
- Coast Starlight departs San Jose: 10:07am
- Coast Starlight arrives in Salinas: 11:48am

The Commuter Rail Extension to Monterey County project will employ 38 miles of existing Union Pacific Coast Mainline track between Gilroy and Salinas to provide an alternative to the highly congested US 101 corridor—extending existing commuter rail service to Pajaro/Watsonville, Castroville, and Salinas.

TAMC invites you to experience new commuter and Coast Daylight passenger rail services planned to Monterey County, as well as view the route and the planned commuter station sites. Tour will include a trip on the Amtrak Coast Starlight from San Jose Diridon Station to Salinas, CA.

Transportation from Salinas, CA, to the San Jose Diridon Station will be arranged by the Transportation Agency.

Cost: \$30

(includes shuttle and Coast Starlight ticket)

Payable to TAMC

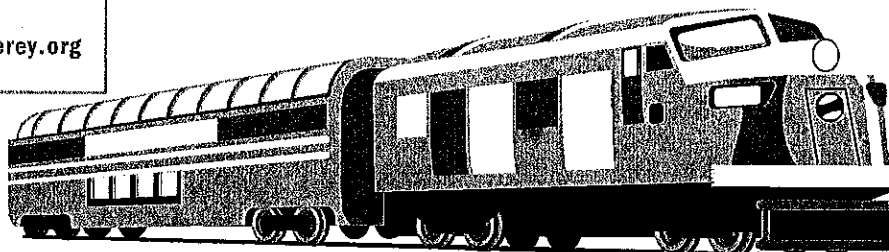
To reserve a seat contact :

Sharon Gavin

Phone: 831-775-4415

E-mail:

sharon@tamcmonterey.org



Christina Watson

From: CherylG@capitolcorridor.org on behalf of DavidK@capitolcorridor.org
Sent: Wednesday, August 10, 2011 8:26 AM
Subject: Capitol Corridor Monthly Performance Report for July 2011
Attachments: Jul11MonthlyPerfRept.pdf

Results show we eked out just a small increase for the month—in July, 141,767 riders hopped on board Capitol Corridor trains, which represent a 0.2% increase from July 2010. While weekday rider counts are strong, ridership the first three weekends were below historical normal weekend levels. Fortunately, passenger counts for the final weekend in July bounced back to normal. We will continue to monitor weekend ridership counts through August. At least the Capitol Corridor July 2011 performance results marks 17 consecutive months of increased ridership, no matter how slight. In regards to other performance thresholds, revenue for July 2011 was up 6% compared to the same period last year and we continue to achieve stellar on-time performance (OTP). In July, the Capitol Corridor OTP went back up to 95%, thus OTP for the year-to-date is also 95%, keeping the Capitol Corridor the most reliable intercity passenger rail service in the Amtrak system.

I am excited to report that the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT), through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced its commitment to award \$336.2 million for state-of-the art, American-made trains to run on intercity passenger rail in five states, including California's intercity passenger rail service. The FRA obligated \$68 million to Caltrans Division of Rail to procure 15 bi-level train cars and four cleaner-running locomotives. The additional American-made rail cars serve to create much needed jobs, accommodate our growing ridership and will help to increase revenue and service efficiency.

Caltrans Division of Rail was the lead entity to vie for this award, and the Capitol Corridor is a thankful recipient of this federal boost, as the new fleet will be shared between the Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin intercity passenger rail services.

The CCJPA team is proud to tout our superior service reliability, which is credited to Union Pacific Railroad's continued objectives to a state of good repair for the track infrastructure as well as disciplined dispatching.

To supplement this report, attached is a PDF file highlighting some of the key activities that have occurred since the previous monthly performance report.

Capitol Corridor (July 2011):

- Ridership: 141,767 riders; +0.2% vs. July 2010; +8% vs. prior YTD
- Revenue: \$2,408,885; +6% vs. July 2010; +11% vs. prior YTD;
- On-Time Performance: 95%; YTD OTP of 95% (again keeping the Capitol Corridor service #1 in the nation).
- System Operating Ratio: 49% YTD vs. 47% in FY10; continued growth in

ridership and revenue keep ratio at standard; however, diesel fuel prices remain a budget concern.

The Capitol Corridor route continues to be third busiest route in the country, with ridership at 1.68 million for the last 12 months

Pacific Surfliners (July 2011):

- Ridership: 279,908 passengers; +6% vs. July 2010, and +7% ahead of prior YTD
- Ticket Revenue only: +11% vs. July 2010, and +11% vs. prior YTD
- On-time performance for July 2011 65% (YTD FY 2011 on-time performance: 79%)

San Joaquin (July 2011):

- Ridership: 103,933 passengers +6% vs. July 2010, and +7% vs. prior YTD
 - Ticket Revenue only: +3% vs. July 2010, and +13% vs. prior YTD
 - On-time performance for July 2011: 88% (YTD FY 2011 on-time performance: 90%).
-

(See attached file: Jul11MonthlyPerfRept.pdf)

DAVID B. KUTROSKY

Managing Director

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Phone: 510-464-6993 Fax: 510-464-6901

e-mail: davidk@capitolcorridor.org

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CAPITOL CORRIDOR MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

JULY 2011

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Service Performance Results – July 2011

Standard	July 2011	vs. July 2011	YTD	vs. Prior YTD	vs. FY11 Plan
Ridership	141,767	0.2%	1,409,639	7.6%	2.6%
Revenue	\$2,408,985	7.2%	\$ 22,412,180	10.7%	-1.2%
Operating Ratio	43%	43%	49%	47%	49%
OTP	95%	97%	95%	92%	90%
Notes: Ridership up 7% over last 12 months with revenue up 10% during the same period; continue to closely monitor fuel budget due to escalating diesel fuel prices.					

Transportation

- Caltrain Santa Clara Station: Agreements are under development with Caltrain in response to CCJPA Board approval for Capitol Corridor trains to serve the station.
- On-time performance (OTP) improved to 95% and as such the Capitol Corridor remains #1 in reliability in the Amtrak system.

Mechanical

- Equipment Performance: Mechanical delays that occurred in June 2011 continued into the 1st half of July, but improved steadily through the end of July.
- Equipment Overhaul: Door operating systems upgrades are complete on 75% of coaches; improved emissions on State-owned F-59 locomotives are proceeding (~55% complete)

Engineering

- Yolo Crossover Project: FRA has submitted a path forward to obligate the funds for the project; CCJPA is working with Union Pacific Railroad and Caltrans Rail to complete the various agreements to secure ARRA funds for the project.
- Sacramento Railyards Project: Staff is working with project team on the integrating new platform/facilities with the train operating plan; coordinating on proposal to include sports complex at site.

Safety/Security

- Security Cameras at Unstaffed Stations: Design complete; installation complete by fall 2011.
- Fence Projects: Advancing fence projects in Solano County and Hayward to prevent access onto tracks in response to numerous trespasser incidents.
- Police Patrols: Program has begun to prevent unwanted activities at Oakland JLS Station.

Planning/Projects

- High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Capital Grants: FRA has obligated a supplemental \$68M (prior \$100M have been obligated) HSIPR funds to Caltrans Rail that will include an additional 10 coach cars and up to 2 green locomotives for the Capitol Corridor.
- Sacramento-Roseville 3rd Track Environmental Review/Preliminary Design: Kick-off meeting in early September; expected to be 30-month effort
- Wireless Network: Installation on trainsets proceeding; soft launch planned for November 2011.

Marketing/Communications

- Advertising/Promotions: Online paid search/radio promo ticket giveaways. Kids Ride Free on Weekends, Seniors Ride Half Off Midweek through October. Planning for late Fall Wi-Fi launch.
- Public Relations (PR): Collaborated with Amtrak, Caltrans on Wi-Fi and Safety Month messages.

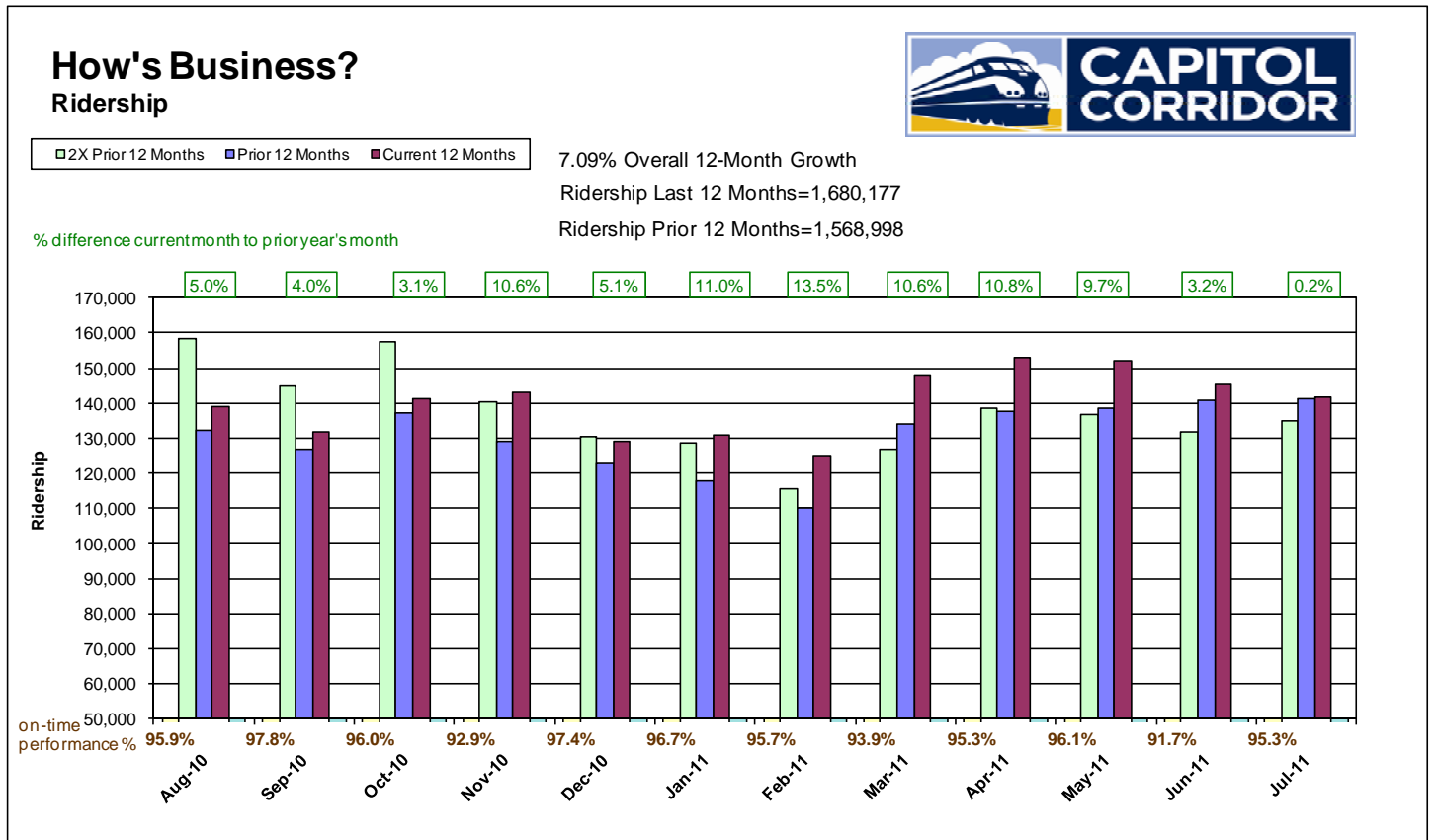
Administrative/Budget/Other

- Meetings have commenced with Amtrak on FY2012 operating budget/ to support current levels.
- FY2012 federal rail funding will be difficult since the FY2011 budget “zeroed out” funding for HSIPR capital grants (from \$2.5B in FY2010) and PTC.



Month	State Performance Standards (a)				Other Performance Measures	
	Ridership		On-time Performance	System Operating Ratio (b)	Revenues	
	Actual	Business Plan	Actual	Actual	Actual	Business Plan
October-10	141,350	141,275	96.0%	49.9%	\$2,120,627	\$2,121,000
November-10	142,961	133,227	92.9%	46.1%	\$2,397,272	\$2,225,000
December-10	128,895	126,380	97.4%	44.8%	\$2,216,664	\$2,142,000
January-11	130,863	121,445	96.7%	48.4%	\$2,070,062	\$1,969,000
February-11	125,201	113,635	95.7%	53.6%	\$1,985,812	\$1,837,000
March-11	148,198	138,063	93.9%	55.5%	\$2,214,492	\$2,099,000
April-11	152,781	142,065	95.3%	53.0%	\$2,323,280	\$2,193,000
May-11	152,128	150,513	96.1%	52.5%	\$2,371,547	\$2,649,000
June-11	145,495	153,038	91.7%	45.4%	\$2,303,439	\$2,633,000
July-11	141,767	153,613	95.3%	43.0%	\$2,408,985	\$2,812,000
August-11		150,691				\$2,624,000
September-11		143,056				\$2,496,000
Total YTD	1,409,639	1,373,254	95.1%	49%	\$22,412,180	\$22,680,000
Previous YTD	1,310,081	--	92.4%	47%	\$20,254,317	--
YTD Change	7.6%	2.6%	2.7%	2.0%	10.7%	-1.2%
Annual Standard/Measure		1,667,000	90%	49%		\$27,800,000

- a) Standard developed by CCJPA in annual business plan update and approved by Business Transportation and Housing Agency
- b) This standard measures total revenues (farebox and other operating credits) divided by total operating expenses adjusted against the fixed price operating contract.



Christina Watson

From: CherylG@capitolcorridor.org on behalf of DavidK@capitolcorridor.org
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2011 9:42 AM
Subject: August 2011 Capitol Corridor and California Intercity Passenger Rail Performance Results
Attachments: Aug 2011.pdf

In August, 153,085 customers hopped on board Capitol Corridor trains, bringing our increase in ridership back up to double digits: 10 percent more riders chose our trains compared to August 2010. The Capitol Corridor August 2011 performance results marks 18 consecutive months of increased ridership, a positive trend we hope to continue to September 30, the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2011. As for our other performance thresholds, revenue for August 2011 was up 17% compared to the same period last year and we continue to achieve remarkable on-time performance (OTP). In August, the Capitol Corridor OTP averaged 94%, maintaining Capitol Corridor's year-to-date OTP at 95%, which means the Capitol Corridor still holds the top spot as the most reliable intercity passenger rail service in the Amtrak system.

We can credit the double-digit increases to our summer promotions and the Capitol Corridor's stellar reliability, which is due to Union Pacific Railroad's efforts to sustain a state of good repair for the track infrastructure and disciplined dispatching.

A reminder that September was declared "Rail Safety Month" by State legislators in 2009. We have joined private and public rail partners to unveil a wrapped locomotive that will be rotated through the Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin routes over the next couple of months to raise community awareness of rail safety.

At the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, rail safety and security is our top priority. The 10,500 trains we run annually necessitates our efforts to promote rail safety 365 days a year.

To that end, I wanted to update you on how the CCJPA has reinvested voter-approved Prop 1B Transit Security Grant dollars into multiple safety and security projects throughout our system. These safety projects include the completion of:

- o installation of video surveillance equipment at six (6) unstaffed stations along the Corridor
- o fencing to discourage trespassers from going on railroad tracks in the cities of Richmond and Oakland.

In addition, we are working closely with the Union Pacific and the cities of Hayward and Suisun to install fences along the rail right-of-way to deter trespassing. These safety projects are expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

To supplement this report, attached is a PDF file highlighting some of the key activities that have occurred since the previous monthly performance

report.

Capitol Corridor (August 2011):

- Ridership: 153,085 riders; +10% vs. August 2010; +8% vs. prior YTD
- Revenue: \$2,314,549; +17% vs. August 2010; +12% vs. prior YTD;
- On-Time Performance: 94%; YTD OTP of 95% (again keeping the Capitol Corridor service #1 in the nation).
- System Operating Ratio: 49% YTD vs. 47% in FY10; continued growth in ridership and revenue keep ratio at standard; however, diesel fuel prices continues to remain budget concern.

The Capitol Corridor route continues to be third busiest route in the country, with ridership at 1.69 million for the last 12 months

Pacific Surfliners (August 2011):

- Ridership: 275,529 passengers; +5% vs. August 2010, and +7% ahead of prior YTD
- Ticket Revenue only: +9% vs. August 2010, and +11% vs. prior YTD
- On-time performance for August 2011 71% (YTD FY 2011 on-time performance: 78%)

San Joaquin (August 2011):

- Ridership: 98,477 passengers +9% vs. August 2010, and +8% vs. prior YTD
 - Ticket Revenue only: +18% vs. August 2010, and +14% vs. prior YTD
 - On-time performance for August 2011: 85% (YTD FY 2011 on-time performance: 89%).
-

(See attached file: Aug 2011.pdf)

DAVID B. KUTROSKY

Managing Director

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

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e-mail: davidk@capitolcorridor.org

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CAPITOL CORRIDOR MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

AUGUST 2011

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Service Performance Results – August 2011

Standard	Aug. 2011	vs. Aug. 2010	YTD	vs. Prior YTD	vs. FY11 Plan
Ridership	153,085	10.3%	1,562,724	7.9%	2.5%
Revenue	\$2,453,422	16.2%	\$ 24,865,602	11.2%	-1.7%
Operating Ratio	42%	45%	49%	47%	49%
OTP	94%	96%	95%	93%	90%
Notes: Ridership up 8% over last 12 months with revenue up 11% during the same period; closely monitoring escalating diesel fuel prices.					

Transportation

- Caltrain Santa Clara Station: Agreements are under development with Caltrain in response to CCJPA Board approval for Capitol Corridor trains to serve the station.
- Despite some host railroad delays in early August, on-time performance (OTP) rebounded to 94% for the month, keeping the Capitol Corridor as the most reliable service in the Amtrak system.

Mechanical

- Equipment Performance: Overall mechanical delays were down compared to July 2011
- Equipment Overhaul: Door operating systems upgrades are complete on 80% of coaches; improved emissions on State-owned F-59 locomotives are proceeding (~60% complete)

Engineering

- Yolo Crossover Project: Staff is completing the agreements with UPRR and FRA to obligate the funds for the project; upon obligation, the project will start in early 2012 and be complete by Fall 2012.
- Sacramento Railyards Project: Staff has applied for an air quality grant to add 4 more power cabinets at new center-island platforms so that locomotives will not idle, burn fuel during layovers; project team has begun discussions on the transition plan for the trains to serve the new platforms (in May 2012).

Safety/Security

- Security Cameras at Unstaffed Stations: Installation underway; complete by fall 2011.
- Fence Projects: Advancing fence projects in Solano County and Hayward to prevent access onto tracks in response to numerous trespasser incidents.
- Police Patrols: Expanded security patrols to support 10th anniversary of 9-11 terrorist attacks.

Planning/Projects

- High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Capital Grants: With FRA funds obligated, staff is working with Caltrans Rail to get RFP bid package for new rail cars prepared for early 2012.
- Sacramento-Roseville 3rd Track Environmental Review/Preliminary Design: Kick-off meeting in early September; expected to be 30-month effort
- Wireless Network: Installation to be complete by early October; testing through October with a soft launch planned for November 2011.

Marketing/Communications

- Promotions: Ringling Bros. and Oakland Raiders currently running; Enhanced outreach to college market (Student Advantage Discount) to promote train travel; Kids Ride Free on Weekends, Seniors Ride Half Off mid-week through October.
- Public Relations: Rail Safety Month in September, Wi-Fi Launch in November

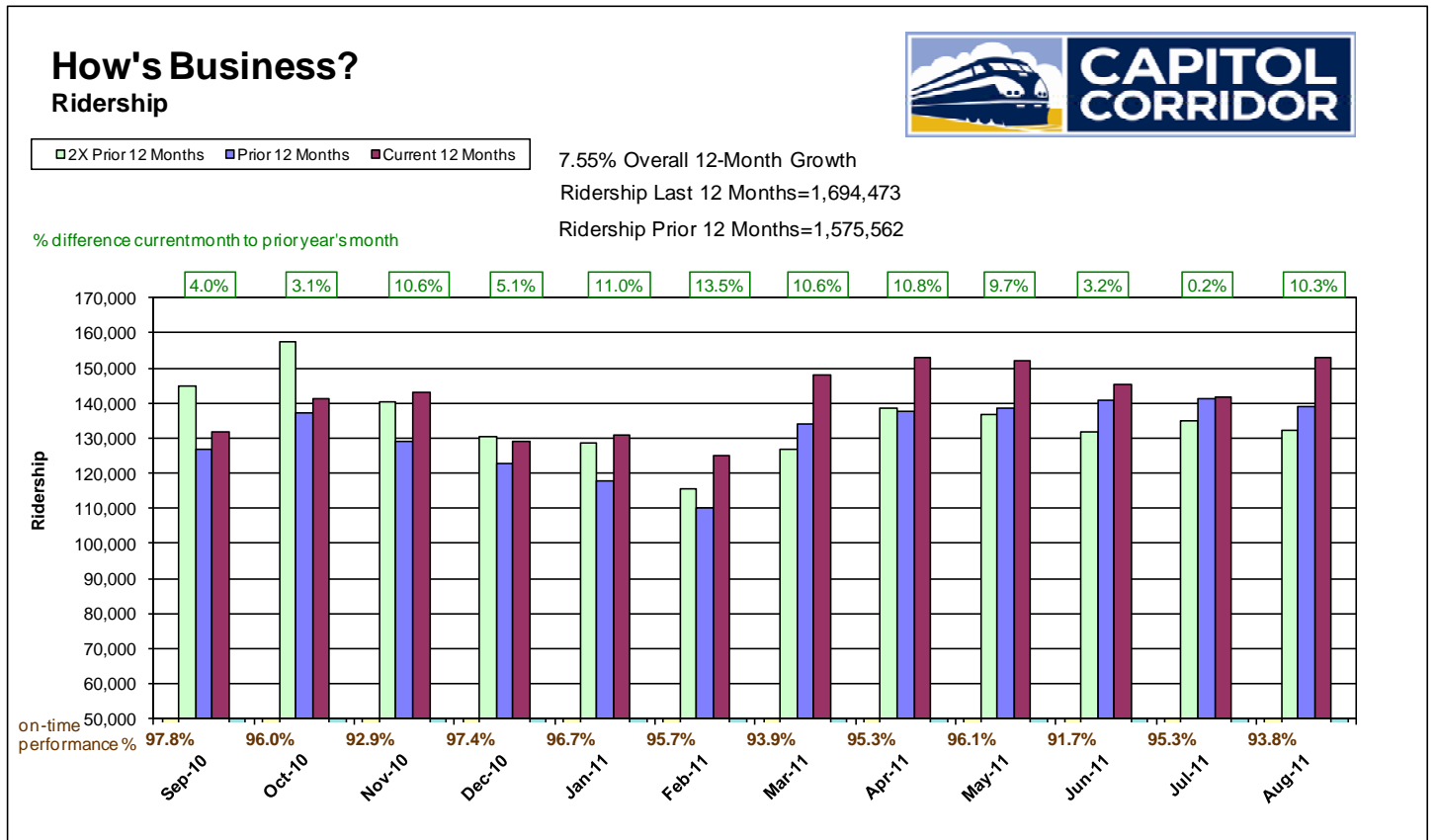
Administrative/Budget/Other

- Completing budget negotiations on Amtrak FY2012 operating budget.
- Congress has begun deliberations on FY2012 budget; outlook is dim for HSIPR capital grants and PTC (both programs were “zeroed out” in FY2011)



Month	State Performance Standards (a)				Other Performance Measures	
	Ridership		On-time Performance	System Operating Ratio (b)	Revenues	
	Actual	Business Plan	Actual	Actual	Actual	Business Plan
October-10	141,350	141,275	96.0%	49.9%	\$2,120,627	\$2,121,000
November-10	142,961	133,227	92.9%	46.1%	\$2,397,272	\$2,225,000
December-10	128,895	126,380	97.4%	44.8%	\$2,216,664	\$2,142,000
January-11	130,863	121,445	96.7%	48.4%	\$2,070,062	\$1,969,000
February-11	125,201	113,635	95.7%	53.6%	\$1,985,812	\$1,837,000
March-11	148,198	138,063	93.9%	55.5%	\$2,214,492	\$2,099,000
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July-11	141,767	153,613	95.3%	43.0%	\$2,408,985	\$2,812,000
August-11	153,085	150,691	93.8%	42.0%	\$2,453,422	\$2,624,000
September-11		143,056				\$2,496,000
Total YTD	1,562,724	1,523,945	95.0%	49%	\$24,865,602	\$25,304,000
Previous YTD	1,448,870	--	92.7%	47%	\$22,365,993	--
YTD Change	7.9%	2.5%	2.3%	1.6%	11.2%	-1.7%
Annual Standard/Measure		1,667,000	90%	49%		\$27,800,000

- a) Standard developed by CCJPA in annual business plan update and approved by Business Transportation and Housing Agency
- b) This standard measures total revenues (farebox and other operating credits) divided by total operating expenses adjusted against the fixed price operating contract.



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Placer on track for share of fed rail funds, new passenger train car

By Gus Thomson, Journal Staff Writer



Gus Thomson/Auburn Journal file photo

Passenger disembark from the Capitol Corridor train at the Auburn station.

boost the number of cars taking off in the morning from Auburn and returning in the evening from Sacramento to six, Kutrowsky said. As well as providing each of the Capitol Corridor's eight routes with one more car each, funding will also add two spare cars to the service to provide spares during maintenance or repair time.

Bob Franklin, Capitol Corridor chairman, said the authority is grateful to the Obama administration for its support of the national intercity rail system. In all, nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars has been secured for passenger rail with the commitment to the new train-car manufacturing initiative.

"The additional American-made rail cars will help to create much-needed jobs, accommodate our growing ridership and increase revenue and service efficiency," Franklin said.

Placer County's intercity passenger rail link with Sacramento is tapping into a U.S. Department of Transportation funding boost.

The department announced this past week its commitment to award \$336.2 million for state-of-the-art, American-made passenger rail cars to run on intercity passenger train routes in five states.

Part of the funding is going to Caltrans' Division of Rail to buy 15 bi-level train cars and four cleaner-running locomotives.

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, which runs one train daily to and from Auburn, will be ordering 10 passenger cars as part of the funding and one of the cars will be added to the Auburn-Sacramento route, Managing Director David Kutrowsky said.

That should help ease demand when the first delivery takes place in 2015, Kutrowsky said.

The Auburn-to-Sacramento train now has a five-car set, with a food service car, three coaches and a cab car. The addition will



Editor [Eric Gneckow](#): Heard some news you want us to check out? Let me know:
Eric.Gneckow@patch.com

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Public Gets Glimpse of High-Speed Future, Suggesting Tweaks

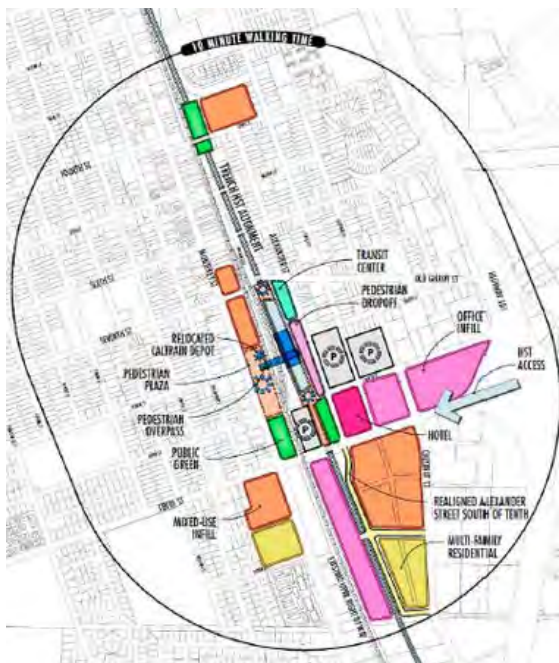
Members of the Gilroy High-Speed Train Visioning Project shared simulations of what future development might look like around a station in Gilroy.

By [Eric Gneckow](#) [Email the author](#) August 18, 2011

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How a "trenched" station and development might look downtown. Credit: Gilroy High-Speed Train Visioning Project

Imagining the development that would sprout up around a future high-speed train station in Gilroy became a little easier Wednesday night.

Members of the city's in-house station study unveiled photo simulations during a public workshop of how proposed station areas might look when the system reaches full operation in 2035.

The renditions, based on concepts proposed during a workshop in June, depicted ways that the city might seek to encourage development near either a downtown station or a location east of the Gilroy Premium Outlets.

Each possible location is still on the table for the California High-Speed Rail Authority. While the authority has the final say, the agency has said that Gilroy's study will play a significant role in influencing the decision.

Wednesday's public workshop—the third held as part of the [Gilroy High-Speed Train Station Visioning Project](#)—gathered final suggestions from the public before project members proceed with a more detailed, financial impact analysis of each possible location and station configuration, said project manager Jeff Williams.

"We want to make sure that each option gets a fair shake," said David Early, founder of the consulting firm enlisted for the project, [Design, Community & Environment](#).

By teaming with the public to envision the future impact of the two possible locations and station configurations, project members said they intend to develop a consensus among residents. The Gilroy City Council is expected to vote on the proposal later this year before sending the heavily researched suggestion to planners at the rail authority.

"There's going to come a time when we ask you and the city council 'Which one of these is best?'" Early said.

Based on the input from the June workshop, members of the visioning project presented four alternatives (the full presentation will be made available on the project [Web site](#)):

Downtown "At Grade"

- Trains would run on a slightly-elevated track that might include the raising of the Caltrain/Union Pacific line and an elimination of all railway crossings and train whistles in the city. All streets that currently cross tracks would still cross.
- The station will be located near the current Caltrain station.
- Suggested development included additional retail near Monterey and 10th streets, with a large parking garage in the area.
- Other parking garages dispersed around the downtown, with possible parking for downtown visitors as well.
- A "public green" east and west of the tracks

Downtown "Trenched"

- Trains would run in a deep trench. Caltrain/Union Pacific tracks are unlikely to run in the trench as well, and railroad crossings would remain intact. All streets that currently cross tracks would still cross.
- The station will be located near the current Caltrain station.
- Proposed development included hotels, tightly clustered parking structures and significant development south of 10th street.
- Partial covering of the trench, with public areas built on the proposed covers. Covering the entire trench is prohibitively expensive.

East of Outlets "At Grade"

- Trains would run on a slightly elevated track.
- The station would be located east of the outlets, partially in the agriculturally fertile "660" area.
- Proposed development included significant surface parking, structure parking, hotels, a convention center and a "public green" west of the station.
- Leavesley and other roads would be significantly enlarged.

East of Outlets "Aerial"

- Trains would run on a highly elevated track that would allow cars and pedestrians to pass under without modifying the level of the roadway.
- The station will be located east of the outlets, partially in the "660" area.
- Attendees at the June workshop suggested significant development in this alternative, an option that would include the creation of hotels, parking, a major park, housing, shopping and offices. Much, if not all, of the 660 area would be developed.

Project members reminded the public that the proposals represented a nearly 30-year view of a future Gilroy. Development could occur in a number of ways, but the proposed alternatives would help the community and the council to determine the best recommendation for the rail authority.

Concepts added for consideration included the higher risk of flooding in the 660 area, the cost of losing agricultural land, the proximity of parking garages to the stations, connection to Caltrain, the financial impact on the downtown and if a convention center would be popular in Gilroy.

Project members plan to release an "existing conditions report," "FAQ" and online survey on their [Web site](#) this month. A fourth workshop in September will narrow down the public's "preferred vision" before a council study session in October, said Williams, project manager.

The visioning project was funded by a \$150,000 grant from VTA and a \$50,000 contribution from the city. High-speed rail service is expected to be operating out of Gilroy in 2025, connecting San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Related Topics: [Gilroy High-Speed Train Station Visioning Project](#), [High-Speed Rail](#), and [caltrain](#)

Which alternative would you like to see? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

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COMMENTS (1)



Pete Arballo

11:40am on Friday, August 19, 2011

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Wow, now this is interesting stuff. I must say I like the Downtown "At Grade". It looks like it would be nice addition to the downtown area. But I also really like the idea of the East of Outlets "Aerial", be a lot of development that this city could use. Personally I do hope for the Downtown "At Grade" but all of these ideas seem pretty acceptable. Im real excited for Gilroy and the High Speed train, imagine being able to just get on the train here and zoom off to Los Angeles for the day, amazing.

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Caltrain could share tracks with high-speed rail

Michael Cabanatuan, Chronicle Staff Writer
Thursday, August 18, 2011

A beefed-up Caltrain service and a slimmed-down high-speed rail system could run between San Francisco and San Jose by sharing the existing rails, plus just a few miles of new passing tracks, Caltrain officials said Wednesday.

The preliminary findings of Caltrain's long-awaited capacity study, released to a group of San Mateo County city officials, lend support to what is being called a blended system, proposed by a group of Peninsula lawmakers. Containing the high-speed trains largely within the Caltrain right of way and avoiding extensive new construction, the plan has the potential to blunt much of the opposition to high-speed rail on the Peninsula, reduce costs, and modernize the Caltrain system.

"There's a lot of potential benefits here," said Seamus Murphy, government affairs manager for Caltrain. "This gives us a good path forward to work with the (California High-Speed Rail) authority and move forward with this approach."

Lower-impact route

Roelof van Ark, chief executive officer of the rail authority, said that while the results are preliminary, they show that it could be possible to build a lower-cost, lower-impact route up the Peninsula as the first phase of the ultimate system. He said he will meet soon with officials from Caltrain and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, which is trying to get high-speed rail back on track in the Bay Area. Last month, the authority halted its studies of the San Francisco-San Jose segment, citing uncertainty of what the region wanted.

"This is a good step toward getting high-speed rail going in the Peninsula," he said.

The biggest potential obstacle to sharing the Caltrain tracks has been uncertainty about whether the system has the capacity to support the commuter railroad, which hopes to run more frequent service, and the high-speed rail system, which had plans to run as many as 12 trains an hour.

Preliminary results of the Caltrain analysis, conducted by LTK Engineering, show that the system, with the addition of a four-track segment roughly 8 miles long to allow high-speed trains to pass slower commuter trains making more frequent stops, could handle up to 10 trains per hour. That would allow Caltrain to run six commuter trains per hour during peak times, and accommodate as many as four high-speed rail trains.

The computer model used in the capacity analysis assumed that Caltrain - which would be electrified and

use lighter, faster rail **cars** and an advanced signal system - would run at 79 mph while high-speed trains could travel at speeds up to 110 mph. That would allow every Caltrain, making 13 or 14 stops, to travel between San Francisco and San Jose in an hour or less - times now achieved only by the limited-stop Baby Bullet express trains. High-speed trains would make the trip in 30 to 35 minutes, with one stop in San Bruno.

Early findings

Marian Lee, acting director of the Caltrain modernization program, said consultants will conduct a second run of the model before completing the analysis. The railroad presented its early findings to the San Mateo County Rail Corridor Partnership because of the intense interest, and equally intense criticism of high-speed rail planning on the Peninsula. Lee acknowledged that major elements of the plan are sure to be controversial, including the design and location of the passing track sections, and how to deal with the 50 grade crossings along the Caltrain right of way.

Van Ark said the shared-track plan would still be expensive and require substantial construction. It is still unclear whether it will meet the requirements of **Proposition 1A**, the state high-speed rail bond, and state environmental laws, he said.

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<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/08/18/BA8O1KOPLK.DTL>

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The Mercury News

MercuryNews.com

Caltrain may drop Amtrak, switch to new conductor provider

Posted: 08/19/2011 07:23:02 AM PDT

Updated: 08/19/2011 07:23:08 AM PDT

Caltrain is considering dropping Amtrak, which has provided the commuter train agency with conductors since 1992.

Caltrain staff has recommended signing a five-year, \$62.5 million contract with TransitAmerica Services Inc., a Missouri company, after considering proposals from three other firms including Amtrak.

"We do not anticipate any immediate savings from the proposed new arrangement," Caltrain spokesman Mark Simon said, but "we hope and expect savings over the five-year life of the contract."

He said it was not possible to project how much the agency might save. The \$62.5 million contract represents a 3 percent increase over the amount budgeted for the same services in fiscal year 2011. TransitAmerica was chosen after a selection process that lasted more than 15 months and involved ranking potential providers based on management and operations plans, cost and the qualifications of the firm and key personnel, Simon said.

Caltrain's board of directors will vote on the contract proposal Sept. 1. If the contract is approved, it will take five months to change over from Amtrak to TransitAmerica.

Though Caltrain's return rate at the fare box is better than that of most transit agencies, and its ridership has been steadily increasing for years, the popular commuter train has struggled financially because it doesn't have a dedicated source of funding like other agencies such as BART. Service and stations narrowly escaped draconian

cuts earlier this year.

OFF TRACK WITH AMTRAK?

A new contract for Caltrain conductors would represent a 3 percent increase over the amount

budgeted for the same services in fiscal year 2011. Here is what is being considered:
\$62.5 million
Proposed size of five-year Caltrain contract with Missouri-based TransitAmerica Services Inc., according to agency staff after weighing other bids



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THE GILROY
DISPATCH

Caltrain nets federal funds for maintenance

Friday, August 19, 2011

By Mark Powell (mpowell@gilroydispatch.com)

Caltrain will receive \$750,000 in federal funds to develop a "comprehensive" maintenance program, the commuter line announced Thursday.

The Bay Area train service was one of six rail lines nationwide to receive the funding as part of a \$3 million pilot program by the Federal Transit Administration, according to a Caltrain news release.

Caltrain said it will use the money to track the condition and maintenance of the railroad, including signals, benches and station platforms.

Although Caltrain already has a computer program to track maintenance, the funding will allow the agency to upgrade its current program with quicker, more up-to-date information, according to the press release.

The pilot program is expected to last 15 months, and results will be shared with transit groups across the country, Caltrain announced.



Mark Powell

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Caltrain execs: Transition to Be Seamless

Changeover and high-speed rail proposal 'are unrelated' spokesman says.

By [Rebecca Rosen Lum](#) | [Email the author](#) | August 19, 2011

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Caltrain's decision to end its operating arrangement with Amtrak and move to a Missouri operating company should have no effect on riders, the agency's chief spokesman said this morning.

"Our goal is for this to be seamless," said Mark Simon. "It's our expectation that riders shouldn't notice any difference in the immediate aftermath. In the long run, they should experience continuous improvement."

The terms of a [proposed new agreement](#) with TransitAmerica Services, Inc. call for a five-month transition period. The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board will vote on whether to approve the five-year, \$300 million contract on Sept. 1.

The St. Joseph, Mo. operator maintains commuter rail lines in San Diego, Dallas and New Mexico.

The new operator will respect the terms of the U.S. Railway Labor Act and retain the Caltrain work force, Simon said.

The agency narrowed the bidder competition from 18 to 4, Amtrak being one. TransitAmerica's proposal for smooth transition won the board over.

"That was a huge part of our decision," he said. "They get it."

The changeover plays no part in the high-speed rail debate, he said. The agency's only concern was that TransitAmerica would run smoothly while a railway is under construction – much as it must do while work continues on the San Bruno grade separation.

"The two are unrelated," he said. "The issue of whether there should be high-speed rail arose because there is already a right-of-way there."

Wednesday, Caltrain released the results of [a new study](#) that shows trains should be able to share a track with a high-speed rail line – a revelation that agency officials expect to quell Peninsula residents' fears of a new track.

A mock-up by LTK Engineering Services demonstrated how six electric commuter trains and four bullet trains per hour could share a blended track between San Mateo and Redwood City – a proposal pitched in April by state Sen. Joe Simitian, U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo and state Assemblyman Rich Gordon.

The transit agency has not yet costed out the model, Simon.

"This is a preliminary analysis," he said. "We haven't done the kind of evaluation that is required to guess at dollar amounts."

A computer simulation took into account such new developments as an electrified track, advanced signaling and a set of passing tracks.

"This answer is encouraging, because it shows we do not have to build a separate track," said Caltrain spokesman Seamus Murphy.

Caltrain, which has been beset by diminishing financial resources and the continuing risk of train suicides and accidental fatalities, faced a \$30 million budget shortfall in March, and considered reducing weekday trains from 86 to 48 and eliminating service altogether on the weekends.

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California High-Speed Rail Faces Trouble In Palo Alto -- And More In Washington



First Posted: 8/23/11 04:23 PM ET Updated: 8/23/11 04:23 PM ET

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ATHERTON, Calif. -- Walk down Ashfield Road in this well-heeled town of 7,000 on the San Francisco Peninsula and you'll find million-dollar homes surrounded by tall fences and lush, manicured landscaping. Down by the railroad tracks at the end of the street, the post office, the police department, the library and a small town hall cluster together -- a perfectly self-contained unit of municipal government.

It conjures a postcard vision of the way the Golden State was always meant to look, its residents must think -- before politicians brought California to the brink of ruin with decades of financial mismanagement and pie-in-the-sky ideas.

Now this town fears one of those crazy schemes will land right where Ashfield Road meets a commuter railroad's right of way. High-speed rail is coming to Atherton's back yard, and Atherton isn't happy about it.

However testy Atherton may get, though, if a high-speed train does whisk down these tracks at 125 miles per hour, it will be a sign that the United States is still a country that can build big, daring infrastructure projects. And it will be a sign that the country is willing to spend big, on the scale of \$60 billion dollars or more, on ambitious public projects that might create hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs.

The train would prove that Dick Durbin was wrong when he spoke about [the death of Keynesian economics](#) during the deficit debate. The project has secured more than \$3.6 billion in federal funding guarantees, making it perhaps the most daring recipient of economic stimulus funding under the Recovery Act.

If the train never comes, the moral of the high-speed rail story will be considerably more complex. Residents, legislators and analysts are likely to dispute its meaning for decades, every time bullet trains are offered as a solution to the transportation problems of an America where highways only get more crowded, airplanes less reliable and gas prices more infuriating.

Countries from France and Spain to China and the central Asian nation of Uzbekistan have built high-speed rail lines. In America, however, even Amtrak's Acela trains [often travel at speeds no greater than those once accomplished by steam engines](#).

Meanwhile, California's high-speed rail program hangs in a state of suspended animation, with boosters confident that ground will be broken in late 2012 as planned, and opponents equally certain they have already killed it.

The critics got more ammunition two weeks ago when California's High-Speed Rail Authority announced that [just one segment would cost \\$3 to \\$6 billion more than planned](#) -- and the cost of the total project could skyrocket even more in October when the authority releases a business plan.

"The cost of a project of this magnitude are always going to have some variance," said Thomas Umberg, chairman of board for the High-Speed Rail Authority. "In my view this is not a significant variance."

Umberg is confident the project will proceed. "I do not think the project is in danger," he said. "I think that the leadership exists in California and elsewhere to complete the project. And I think that the popular support for the project in California will also continue."

For now, the leadership to which Umberg referred is toeing the line. Last Wednesday high-speed rail got a vote of confidence from Governor Jerry Brown, who campaigned as a backer but had

lately seemed to waiver, when he [told](#) the *Fresno Bee* that he still supported the project. "I would like to be part of the group that gets America to think big again," Brown said.

Just holding on to Jerry Brown, however, might not be enough.

HIGH-SPEED HOPES

The Golden State's dream of a bullet train between Los Angeles and San Francisco started back in 1996, with the establishment of the High-Speed Rail Authority. For years that agency, underfunded and understaffed, had a whiff of science fiction about it. Then in 2008, the state passed a referendum, [Proposition 1A](#), hoping that it could knit together Northern and Southern California while creating jobs to lift the state out of its Great Recession doldrums.

Price tag: \$9.95 billion in state bonds, to be matched by federal funds and complemented by private investment, for a total of \$45 billion spent. It would be the largest infrastructure project in the nation, something as audacious in its aims as the Interstate Highway System. The pro argument in California's voter guide [touted](#) the project's potential to create 160,000 construction jobs and 450,000 permanent jobs.

Daniel Curtin, director of the California Conference of Carpenters, said "the jobs themselves in building it are quite substantial, but more important is the economic engine in it that drives economic development."

If the train is built, he believes, far-flung places like Fresno, which is currently "three hours from everywhere," would essentially become suburbs of the state's two big metro areas. "There are foothills in Fresno that are fabulous, just beautiful, but you can't get there. It's easier to get to Tahoe, for crying out loud, from the Bay area."

When Prop 1A passed, bullet train boosters were ecstatic. The then-chairman of the authority, [Quentin Kopp, said the vote proved](#) Californians were "as intrepid and energetic as the argonauts of the 19th century and our forefathers during the Depression who built the Golden Gate Bridge and the Bay Bridge."

Kopp neglected to mention that the vote approving the Golden Gate Bridge happened long before the Depression. The California State Legislature created a bonding authority to finance the project in 1923. Another ten years passed before construction began, then another four years before the bridge was finished. Nobody expected California's train to be done before 2020, but if Kopp's analogy is more apt than he intended, it would be 2018 before the state breaks ground.

The Golden Gate Bridge's design employed a novel design that allowed it to sway in the wind, and perfecting that innovation, along with the manifold other challenges involved in engineering the bridge, took years of hard work. The high-speed train project has taken so long, however, not because it is engineering innovative new trains -- the state can simply buy those off the shelf from Europe or Japan -- but because it must assemble the nuts and bolts of financing and a route plan.

A typical week on the authority's calendar from last year highlights some of the many political stakeholders who need to be placated or at least disarmed along the railroad's 800-mile stretch: a meeting at the Rancho Cordova Rotary Club, a public information meeting in Fresno, a meeting with the Southern California Association of Governments, a scoping meeting in Stockton, a community meeting in Anaheim, another scoping meeting in Merced, and a legislative hearing held by two state senators in Palo Alto City Hall.

High-speed rail is an all-state effort, but if California is ever going to build the system, it will have to break ground in some smaller section of the state. Yet what might seem natural for the first phase -- putting tracks along the highly populated areas near San Francisco and Los Angeles, so trains could start running immediately and making money -- isn't what will happen.

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In order for the high-speed rail project to receive federal stimulus money, it needed to prove that it could start building quickly, before the 2012 deadline included in the Recovery Act. For that reason, the state will have to break ground along the path of least resistance. And one reason why a San Francisco spur won't be where high-speed rail debuts: the angry citizens of Atherton and its partners on the peninsula, Menlo Park and Palo Alto.

PALO ALTO'S BERLIN WALL

Most people involved in the rail debate seem to agree that while the High-Speed Rail Authority was busy drawing up its routes and negotiating with federal officials, it was doing an abysmal job of communicating with the people whose homes would soon neighbor its tracks. There weren't enough meetings on its calendar, and the ones that were happening weren't going very well, especially on the San Francisco Peninsula's shoulder.

Take Atherton. The strange thing is, this town already has trains. It's had them for a long time, and they've always been ugly and noisome. At least nine passenger trains an hour blow through here at peak times. Cars halt at the railroad crossing. Horns blare so Caltrain can ferry its loads of commuters to and from San Francisco. Discussions in the town hall -- including hearings aimed at killing high-speed rail -- pause when the trains come through.

Despite all that, there seems to be something about the train Atherton doesn't know that is scarier than the one it does.

And it's not just Atherton, even though this Republican outpost in an otherwise liberal congressional district has always served as a convenient poster child for intransigent conservatism. In nearby Palo Alto, which supported the high-speed train referendum by a 2 to 1 margin, signs of dissent were surfacing just five months later.

At a meeting in the city, the *Metroactive* paper [reported](#) "protesters holding signs saying 'Deceived by Prop. 1A' ... charging that elevated train tracks above cross streets, and proposed security barriers, will divide their community like a Berlin Wall."

Some of those protesters, of course, had opposed high-speed rail from the start. But others were

taken aback by the realization, prompted by the authority's environmental review process, that it could take a hulking viaduct, hoisted 40 feet or so in the air and bearing four tracks, to send the trains through their town without slowing down for road crossings.

Thus began the Berlin Wall metaphor, which has likely done more than anything else to curb enthusiasm for fast rail on the peninsula. Rod Diridon, the executive of the Mineta Transportation Institute and the chair emeritus of the High-Speed Rail Authority Board, acknowledged problems with the effort's outreach efforts.

For one slice of Californians, he said, that part of the "the conservative group who are going to oppose any major investments, especially investments that are going to undermine the automobile," there was no way to save high-speed rail. They are part, he said, of an effort promoting "carefully choreographed skepticism on high-speed rail across the nation."

But for other people, the "maybe 15 to 25 percent that want high-speed rail, but are skeptical of the way it's being pursued," the authority fell down on the job. One public relations group was contracted to handle the statewide outreach, engineers were left to talk to people in cities and towns, and [the result was a mess](#). Locals criticized [Diridon himself for an "abrasive" public-speaking style](#).

State Senator Joe Simitian, who represents the area, said that part of the problem was that "you have a relatively small agency" -- which at one point just a few years ago had only 11 employees -- that "woke up one morning, after the election was over, and discovered they were responsible for the design, development, operation and financing of a \$43-billion megaproject, and that has not been a smooth transition. And perhaps with benefit of hindsight, we should not have expected it to be a smooth transition."

Others agree.

"From 2008 to 2010, we went from playing fantasy football to playing in the NFL," acknowledged Thomas Umberg, the chairman of the High-Speed Rail Authority's board.

As the planning process dragged on from 2008 to 2010, opposition along the peninsula and elsewhere in California deepened.

"SHOULD WE BUILD PYRAMIDS?"

On January 28, 2010, President Obama announced the winners of the competition for the billions of dollars for high-speed rail included in the Recovery Act. California applied for \$4.7 billion; it received \$2.25 billion. That fell far short of the \$17 billion to \$19 billion in federal funds the authority said it would eventually need, but it was a start.

Last fall and winter, the federal government gave the program additional funding boosts of more than a billion dollars. But that money was something of a double-edged sword. For starters, California only got some of it because Republican governors had launched a national assault on high-speed rail.

In Wisconsin, Scott Walker campaigned on a pledge of refusing \$810 million in funding from the feds, [calling it](#) a "controversial train boondoggle ... that taxpayers literally cannot afford." In Ohio, Governor-elect John Kasich's spokesman [referred](#) to a "so-called" high-speed rail project that was "wildly unrealistic." Kasich, presaging this year's deficit battle, requested that the money be used to pay down the federal deficit, not to create public works programs that might generate

jobs.

State officials in California were ecstatic about the windfall those governors' decisions represented for them. But the new federal funds came with a catch: California would have to start construction in the state's Central Valley, better known for its grape growers than its cities.

The feds had gotten wind of the peninsula's high-pitched agita over high-speed rail and feared it could prevent speedy construction. The benefits of turning to the Central Valley instead: flat land and a desperate need for jobs, which translated to increased support from local politicians. The drawback: There weren't many people ready to ride trains in the Central Valley.

Diridon, the chair emeritus of the High-Speed Rail Authority, defended the decision to build in the Central Valley. If people on the peninsula "decide they want to raise hell, they can do so, and they have in previous years and it's caused huge delays," he said. So it was better to start in the Central Valley, and to try and work out a compromise on the peninsula in the meantime.

That compromise, if it is to come, will need to work around a pending lawsuit. In October of 2010, just as California was getting more money for rail, the municipalities of Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Atherton did raise a little hell. They sued the High-Speed Rail Authority, alleging that its ridership and revenue forecasts were so off-base that they were fundamentally flawed, [according to reporting in the Palo Alto Patch](#). They made particular use of alleged violations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), long a friend of those determined to thwart development in the state.

In interviews with HuffPost, two Democratic Palo Alto councilmen who voted for Proposition 1A vented their frustration with the high-speed rail program and described the growth of their opposition towards it.

Palo Alto Councilman Larry Klein is a Democrat who was endorsed by the Sierra Club in his last election. But in the months after Prop 1A's passage, he became concerned -- at first, about that Berlin Wall of a viaduct. But then his concerns grew to cover more "macro" issues.

"The more you get into this -- as many of us have over the past two years after the voters passed the bond measure in the '08 election -- the numbers just don't work," Klein said. "The people who were the chief proponents, I think, were more enthusiastic than realistic."

Klein's opposition to high-speed rail is not on the ideological level -- he doesn't deny that economic stimulus spending can create jobs -- but he does share the GOP's skepticism over high-speed rail projects.

"There are infrastructure projects and there are infrastructure projects. You can't just look at all of them and say they're all the same. Egypt three or four thousand years ago had a big infrastructure project called the pyramids. Should we build pyramids just because that'll create a lot of jobs?"

Decrying the "mad rush to chase federal dollars," Councilman Pat Burt said, "We don't have the money to have one of the best local commuter train systems survive, because we're borrowing all this money to pay for things like high-speed rail, which is looking more and more like a boondoggle."

Concerns like Burt and Klein's marked a shift in opposition to the rail project. Whereas complaints over ridership estimates had previously been the province of conservative and

libertarian outfits like the Reason Foundation ([which released a highly critical report just before the Proposition 1A vote](#) alleging that the San Francisco-to-Los Angeles line would lose \$4.17 billion a year), opposition was now filtering down to relatively liberal local politicians.

THE WASHINGTON QUESTION

The metastasis of this argument against high-speed rail, as typically pushed by Republicans -- that it simply cannot make money in the United States, or maybe just not outside of the Boston-Washington corridor -- creates a formidable hurdle for the project within California. The peninsula's politicians are among the most well-connected in the state.

Local politicians U.S. Representative Anna Eshoo and state Sen. Simitian have proposed "blending" high-speed rail with the local commuter service Caltrain, which has been undergoing dire financial problems. [Caltrain says it could work](#). If the High-Speed Rail Authority agrees, that could go some way towards smoothing local opposition -- but at the cost, potentially, of sending fewer fast trains all the way to San Francisco.

Even if the peninsula can be placated -- still a big "if" -- the High-Speed Rail Authority faces mounting opposition in D.C. that could prove far more life-threatening than the give-and-take over a viaduct in Palo Alto. Though California has already received more than \$3 billion in federal high-speed rail funds, Republicans in Congress are trying to get that money back. The GOP recently [attempted to use](#) high-speed rail monies to cover emergency relief in flooded areas along the Mississippi -- surely a worthy aim, but one intended more to deal President Obama's big ticket infrastructure project a fatal blow.

At a meeting of peninsula cities in July, Pat Burt, the councilman from Palo Alto, seemed to treat the bullet train's death as a foregone conclusion. Even Governor Jerry Brown's spokesman [has admitted](#) that funding the project will be an uphill battle, given the GOP's hostility at the national level.

If high-speed rail dies, some will say it was because Atherton, Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and all the other well-off towns nearby couldn't see past their own backyards. They will blame California's onerous environmental review process, which was more or less designed to let local communities stop big projects and has created a culture of lawsuits.

That argument upsets Elizabeth Alexis, [a self-educated critic of the project](#) who volunteers with Californians Advocating Responsible Rail Design.

"Too many people want to make it a referendum on trains or NIMBYs or whatever," Alexis said, using the acronym for 'not in my backyard.' "Those are convenient scapegoats for opposition to things you don't like."

For her, the numbers for the project simply do not wash. She feels vindicated by the radically increased cost estimates for the Central Valley, which she says are in line with [her group's estimate](#) that the overall cost of the project will rise to \$65 billion. Factor in inflation and the price tag [might be as much as \\$100 billion](#).

Even somebody who has been critical of the way California handles environmental reviews for big projects does not think the peninsula deserves the blame if high-speed rail goes down. Gabriel Metcalf, the executive director of San Francisco Planning (and) Urban Research (SPUR), said, "The Congressional Republican chokehold on America is the real threat to this project. They seem to dream of 1955, when highways and suburban tract homes were the only kinds of infrastructure you had to worry about."

In October, the California High-Speed Rail Authority must release a long-awaited business plan. If California is to take advantage of stimulus funds, the last opportunity for federal assistance in the foreseeable future given that Congressional Republican "chokehold," the clock is ticking: It must break ground on that Central Valley segment before the end of next year. Whether it will get in under the wire is an open question, as is the question of what will happen next.

For now, high-speed rail's future funding is unclear, particularly the \$14 billion or more in additional federal funds California will need to finish its project. Even if construction on a segment in the Central Valley does beat the federal deadline, Atherton may ultimately get its wish: the Republican majority in the House may try to kill the project. If the project's costs do increase, federal inaction could be enough to finish the job. [Despite engineers' dire warnings that the U.S. infrastructure is falling apart and roads are overcrowded](#), much to the detriment of the economy, Congress has shown little inclination to fix the nation's transportation deficit.

If the project dies in a few years, critics have pointed out, the decision to build first in the Central Valley instead of near San Francisco or Los Angeles will be doubly regrettable, since the tracks will be good for nothing more than a "train to nowhere," or at best, a train from Merced to Bakersfield. They say that's a reason to stop the project now, before billions are wasted.

Rail boosters paint a bleak picture of what the end of high-speed rail would mean for the state and the country. California is projected to see its population soar from 37 million today to some 50 million by 2035. All those extra people will be crowded into a state that seems to have already added as many freeway lanes and airport gates as it possibly can. But if California must add more, rail backers claim, the costs will outstrip those of the project, since ["the cost of doing nothing is not zero."](#) They believe population growth would require \$90 billion to \$100 billion more in highway and airport investments.

The country is nearing a breaking point, rail authority chairman Umberg argues, and rail is the only way out.

"I think we should take a look at countries like Afghanistan and decide whether that's where we want to end up," said Umberg, who recently served a tour there with the Army.

"I think that's where we end up without investments in infrastructure, if we don't maintain our transportation infrastructure and improve it to keep pace with population and the rest of the world. That's where we end up. I know that sounds like hyperbole -- but we have hard choices to make."

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Caltrain recommends new operator to run rail system



Should the Joint Powers Board approve the final recommendation, it would bring to an end the 20-year relationship between Caltrain and Amtrak. Photo: Lucius Kwok.

Caltrain management has announced it has negotiated a proposed contract with TransitAmerica Services Inc. of St. Joseph, Missouri, to operate the Peninsula commuter rail system and that it will recommend the contract for approval to the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board at its Sept. 1 meeting.

The recommendation is based on a

competitive process that extended over more than 15 months and included detailed and expert evaluation of five proposals from top rail management firms.

The proposal presented by TransitAmerica received a consensus top ranking.

Proposals were scored in three major areas of criteria – the management, operations and maintenance plan; the cost proposal; and the qualifications and experience of the firm and key personnel proposed by the firm as the management team for the Caltrain service.

The first full year (FY 2013) of the five-year contract is for \$62.5 million, within the projected Caltrain operating and capital budgets. Subsequent contract amounts are subject to annual negotiations.

With a transition to a new rail contractor, federal regulations provide job protections for current employees.

“We made a business decision to go to the marketplace and the result is an opportunity for a partnership between TransitAmerica and Caltrain that can meet the high expectations we have for a safe, reliable, viable Peninsula commuter rail service now and in the future,” said Caltrain Executive Director Michael J. Scanlon.

“This is a contractor with the experience, the know-how and the vision to assist Caltrain in operating a system that provides opportunities for improvements, expansion, cost and operational efficiencies and to continue and enhance the long-established Caltrain culture of safety first.”

Should the Joint Powers Board approve the final recommendation, it would bring to an end the 20-year relationship between Caltrain and Amtrak, which has operated the rail system since 1992, when the Joint Powers Board assumed responsibility for the iconic 148-year-old Peninsula commuter line.

“The contribution of Amtrak to the Caltrain service can never be fully measured,” said Scanlon.

“The successes enjoyed by Caltrain are due in significant part to the partnership between Amtrak and the agency, and we are grateful for all Amtrak has done.”

Once the contract is executed, there will be a five-month period during which the new operator will transition into place and mobilise its new management team.

During that period, Caltrain and Amtrak will remain in a partnership and Amtrak will continue to operate the railroad as it participates in the transition.

The Caltrain panel recommended TransitAmerica after receiving best and final offers from four firms, including Peninsula Corridor Rail Services, Inc., a partnership between Amtrak and rail car manufacturer Bombardier.

The company also had a demonstrated track record of success operating other commuter rail systems across the country, including San Diego's Coaster, Dallas' Trinity Railway Express and New Mexico's Rail Runner Express.

The major components of Caltrain's new five-year contract, with five one-year options, include the daily staffing and operations of trains, as well as inspection and maintenance of tracks, the passenger rail vehicle fleet, rights of way, structures, the signaling and communication network, stations, and other facilities.

Scanlon said that while cost was a critical criterion, it was not the only factor in identifying the best proposal to meet the system's needs.

He said TransitAmerica presented the agency with the best overall proposal to provide the desired operational enhancements and performance improvements for Caltrain riders with an achievable operations plan that should result in efficiencies to the system over the life of the contract.

"TransitAmerica simply provided the best solution for our railroad," said Scanlon.

"TransitAmerica demonstrated that they were the most aligned with our vision for the operation of Caltrain. Their plans for Caltrain clearly are the best value offered by any of the proposers.

"This decision is not about rejecting any of the proposers. It is about selecting a firm that provided the most effective plan for the best value."

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3. [Retirement of Director of Peninsula Rail Program \(http://www.rail.co/2011/01/07/retirement-of-director-of-peninsula-rail-program/\)](http://www.rail.co/2011/01/07/retirement-of-director-of-peninsula-rail-program/)

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Plan for 'blended' rail system gains steam

Rail Authority's peer review group latest panel to support Peninsula lawmakers' proposal to blend Caltrain, high-speed rail

by **Gennady Sheyner**
Palo Alto Weekly Staff

A proposal by three lawmakers to blend high-speed rail and Caltrain on the Peninsula received a boost Friday when a panel of experts retained by the California High-Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) decided to lend its support to the idea.

The rail authority's "peer review group," which is chaired by Will Kempton, submitted a letter to state Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, and state Assemblyman Rich Gordon, D-Menlo Park, largely endorsing the plan the two legislators and U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo unveiled in April. Under the Eshoo, Simitian and Gordon proposal, the Caltrain corridor would be electrified and modified to accommodate both Caltrain and high-speed rail.

The rail authority, which is charged with building the voter-approved rail line, has so far focused on the "full build" approach, which calls for separate tracks for the new rail system.

In its letter, the group notes that the rail authority's demand forecasts remain uncertain and that the "full build" approach is "an unnecessary bet that the upper ranges of the demand forecasts are highly likely whereas the 'blended' approach would postpone larger investments until demand has been demonstrated by the initial services on the line."

The shared-tracks approach, the committee said, could also help the rail authority manage the new system. The agency has been in existence for more than a decade, but has spent most of this time advocating -- rather than planning -- for a new system.

"HSRA has, as yet, no actual experience with construction cost and management," the letter states. "Adopting a blended approach with local agencies would permit a sharing of the planning and management burden in those areas where HSRA could move up the learning curve on the higher speed section in the Central Valley."

The three legislators unveiled the plan largely out of concern about the way the controversial project is being managed. Early design plans, which called for the possibility of elevated tracks stretching along the Caltrain corridor, have galvanized Midpeninsula communities and have prompted various city officials, including the entire Palo Alto City Council, to formally oppose the project they once supported. The legislators have also been increasingly concerned about the cash-strapped Caltrain service and believe the electrification of Caltrain (which currently uses diesel) could increase its ridership and revenues.

The rail authority has been skeptical about the "blended" proposal, with several members of the agency's board of directors saying they were worried about the prospect of Caltrain dipping into high-speed-rail funds. Rail Authority CEO Roelof van Ark has also said that the blended approach could make it difficult for the rail system to meet its mandated goal of getting from San Francisco to Los Angeles in about two and a half hours. Earlier this month, when Caltrain released a study finding the blended option to be feasible, van Ark said such a system could be possible in the "near term."

The new findings by the authority's peer review group, which reports to van Ark, lend further credence to the legislators' proposal. The panel determined that the "blended approach" could make the system more financially feasible. The project, whose cost was initially estimated at \$43 billion, is now expected to cost more than \$60 billion. The 2008 bond passed by California voters allocates about \$9 billion to the project and the rail authority hopes that federal and state grants, along with private investment, would make up the balance.

The rail authority decided late last year to launch the rail system in the Central Valley.

"A 'blended' approach would be much less costly at the outset than the 'full build' approach, meeting one of the fundamental objectives of efficient investment management, which is to shift investment as far out in time as is consistent with project needs," the panel wrote. "Given the large capital needs of the project, money saved can obviously be used elsewhere."

The committee's findings were greeted with enthusiasm by Gordon and Simitian, both of whom have been critical of the rail authority's projections. Gordon said in a statement that he appreciates the peer-review group's feedback.

"Their statement, in conjunction with last week's capacity study released by Caltrain, shows a way forward for a system that is consistent with the current rail system and also begins to address the concerns of the communities that will support it," Gordon

said. "There is much work to be done, but I am encouraged by these statements."

Simitian, who has been one of the Senate's leading skeptics of the rail authority's projections and business plans, called the commentary by the Peer Review Group "particularly compelling given the professional expertise and experience of the Peer Review Group membership." Simitian said in a statement there appeared to be a "growing consensus in support of a blended system" and cited recent statements from the peer review group, Caltrain and various Peninsula cities. He also said he wasn't surprised by the panel's findings.

"My colleagues and I have been making the case that high-speed rail 'done right' means a 'blended system' along the San Jose to San Francisco corridor -- a system that integrates High-Speed Rail with a 21st century Caltrain," Simitian said.

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Grants to Boost Rail Safety

08.31.11 - 02:24 pm

Federal grants have boosted the cash on hand to \$27 million for a rail-safety system that will monitor trains and even allow them to be controlled remotely to prevent crashes, officials announced Wednesday.

Caltrans said the Federal Railroad Administration has awarded three grants totaling \$55 million to reduce congestion and increase safety on the Pacific Surfliner rail corridor between Los Angeles and San Diego.

“Enhancing our commuter rail service is a critical component in ensuring Southern California’s transportation network can carry us successfully into the future,” Will Kempton, CEO of the Orange County Transportation Authority, said in a statement. “We are thankful for the strong partnership we have forged with the federal government and appreciate the continued support of our ongoing efforts to improve safety and mobility in the region.”

Of the grants, \$13.5 million will fund a Global Positioning System-based (GPS) signaling system, known as Positive Train Control (PTC), which will increase railroad safety by monitoring and controlling trains to prevent collisions and derailments. The implementation of PTC is mandated for all rail providers by 2015 by the federal Rail Safety Improvement Act.

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority, which operates Metrolink, will install the PTC system on tracks between San Onofre and Moorpark, where Metrolink shares the line with the Pacific Surfliner. The state will match the federal funds for the PTC dollar-for-dollar with 2009 Proposition 1A rail bond funds, increasing the project’s funding to \$27 million.

"Metrolink is grateful to the leaders, who demonstrated their commitment to rail safety by allocating these funds. Our program is now fully funded, and Metrolink is well on our way to being the first commuter rail agency in the nation to implement Positive Train Control," Metrolink Chairman Richard Katz said

A final segment of a third track between Los Angeles and Fullerton will take \$38 million of the money. The Pacific Surfliner, Metrolink, and freight trains currently share two rail tracks, which can create congestion and delays, officials said. Another \$3.4 million will fund new track construction at the Oceanside station to move Metrolink commuter trains off the mainline.

“More Californians are choosing trains for travel and Caltrans is committed to ensuring a safe ride for all our passengers,” Acting Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty said in an announcement of the grants.

The Federal Railroad Administration also recently awarded California \$68 million in Recovery Act funding for intercity trains servicing intercity routes. The funding is part of a multi-state procurement among California, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and Washington State to pool resources, maximizing the purchase of next-generation American-made trains. Caltrans will take the lead in purchasing

the rail cars and locomotives for all states, resulting in lower costs for all states involved because the equipment will be acquired in high volume under one contract.

Along with \$100 million from a previously awarded grant to California, the funding will enable Caltrans to purchase 27 rail cars for the Pacific Surfliner, 15 rail cars and four locomotives for the San Joaquin corridor, and 10 rail cars and two locomotives for the Capitol Corridor.

Under the Amtrak California banner, Caltrans funds three of the five busiest intercity passenger rail routes in the Amtrak system: the Pacific Surfliner corridor (ranked second), the Capitol Corridor (ranked third), and the San Joaquin corridor (ranked fifth). Caltrans is on-track to break its all-time ridership record of 5.58 million passengers boarding Amtrak California trains in the next few months.

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The Mercury News

MercuryNews.com

Caltrain rejects lowest bidder to operate system

By Mike Rosenberg
mrosenberg@mercurynews.com

Posted: 08/31/2011 09:21:29 PM PDT

Updated: 09/01/2011 10:00:25 AM PDT

As Caltrain readies for another financial crisis that could strip riders of their favorite service or lead to tax hikes, the railroad is turning down an offer from a massive transit company to operate the commuter line at a savings of \$24 million over the next five years.

The reason? Caltrain executives say they are getting "the best bang for their buck" by picking the second-cheapest operator -- a firm they say was so impressive it "blew their socks off" and will still do the job for less money than what they had budgeted for future years.

The Caltrain board on Thursday is expected to sign a new five-year, \$398.6 million deal with Missouri-based TransitAmerica to operate Caltrain service at the start of 2012, taking over the expiring contract from longtime partner Amtrak.

The contract makes up more than 60 percent of Caltrain spending. The winning firm must hire conductors and engineers, maintain the railroad and handle most other nonadministrative duties.

But Veolia -- which claims to be North America's largest private transportation provider and operates commuter rail lines in Boston, Miami and Austin -- submitted an offer for the same job that was 12 percent cheaper than TransitAmerica's plan. Veolia's five-year estimate totaled \$374.5 million and was the only proposal Caltrain received that would cut cost from the current Amtrak deal.

The difference between the two firms' offers, some \$4.8 million annually, is enough to keep

weekend service, night trains and other endangered service in tact. Facing a historic budget crunch, Caltrain raised fares and cobbled together enough bailout cash from local counties to maintain service

this year but is expected to ask voters to approve some sort of tax increase next year to save service over the long term.

Despite the financial crisis, the agency decided cost would account for one-fourth of its decision on which operator was best. The remaining three-fourths had to do with Caltrain executives' interpretations of the firms' quality, including everything from experience and qualifications to management and maintenance plans.

"It's not like we're walking away from a chunk of money; we had to look at the whole picture," Caltrain spokesman Mark Simon said. TransitAmerica "presented us with a plan that basically just blew our socks off. We thought this proposal by TransitAmerica was really a creative and intelligent and thoughtful way to go about it, within a budget that made sense to us."

The winning firm is smaller, has fewer years of experience and not as many clients as the cheaper one.

TransitAmerica's parent company, Herzog, is 42 years old; Veolia has 150 years of experience. TransitAmerica

does business only in the United States; Veolia operates 200 transit contracts and has deals in 30 countries. In 2009, TransitAmerica's parent had revenue of \$401 million; Veolia's had \$8.5 billion.

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The Mercury News

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HOW THE FINALISTS STACKED UP

Caltrain executives ranked the firms competing to operate its system on quality — which included qualifications, experience, management, operations and maintenance plans — and on cost, which accounted for one-fourth of the decision.

	Quality score	5-year cost estimate
1. TransitAmerica	68.4	\$398.6 million
2. Amtrak/Bombardier	56	\$421.1 million
3. Veolia	48.6	\$374.5 million
4. Keolis	41.8	\$416.4 million

Source: Caltrain

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED:

The Caltrain board is scheduled to name its next operator at a meeting Thursday at 10 a.m. at 1250 San Carlos Ave. in San Carlos. The meeting will not be webcast.

will not be webcast.

But Caltrain officials say TransitAmerica distanced itself from the pack during a grueling, yearlong process that began when 30 Caltrain executives, outside consultants and area experts vetted the proposals.

Later, Caltrain spent days interviewing the four finalists, called references and made unannounced visits to rail lines operated by the firms. As a surprise, they even presented the firms with a crisis scenario and asked them on the spot how they'd fix it.

When factoring in cost estimates and quality scores from Caltrain executives, TransitAmerica beat out second-place finisher Amtrak/Bombardier, while Veolia finished third and another firm, Keolis, came in last.

Caltrain has a history of spending more money to keep what it considers top talent.

It pays CEO Mike Scanlon a higher salary than any other transit boss in the state and in recent years raised its payroll for administrative employees and paid raises to its Amtrak contractors. This year, executives revised their initial budget upward in order to keep service intact.

Contact Mike Rosenberg at 408-920-5705.

If you're interested:

The Caltrain board is scheduled to name its next operator at a meeting Thursday at 10 a.m. at 1250 San Carlos Ave. in San Carlos. The meeting



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Written by Robert J. Hawkins

Caltrans has received \$3.4 million from the Federal Railroad Administration to build new track in Oceanside to move Metrolink commuter trains off the main line.

4:53 p.m., Aug. 31, 2011

The funding was part of \$55 million in grants designed to "to reduce congestion and increase safety on the Pacific Surfliner intercity rail corridor between Los Angeles and San Diego," according to Acting Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty.

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Metrolink operates commuter trains between Los Angeles and Oceanside.

Also see »

[Construction delays on Orange Line over the weekend](#)

The largest of three grants announced is \$38 million to build a final segment of a third track between Los Angeles and Fullerton. The existing double track is shared by the Amtrak Surfliner train, Metrolink and freight trains.

[A brownbag lunch with a glimpse into the future](#)

The third grant, for \$13.5 million will help fund the installation of the federally mandated Positive Train Control system, designed to monitor trains and prevent collisions through the use of Global Positioning System technology.



[Spirit to begin SD-Las Vegas flights on Wednesday](#)

The state will match the \$13.5 million with 2009 Proposition 1A rail bond funds, increasing the project's funding to \$27 million.

These funds will be directed toward the section of rail between San Onofre and Moorpark, where the Surfliner and Metrolink share tracks.

Also of interest

[US awards \\$25M for train safety on county's coastal corridor](#)

All U.S. train systems must have a safety system in place by 2015.

Caltrans funds three of the five busiest intercity passenger rail routes in the Amtrak system: the Pacific Surfliner corridor (2nd), the Capitol Corridor (3rd) and the San Joaquin corridor (5th).

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Caltrain selects new company to run rail line

The Associated Press

Published Thursday, Sep. 01, 2011

SAN CARLOS, Calif. -- Caltrain has selected a Missouri-based company to operate the commuter rail line.

Caltrain's board unanimously agreed to a five-year deal with TransitAmerica on Thursday. The company will take over operation of the rail line from Amtrak next year.

TransitAmerica has estimated its contract will cost Caltrain \$399 million. That was not the lowest bid Caltrain received.

The San Jose Mercury News reports (<http://bit.ly/oOZi17>) that Veolia, another company, submitted an offer that was \$24 million lower.

But Caltrain spokesman Mark Simon said the contract with TransitAmerica is subject to negotiation and could eventually come in below the lowest bid. Simon also said Caltrain was looking at more than just cost; it wanted a company that could perform the best.



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Caltrain Board Approves Operating Contract with TransitAmerica

Amtrak will continue to run Caltrain through a five-month transition period.
September 2, 2011 [Print](#)

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On Thursday, Caltrain's Board of Directors approved a five-year contract with TransitAmerica to run its train system, ending a 19-year partnership with Amtrak.

Caltrain officials said that after an extensive bidding process, TransitAmerica's bid was the highest ranking, in its cost proposal, the qualifications of the company's staff and its operations and maintenance plans.

"We made an important business decision to go to the marketplace and seek new ideas, new energy and new approaches to how the rail operations contract was administered and performed," Caltrain Executive Director Michael Scanlon said in a statement.

Amtrak will continue to run the train system during a five-month transition period, officials said.

For the first full year of the contract, Caltrain will pay TransitAmerica \$59.5 million, according to Caltrain officials. Subsequent contract amounts will be subject to annual negotiations.

"While the contribution of Amtrak to the Caltrain service has been significant, today's decision was about the future of the system, and TransitAmerica provided the most effective plan for providing service to our riders," Caltrain's board chairman Sean Elsbernd said in a statement.

Bay City News Service

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MST Introduces Rapid Transit Service to Monterey County

Posted: Sep 06, 2011 2:56 PM PDT

Updated: Sep 06, 2011 2:56 PM PDT

By Kiki Jones - [email](#)

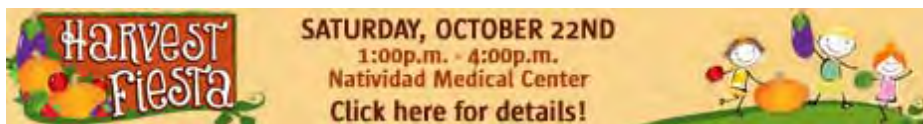
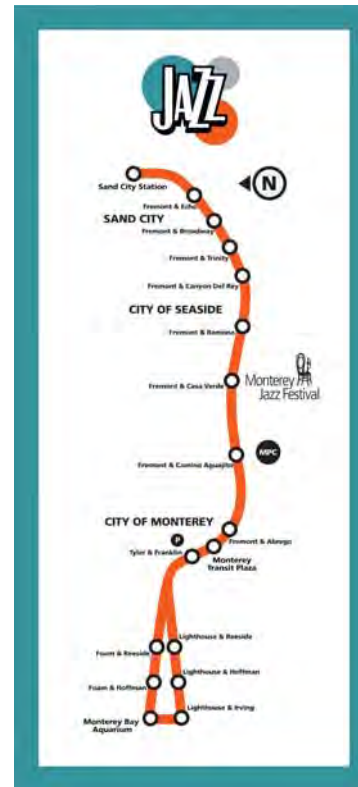
MOTNEREY, Calif- Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) is partnering with the Monterey Jazz Festival to launch their Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service in Monterey County in the fall of 2012. MST says that this new service will decrease travel times by as much as 25 percent.

Aptly name "JAZZ," the new 6.75-mile BRT service will start at Sand City Station located at the Edgewater Shopping Center, run along Fremont in Seaside and North Monterey, continue through downtown Monterey and along the visitor-intensive Lighthouse Avenue corridor in New Monterey, and turn around for a return trip near the world famous Monterey Bay Aquarium.

The New BRT service will introduce new technologies that include queue jump lanes, transit signal priority (TSP) and increased stop spacing to streamline bus traffic along the corridor and significantly reduce travel times.

In late 2009, MST received approximately \$2.7 million in Small Starts program funds from the Federal Transit Administration to fully-fund the project, along with \$700,000 in state transportation bonds.

For more information, visit www.mst.org or call Monterey-Salinas Transit toll free at 1-888-MST-BUS1.



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September 7, 2011

Industry News

Monterey, Calif., partners with music festival to launch BRT

[Monterey-Salinas Transit](#) (MST) is partnering with the Monterey Jazz Festival to launch its bus rapid transit (BRT) service in Monterey County in the fall of 2012.

This new service will not only decrease travel times by as much as 25 percent along one of the busiest traffic corridors on the Monterey Peninsula, but also will provide an entertaining and educational history of the Monterey Jazz Festival at the same time.

Aptly named "JAZZ," the new 6.75-mile BRT service will start at Sand City Station located at the Edgewater Shopping Center in Sand City, run along Fremont in Seaside and North Monterey, continue through downtown Monterey and along the visitor-intensive Lighthouse Avenue corridor in New Monterey, and turn around for a return trip near the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

The BRT service will introduce new technologies that include queue jump lanes, transit signal priority (TSP) and increased stop spacing to streamline bus traffic along the corridor and significantly reduce travel times. The new shelters will offer global positioning system (GPS)-enabled electronic passenger information signage and other enhanced amenities as well as minimal curb and sidewalk improvements to ensure that all stop locations meet federally-mandated Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

Pavement at stops and at the new queue jump locations will be upgraded to accommodate BRT operations and redesigned to provide a unique, decorative flair to match the new JAZZ design and color scheme. The low-floor buses that MST will operate on the BRT corridor are already TSP-enabled and will be repainted to reflect the JAZZ brand image of the new service.

A sample shelter will be on display within the Monterey County Fairgrounds at this year's Monterey Jazz Festival, which takes place Sept. 16 to 18. The full system is slated for completion in time for the 55th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival in September of 2012.

In late 2009, MST received approximately \$2.7 million in Small Starts program funds from the Federal Transit Administration to fully fund the project, along with \$700,000 in state transportation bonds.

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Railhead Corp. tapped for Caltrain project



Wednesday, September 07, 2011

Caltrain has selected Railhead Corp. to install Railhead Vision Systems cameras on the front and back of Caltrain consists, in order to protect train engineers and provide valuable information for investigators after any death on the track.



So far in 2011, nine pedestrians have been hit and killed by Caltrains; 11 people on the tracks were killed in 2010.

Caltrain spokeswoman Christine Dunn said recent deaths were not the impetus for the project, but the cameras will aid in investigations. "It's certainly going to give us more information about what the engineer sees and that

includes the fatalities on the right of way," she said. "It's certainly going to give us more information about what the engineer sees and that includes the fatalities on the right of way," she said.

Southern California's Metrolink installed cameras on its trains two years ago, after a collision between a Metrolink train and Union Pacific train killed 25 people. Investigators found the train engineer was texting at the time of the crash. Railhead Corp was chosen to install cameras inside Metrolink train control rooms to monitor engineers; it installed outward-facing cameras at the same time.



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House GOP's 2012 Transportation Budget: Deep Cuts, Especially for Livability

Posted By [Tanya Snyder](#) On September 8, 2011 @ 3:33 pm In [Amtrak](#), [DOT](#), [EPA](#), [Federal Funding](#), [House of Representatives](#), [Livable Streets](#), [Rail](#), [Transit](#), [Transportation Alternatives](#), [Transportation Policy](#), [U.S. DOT](#) | [3 Comments](#)

In about an hour, Congressional appropriators will vote on how much money to allocate for transportation in the next fiscal year. It won't be pretty.



[1]

This smiling man (THUD Chair Tom Latham) is getting ready to take the axe to prized livability programs. Photo: [Iowa Independent](#) [2]

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) is planning deep cuts to many programs, some reminiscent of House Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan's notorious budget proposal, which wanted to slash transportation spending by about a third.

The subcommittee is led by Iowa Republican Tom Latham, whom we [profiled](#) [3] when he took the gavel. At the time, we were worried he would end up cutting important livability programs, and here he is, doing exactly that.

At least transit and highway spending share the pain, both getting cut the same 34 percent. Highway funding goes from about \$41 billion to \$27 billion; transit funding (excluding New Starts) goes from \$8.3 billion to \$5.3 billion.

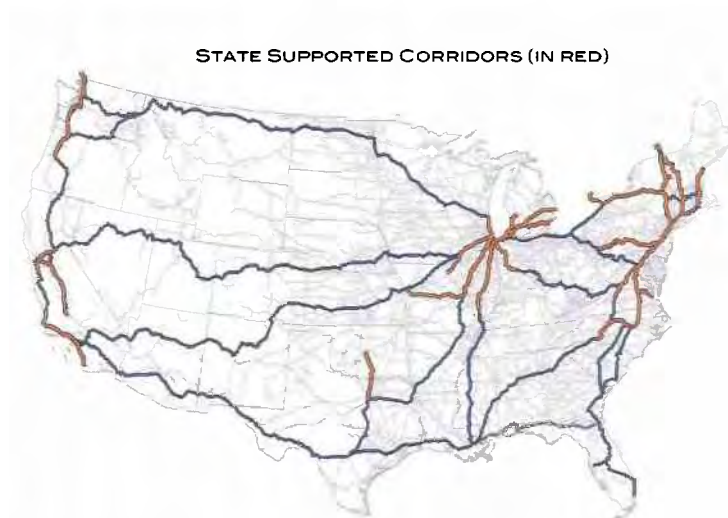
Bizarrely, the bill regresses to a pre-cooperation era and returns to the age of agency silos. One great accomplishment of the Obama administration has been the Sustainable Communities Partnership which joined USDOT, HUD and the EPA to work together on common development programs, planning inexorably linked programs of housing and transportation in conjunction with each other, and in consultation with the environmental regulator. But the appropriations bill prohibits HUD from using any funding for anything related to the Partnership.

In his excellent analysis of the dismal news, Transportation for America's Stephen Lee Davis also delivers this blow: the innovative TIGER grants, TIGGER grants and high-speed rail programs are cut entirely. And more, Davis writes:

The New Starts transit program, which essentially funds all new transit system construction, gets cut to \$1.55 billion down from \$2 billion in FY10. In addition, a policy tweak is made that requires state or local funds to make up more than 50 percent of any new grant agreements. Or put another way, the feds will no longer cover more than half of any New Starts transit project, exacerbating an existing gap between the share the government will pay for transit vs. highway projects. (Highway projects get around 80 percent of their funds from the federal government.)

Existing passenger rail service faces deep cuts of its own. Amtrak's capital budget (new rolling stock, new lines, equipment, etc.) is cut by \$24 million (from \$922 million to \$898 million; down

from \$1 billion in 2010), but the operations budget is where Amtrak takes a big hit, going from \$563 million to \$227 million. On top of that, an important policy change will prevent Amtrak from using any of their operating funds on state-supported lines — lines where a state has partnered with Amtrak to increase passenger rail service and ridership. To put that change in perspective, in 2010 9 million rides were taken on state-supported routes.



[4]

Amtrak State-Supported routes, from the [T&I Committee report](#) [5]

The bill also prohibits any new RRIF loans or loan guarantees. [RRIF](#) [6] is a loan program, like TIFIA for rail projects, which has received significant attention over the last year. Cumbersome rules and application processes have resulted in the program being seriously undersubscribed, spending just \$1 billion of the \$35 billion it has at its disposal. Republicans have held hearings to work on improving the program, but now it appears they'd rather just leave it for dead.

There is a silver lining to this disastrous bill, Davis says, and it's that the incompetence and intransigence that we've seen lately in Congress will keep it from becoming law — for a long time, at least. Remember, the fiscal year ends September 30 — the red-letter day when the current SAFETEA-LU extension and the gas tax also expire — and Congress is nowhere near ready to pass a consensus 2012 budget out of both houses.

That means that we can look forward to another budget extension, and possibly a whole string of extensions. That doesn't necessarily mean it will be a clean extension — lately, Republicans have been flexing their muscle to demand spending cuts, even on extensions. But we won't see this bill enacted for quite a while, if ever.

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URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/latham.jpg>

[2] Iowa Independent: <http://iowaindependent.com/16904/democrats-gear-up-early-for-another-crack-at-latham>

[3] profiled: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/2010/11/11/the-power-of-the-pursestrings-shifts-to-a-livability-denier-in-the-house/>

[4] Image: <http://t4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/statesupportedroutes.jpg>

[5] T&I Committee report: http://republicans.transportation.house.gov/Media/file/112th/Railroads/Rail_Competition_Bill_Package.pdf

[6] RRIF: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/2011/02/18/in-age-of-s%C2%ADpending-cuts-why-are-billions-of-federal-rail-dollars-going-unused/>

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House and Senate Agree on 6-Month Transpo Extension

Posted By [Tanya Snyder](#) On September 12, 2011 @ 11:45 am In [Federal Funding, Reauthorization](#) | [3 Comments](#)

Just days after a [Senate committee asked the full chamber](#) ^[1] to consider a four-month extension of SAFETEA-LU, new negotiations have replaced that idea with a six-month extension at current spending levels. The bill also extends the [gas tax](#) ^[2].



^[3]Over the weekend, the House and Senate decided to combine the long-overdue FAA reauthorization with the pending surface transportation bill, considering them together as one uniform transportation extension [[PDF](#) ^[4]]. The FAA bill will be extended for four months, while SAFETEA-LU will be extended for six, with an expiration date of March 31.

As an added bonus, combining the bill with the FAA means that Congress can't keep us in suspense until the last possible moment, as they've been prone to do lately. (Remember the debt ceiling? Remember the narrowly-averted government shutdown last spring?) The FAA extension expires September 16, so if Congress is to extend them together, they'll have to act by the end of this week, instead of waiting till the end of next week, when they leave for another recess. The House is tentatively planning to vote on the bill tomorrow.

The extension is a clean one, with no changes in policy. That means [bike/ped funding](#) ^[5], which has been under threat over the last week, will remain for the next six months, at least. And the extension will be funded by the same 18.4 cent federal gas tax the U.S. has had since 1993, which was also due to expire September 30 and which is also renewed by this action.

The extension will stick to current funding levels, authorizing \$24.78 billion in spending from the Highway Trust Fund for the first half of FY2012 (which begins October 1). That's almost \$19.8 billion for highways and \$4.2 billion for transit.

That's far more than the [FY2012 budget just passed](#) ^[6] by the Transportation and HUD Appropriations subcommittee in the House, which agreed to \$27.7 billion for highways and \$5.2 billion for transit *for the entire year*. Although this extension can authorize more spending than that, actual spending levels are up to the appropriators, according to Jeff Davis at Transportation Weekly. Experts say that at this level, most of the money would go to pay states back for projects already built, and *new* highway project funding could be cut by as much as 75 percent.

But higher spending levels also have their down side. "Maintaining current highway and transit spending levels for any period of time deepens the Highway Trust Fund's revenue hole," writes Jeff Davis, noting that according to the CBO, "the Highway Account of the Trust Fund will run out of cash at these spending levels in the first few months of calendar year 2013, with the Mass Transit Account running dry a year or so behind that)."

Davis also notes that "bringing the extension bill to a vote in the House will require the House to vote to waive the budget totals in the [Ryan budget plan](#) ^[7], which will likely bring some opposition from conservative Republicans."

The extension bill the EPW Committee passed last week included a \$3.13 billion rescission, meaning that even though it provided \$43 billion, more than \$3 billion of that would need to be returned by the states. This new extension bill takes that "rescission" out of the total up front, lowering the \$43 billion to just under \$40 billion for the year.

Senator Boxer has raised an objection to the \$3 billion cut, even though the front-end budget cut isn't much different from her own back-end rescission. Davis speculates that this is because the EPW two-year bill seeks to hold current spending levels, but if current spending levels are lowered in this way, the EPW bill would actually represent an increase.

In Boxer's statement, she also expressed her pleasure that the House is moving forward with an extension with current spending levels, which is what she has supported for both the extension and the full reauthorizations. "The original House proposal would have cut spending by more than 30 percent, which would threaten hundreds of thousands of construction workers' jobs and thousands of businesses," she said.

She also said she welcomes the longer extension "because it gives more certainty to the private sector and to states and local governments in their plans for road and transportation projects."

However, pushing the expiration so far into next year makes it even more likely it will be followed by nothing but another extension, not an actual reauthorization. Both parties will be loath to pass a big spending bill so close to a presidential election.

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[1] Senate committee asked the full chamber: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/2011/09/08/inhofe-supports-clean-extension-won%E2%80%99t-vote-against-bikeped-this-time/>

[2] gas tax: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/2011/08/11/it%E2%80%99s-official-congress%E2%80%99s-next-spitting-contest-will-be-over-the-gas-tax/>

[3] Image: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/handshake.jpeg>

[4] PDF: http://rules.house.gov/Media/file/PDF_112_1/Floor_Text/MICA_069_xml.pdf

[5] bike/ped funding: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/2011/09/06/the-senates-dr-no-says-hell-block-an-extension-unless-bikeped-is-cut/>

[6] FY2012 budget just passed: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/2011/09/08/house-gops-2012-transportation-budget-deep-cuts-especially-for-livability/>

[7] Ryan budget plan: <http://dc.streetsblog.org/2011/04/15/%E2%80%9Cpath-to-prosperity%E2%80%9D-or-road-to-ruin-either-way-the-house-says-yes/>

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