



Wheels of Progress

Here is our annual list of major rail passenger improvements planned to enter service, many with dates. For other projects, dates are "to be announced." Dates and projects subject to change. "Major Accomplishments in 2006" will appear in the February issue.

2007

Late January—Little Rock River Rail streetcar extension to Bill Clinton Presidential Library and Heifer Project International headquarters (0.5 mi).

April 7—S.F. Muni J/Church extension along Third Street, San Francisco Caltrain-Bayshore Caltrain via Third St. and Bayshore Boulevard.

September—Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Greenbush Commuter Rail (branch off existing Old Colony Service) Braintree-Scituate-Greenbush (18 miles)

Summer—Portland, OR, Streetcar Lowell extension, S.W. Gibbs-S.W. Lowell (South Waterfront, 0.6 mi.)

Fall—Milwaukee Amtrak station is renovated and made into intermodal ter-

minal. (Construction began in July 2006)

Fall—Calgary "CTrain" (Light Rail) Northeast Line extension, Whitehorn to McKnight-Westwinds (1.86 miles)

Fall—South Lake Union (Seattle) streetcar, to Westlake Center (1.3 miles)

Late—Amtrak Chicago-St. Louis and Metra Heritage line trains speed up thanks to automation of Brighton Park Junction on Chicago's south side. Trains will pass through at 45 mph instead of having to stop. This is one of the U.S.'s last manually controlled, non-interlocked junctions.

November—Charlotte, NC "South Corridor" light rail (to expand on previous heritage system) Uptown - I-485/Pineville (9.6 miles)

December 31—Diesel light rail line, Oceanside-Escondido, CA (26 mi).

Sometime—Monterrey, Mexico Metrorrey light rail extension, General Anaya to Sendero (San Nicolas de los Garza and Escobedo counties), 5.4 miles

Sometime—Light rail link between San Juan, Puerto Rico and suburban

Caguas (10 mi.)

2008

September—Portland's Washington County Commuter Rail: Beaverton (Tri Met light rail transfer) to Wilsonville, 14.7 miles. FTA full funding grant agreement approval is imminent, construction contractor has been secured, DMU's designed, and groundbreaking held October 25. [DMUs (diesel multiple units) are self-propelled diesel rail cars.]

Fall—Austin commuter rail, downtown to Leander (32 miles). Construction under way and DMU's are being built.

Late—Three Salt Lake City projects:

- Intermodal Terminal opens (at site occupied by Amtrak since 1999).
- Salt Lake City commuter rail, Intermodal Terminal-Ogden-Pleasant View (44 mi).

- TRAX light-rail branch, Delta Center-Intermodal Terminal (4 blocks).

Late—Rail Runner Albuquerque commuter rail extension, Bernalillo-Santa Fe. Could slip to 2009 if all-new right of way is chosen rather than existing

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NARP Board Approves Aggressive Plan and Budget for 2007

"We have made substantial progress in a short period of time," NARP President George Chilson told the Board of Directors in his "State of the Association" report at the October meeting in Austin.

"In the last two years, we have increased our membership 67%, doubled our revenue and rebuilt our cash reserves. We've established an endowment to secure the long term viability of the Association. We've begun a program to solicit bequests and planned gifts. We expect our membership to reach 21,000 by the end of the year and to continue growing.

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—Alan Miller

Sacramento now has a transit link to its Amtrak station (above, far right). A 0.6 mile extension of the city's light rail system was opened on December 8. The project was delayed several times, most recently due to security concerns (the line passes in front of the Federal Building) and the discovery of archeological artifacts during construction. The light rail extension complements the August 28 increase in Capitol Corridor frequencies (above, left). The Capitol Corridor also celebrated its 15th birthday in December. What began as a small corridor operation with less than 273,000 passengers a year has now grown into Amtrak's third biggest corridor, with 1.3 million riders in 2006.

“We have adopted a clear, concise mission statement. We are developing a long term vision for a national network. Most importantly, we have succeeded in neutralizing concerted efforts to dismantle the national passenger train network.”

“The future will bring significant challenges and opportunities,” Chilson said. “NARP must be prepared to address them aggressively and proactively. There are five primary areas that are critical in winning our fight: the Administration, Congress, the railroads, the states and Amtrak.

“Our growth is providing the additional resources we need to address each area and begin the transition from defense to offense. In the coming year, we will focus on further enhancing our capabilities in grass roots organizing, in communications and in leveraging technology.”

After Chilson’s comments, the board then heard reports outlining components of the plan, which among other things calls for additional staff, technology improvements and assistance from outside professionals:

- Ross Capon, Executive Director, described the legislative challenges, goals and plans for 2007.

- Rick Harnish, NARP Board Member and Executive Director of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association, described the advocacy efforts and political process that succeeded in doubling state-supported train service in Illinois (December News). Assistant Director David Johnson discussed NARP’s efforts to mobilize local teams to promote the long distance network.

- Bob Glover, NARP Treasurer, concluded the Friday session by presenting projected revenue and expense for 2006 and the budget for 2007. The budget authorizes spending \$1.45 million – a 40% increase over 2006. Projected revenue would finance all but \$100,000 of the to-

tal, with the balance funded from cash reserves. Glover noted that an increase in donations could offset the projected deficit and urged directors and members to be generous in their support in 2007.

The board adopted the plan and budget on a unanimous voice vote.

The Saturday session began with committee meetings. Then the board broke into smaller groups for workshops on five topics: grass roots organizing, the national network vision, legislative initiatives, public communications and strategies for defending the national network. The individual groups then presented their ideas and recommendations to the full board.

One recommendation that emerged from this process addressed NARP’s continuing concern over Amtrak’s failure to restore New Orleans-Florida service. The board voted to recommend to Amtrak that they extend the *City of New Orleans* to Miami.

The Board also approved two resolutions, one concerning ADA regulations on platform height (December News) and the other addressing negative provisions in currently pending appropriations bills.

The NARP Board meets twice a year: in the spring in Washington, D.C. and in the fall in another city. The 2007 meetings are May 1-3 and October 26-27 (Charlotte, NC). The fall 2008 meeting will be in Portland, OR. Most sessions are open to NARP members. Invitations to the fall meeting usually are sent to members in the area. A 15-member executive committee, which meets monthly by teleconference, acts for the board between its meetings. ■

At www.narprail.org, you can see the two resolutions under “Info & Links” then “NARP Reports, Comments, and Letters to Officials.”

An Association summary financial statements appears below. NARP’s 990 IRS filings are available on our website, click on “Info & Links” then “More About NARP.” Also in that location is Chilson’s presentation discussed above.

infrastructure.

Late—Edmonton South LRT phase II, Health Sciences-South Campus (2.4 mi.)

Late—Calgary “CTrain” Northwest Line extension, Dalhousie-Crowfoot

December—Phoenix Light Rail “East Valley Light Rail,” Montebello-Downtown-Airport-Mesa (20.3 miles)

Sometime—Keystone line station renovations at Lancaster and Elizabethtown and new stations at Keystone line at Harrisburg International Airport and Paradise (connecting with Strasburg Railroad). Elizabethtown and Paradise projects delayed due to platform height issues (August, December News)

Sometime—Metrolink (Los Angeles commuter rail) 91 Line extension, Riverside-Perris (18 mi.)

Sometime—Intermediate stop near Illinois Science and Technology Park on Chicago’s currently non-stop Skokie Swift shuttle between Howard Red/Purple line station and Skokie.

2009

- Hudson Bergen Light Rail extension, 22nd Street-8th Street (Bayonne, 1 mi.)

- Orlando Commuter Rail, Downtown-DeBary (approx. 26 mi.). Big step forward: the State and CSX have agreed to State purchase of the right-of-way.

- Miami-Dade Metrorail Earlington Heights-Miami Intermodal Center at Miami International Airport (2.6 miles). Project accelerated because no federal funds are used.

- Charlotte “Center City Streetcar”, Downtown-Eastland Mall (10-mi.).

- Northstar Commuter Rail, Minneapolis (Target Center)-Big Lake (40 mi.). Full funding FTA agreement reached, construction underway. Also includes 0.4 mi. extension of Hiawatha Light Rail to Northstar station.

- Edmonton South LRT phase III, South Campus-Century Park (2.6 mi.)

- TransLink “Canada Line” Vancouver Airport (Richmond)-downtown Vancouver (11.8 miles), private/public DBOM consortium

- Sound Transit (Seattle) Central Link Light Rail, Seattle-Tukwila (14 miles), December extension, Tukwila-SeaTac Airport (1.7 miles).

- Sounder commuter rail trains extended from Tacoma to Lakewood, Wash.

(continued on top of page 3)

NARP 2004-2007 Financial Highlights

	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006 Projected	2007 Budget
Revenue	\$597,849	\$999,512	\$1,038,700	\$1,353,813
Expenses	\$689,527	\$904,991	\$1,018,400	\$1,455,875
Net	(\$91,678)	\$94,521	\$20,300	(\$102,062)

(9 mi.). Delays have resulted from problems with alignment and steep (3.6%) grade near downtown Tacoma.

- Completion of building renovation at King Street Station, Seattle (used by Amtrak and Sounder). Platform and canopy work was completed in 2000.

- Portland Tri-Met MAX Green Line light rail extension to Clackamas Town Center (6.5 miles) and opening of Portland Mall Light Rail, Union Station-Portland State University (21 blocks).

- Two Los Angeles MTA Gold Line extensions: Union Station-Little Tokyo-Boyle Heights-East Los Angeles (6 miles); Sierra Madre Villa-Azusa Citrus Ave. (7 miles)

- Rail station (with all rental car outlets) opens at Warwick, RI, for Providence's T. F. Green Airport. Moving sidewalk links to air terminal. MBTA Commuter trains from Providence-Boston. [For Amtrak trains to stop here, in high speed territory, apparently would require a \$50 million investment in controlled, electrified sidings.]

New information on future projects

- **2010**—Norfolk, VA (Eastern Virginia Medical Center-Newtown Road-Kempsville Road) light rail (8.4 miles). Right-of-way purchased from Norfolk Southern; FTA agreement nearly done.

- **2010**—Two Charlotte milestones: North Corridor Commuter Rail, Downtown-Mooresville (30 mi.); New downtown Charlotte "Gateway Station" also serving

Amtrak, local bus, and Greyhound.

- **2011**—Pittsburgh Port Authority North Shore light rail, Gateway Center-Allegheny (Heinz Field, 1.2 mi). FTA full funding agreement signed.

- **2012**—Second Avenue Subway in New York City (8.5 miles). Contract has been let for first phase of tunneling; construction set to begin in 2008.

- **2012**—Los Angeles Exposition light rail line, Figueroa St. (junction with existing Blue Line)-Culver City (8.5 mi.), first segment of eventual line to Santa Monica. Groundbreaking for initial segment was Sept. 29, 2006.

- **2012**—Rapid transit West Oahu-Honolulu (23 miles). Honolulu City Council has chosen rail as the preferred mode.

- **Sometime in the future**—Northwest Arkansas Commuter Rail: Fayetteville-Bentonville (32 mi.). Commuter Systems Action Committee formed to promote concept and get funding for preliminary study; this is one of the nation's fastest growing regions. ■

Corrections

September, Page 3: Interstates 30 and 35W (not 20 and 35) intersect above Tower 55 in Fort Worth.

December, Page 2: Amtrak's new Chicago-Quincy train is the *Carl Sandburg* (not *Sandberg*).

Rail Victories on Election Day

Kansas City voters approved a sales tax increase to fund a 27 mile light rail line, despite opposition from many local officials.

California voters approved: \$40 billion in public works bonds; \$20 billion is for transportation, \$4 billion of that for public transportation. Voters also approved making it harder to divert gas tax money from transportation.

Fort Worth voters approved a one-half percent sales tax for commuter rail projects, including a link to Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

Minnesotans approved a state constitution amendment requiring the state to spend motor vehicle sales tax revenues on transportation—40% on transit.

Seattle voters approved property and sales tax increases to fund transportation and transit projects.

Salt Lake City voters favored a quarter-cent sales tax increase to pay for public transit construction and highway projects.

NARP issued a news release touting these victories on Nov. 10, available at www.narprail.org.

Amtrak Honors Crawfordsville Students

Each year, the Amtrak President's Awards honoring employees also includes a "Champion of the Rails" award to someone outside Amtrak.

At the October 18 luncheon in Washington, that award went to 11th and 12th grade students of Crawfordsville (IN) High School for work both as rail advocates and in cleaning up their Amtrak station—work for which NARP recognized them last spring (May 2006, *News*).

To accept the Amtrak award, Crawfordsville Community Schools Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Steele joined three of the students involved in the project—Natalie Davis, Paul Utterback, and Mathew Kelsey—and their advisor, Dr. Helen Hudson.

Their award was given first. The Hoosiers were invited on stage, given their trophy, plus small Champion of the Rails pins for each participant, and posed for pictures with President Kummant.

NARP Board Member Ken Briers represented the Association at the event and gave the group a tour of Union Station after the luncheon.

To quote this year's Crawfordsville High School Yearbook, "What started as a simple Problem Based Learning (PBL) project in 2004...blossomed into a community-wide interest that grabbed the attention of local and national high speed rail groups."

The students' efforts to maintain the Crawfordsville station have continued, and a new generation of passenger train advocates has been recruited!

This is the second consecutive year in which NARP had a special interest in the Champion of the Rails Award. Last year, it went to the Burch family—Bette Burch, her son Michael, and her daughter Kathryn Pettyjohn—for their support of rail passenger safety through the Dr. Gary Burch Memorial Safety Award. ■



—Ken Briers

(l. to r.) Dr. Helen Hudson, Natalie Davis, Paul Utterback, Mathew Kelsey, and Dr. Kathleen Steele accept the Amtrak "Champion of the Rails" Award from Amtrak President and CEO Alex Kummant during the October 18 Amtrak Employee Awards banquet. This was the students' second trip to Washington, D.C. to be recognized for their efforts; the first came last April at the NARP Board meeting and Congressional Reception.



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(This has news through December 13. Vol. 40, No. 11 was mailed November 30.)

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Oregon Thruway Bus Change—Bus 5528 (Eugene-Albany-Salem-Portland) is 30 mins. earlier (dpt. Eugene 1:15 p.m.) than in National Timetable.

Crescent Atlanta-New Orleans cancellations—Due to NS track and bridge work, Jan. 21-Feb. 15, Train 19 departing New York City Sun.-Wed. will terminate in Atlanta; Train 20 that normally originates in New Orleans will originate in Atlanta Mon.-Thurs. Amtrak planned no alternate motor coach service; NARP has urged Amtrak to reconsider this, saying that four consecutive days without service is unacceptable.

California Zephyr delays—Thruway Bus connection from train 6 to Springfield, IL and *Texas Eagle* is eliminated for now (still O.K. for *Southwest Chief*, westbound CZ). Due to backlog of UP maintenance (mainly ties), CZ is taking substantial delays in Nevada. Temporary, slower schedules are possible soon (depart Emeryville earlier; arrive later; no change Chicago-Denver).

Lincoln Service and Keystone timing changes—To improve reliability, many trains have 5-15 minute adjustments (Chicago-St. Louis and Harrisburg-Philadelphia); check with Amtrak prior to travel.

Rail, Energy, and the Environment

In a November 3 release, "Rail Needed to Help on Global Warming," NARP said the energy efficiency of rail transportation is a powerful reason for the U.S. to invest more in rail. It cites 2003 numbers from the latest Transportation Energy Data Book (July *News*, p. 2).

"Rail's contribution could be even stronger if the U.S. had a serious rail passenger investment program, and stronger policy support for freight rail. Moreover, the [Oak Ridge] figures understate rail's existing contribution because they do not reflect rail's ability to encourage pedestrian-friendly [and transit-friendly] real estate development...Aviation is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gases."

Citing data from the Pew Center on

Global Climate Change, NARP said the U.S. alone accounts for 25% of the world's greenhouse emissions, with transportation contributing one-third of the nation's emissions (rising to 36% by 2010), and highway vehicles accounting for 72% of total U.S. transportation emissions. Each year, U.S. transportation produces more CO₂ than any other nation's entire economy, except China.

On Nov. 7, the International Energy Agency, in its annual "Outlook" report, pleaded for action, saying overdependence on oil places the world on a "crisis to crisis" course that "may mean skyrocketing prices or more frequent blackouts; can mean more supply disruptions, more meteorological catastrophes—or all these at the same time." ■

Capitol Hill Update

Amtrak and most of the federal government have been funded on continuing resolutions in Fiscal 2007, the latest through Feb. 15 (approved Dec. 8). The new appropriations chairman, Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) and Rep. David Obey (D-WI), announced Dec. 11 that they will do another continuing resolution (CR) good for the rest of the fiscal year (to Sept. 30).

This suggests Amtrak will not face unworkable, Republican-passed, micromanaging language. Funding could stay at the Fiscal 2006 level of \$1.29 billion, or could be reduced to about \$1.1 billion, the level in the current CR.

Rep. John Mica (R-FL), a leading Amtrak critic, will be ranking member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. On the Railroads Subcommittee, Reps. Corrine Brown (D-FL) and Steve LaTourette (R-OH) will be chair and ranking member, respectively, a role reversal from 2006.

New Democrats on the House Ways & Means Committee, which would need to approve the funding mechanism for a passenger rail bill: Earl Blumenauer (OR), Ron Kind (WI), William Pascrell (NJ), Shelley Berkley (NV), Joseph Crowley (NY), Chris Van Hollen (MD), Kendrick Meek (FL), Allyson Schwartz (PA) and Artur Davis (AL).