



from the
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS**

Vol. 24, No. 6  June, 1990

John R. Martin, Pres.; Eugene Skoropowski, V. Pres.; Robert Glover, Sec.; Joseph Horning, Jr., Treas.; Ross Capon, Exec. Dir.; Scott Leonard, Asst. Dir.; Jane Colgrove, Membership Dir.; Harriet Parcells, Transp. Assoc.

News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers (ISSN 0739-3490), is published monthly except November by NARP, 236 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Suite 603, Washington, DC 20002. 202/546-1550. Membership dues are \$20/year (\$10 under 21 or over 65) of which \$5 is for a subscription to NARP News. Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC.

Postmaster: send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers, 236 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Suite 603, Washington, DC 20002.

(This has news through July 9. No. 5 was mailed 1st class May 24 & 25.)

RETURN REQUESTED

California Voters Love Rail!

Earthquake Challenges "Need" for More Freeways

Mass transit and employer work flexibility programs were the heroes in San Francisco after the "Pretty Big One" shut the Bay Bridge and other key area freeways. Bay Area traffic flowed better than predicted. The area's ability to cope with reduced road capacity suggests the folly of plans to build many more urban highways nationwide (see "AASHTO's Concrete Dreams," April News).

Consultant Paul Rupert, of San Francisco-based New Ways To Work, called BART "truly the saviour of the day. It performed extraordinarily well . . . gave transit a good name." BART now averages 8.6% more weekday riders than before the quake (245,000 vs. 225,648). (The post-quake peak, while 24-hour service was offered, was 357,135.)

On work flexibility, Pacific Bell led the way with a campaign of "getting the work to the people" by electronic means, but all large employers—including those previously committed to what Rupert called the "extraordinarily ordinary"—were forced into creative practices, including:

- flexitime (people working different hours);
- compressed work week (i.e., 4 10-hour days);
- flexiplace (work at home or closer to home); and
- greater emphasis on transit and ferries.

In a presentation videotaped for an Institute of Policy Studies June 27 meeting in Washington, Rupert disputed the popular impression (reflected in the Nov. 19 *San Francisco Examiner*, p. D1) that post-earthquake creativity quickly disappeared.

He said many employees successfully insisted on retaining their new-found flexibility. He expects employee pressures will become a bigger factor in future work flexibility progress. He also thinks that the work-at-home movement many had expected 10 years ago due to personal computers is now getting underway for real due to the added impact of FAX machines, cellular phones, phone mail, and pagers.

(In the fall, the University Transportation Center at the University of California/Berkeley will release a report—as yet untitled—on the earthquake's long-term work flexibility effects. To get the executive summary, write to: Dr. Anna Bennett, Institute of Transportation Studies, Richmond Field Sta.—Bldg. 452, 1301 S. 46th St., Richmond, CA 94804.) ■

2 Rail Bonds, Gas Tax Measure Pass!

"This was a massive affirmation of rail transportation in California."
—San Mateo County Supervisor Tom Nolan

"By God, we're going to lay some rail."
—Santa Clara Supervisor Rod Diridon, *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 7

"Above all, the vote was a triumph for transit."
—*San Francisco Chronicle*, June 7 editorial

Some rail engineering consultants started opening new California offices months ago. Caltrans and county agencies have hired new rail personnel. And Amtrak appointed its first "non-Washington" government affairs official: on Jan. 15, Los Angeles-based Ron Scolaro, formerly general superintendent of Amtrak's Western Division, became Chief Administrative Officer—Government Affairs West.

Due largely to voter approval of 3 key measures on June 5, California seems to be changing from a state where—as in the rest of the U.S.—new rail projects require the work of individual "heroes" to one where new rail projects will be institutional products, much like roads.

One logjam broke 10 days after the vote: 3 counties, California DOT (Caltrans), and Southern Pacific reached "a historic agreement that preserves the [San Francisco-San Jose commuter rail] line, adds 14 trains to the service, and ensures the sale of the tracks to a government transit authority" (*San Francisco Chronicle* June 15 news story). Some observers hope labor agreements will be modernized before the new trains are added.

Prospects also seem brighter for extension of the commuter trains closer to the heart of San Francisco and south to Gilroy.

The voters approved:

● **Proposition 116**—The \$1.99 billion rail bond initiative that was on the ballot because the Planning and Conservation League, Train Riders Association of California (TRAC), California NARP members, and their allies collected 696,000 signatures (372,000 were needed). 116 got a 53.2% yes vote. It was in the planning and campaign stage for 18 months; TRAC and

(Continued on page 3)

NARP Continues to Push Boston Rail Links

Efforts continue to get a railroad connection between Boston's north- and south-side commuter rail lines. This connection would also permit the fastest and most cost-effective Amtrak service to New Hampshire and Maine (NARP News, Aug. & Dec. '83, Apr. & July '84, Apr. '88).

Massachusetts plans to put Boston's elevated crosstown freeway underground and add a few lanes to it and to build a "3rd harbor crossing"—a South Station-Logan Airport freeway. There is also citizen support for extending Amtrak and commuter rail service to the airport via the new tunnel. State officials favor freeway-only tunnels in both cases.

NARP Exec. Dir. Ross Capon and Louise Lewis, chair of the New England Sierra Club's Central Artery/3rd Harbor Tunnel Committee, cosigned a June 20 letter urging federal officials, in reviewing the latest Central Artery/Tunnel environmental impact statement (EIS), "to insist on full analysis of an alternative that includes" the rail connections, which "have not received serious consideration. We believe this is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act."

The letter was addressed to heads of the Federal Highway, Federal Railroad, and Urban Mass Transportation Administrations—Thomas Larson, Gil Carmichael, and Brian Clymer. Copies went to President Bush, Secretary Skinner, all U.S. legislators from New England, the 6 governors, EPA's regional administrator, and Col. Daniel M. Wilson, head of the Army Corps of Engineers' New England Division, based in Waltham, MA.

Capon, Priscilla Chapman (exec. dir. of Sierra Club/New England), and TrainRiders Northeast Pres. and NARP Dir. Wayne Davis of Yarmouth, ME, held a news conference at South Station on June 20 to announce the letter. This resulted in a good June 21 *Boston Herald* story, "Push for crosstown rail link study."

Although *The Boston Globe's* June 21 story only mentioned our concerns in passing, their June 25 editorial, "The EPA and the artery," perhaps as a consequence of the EPA statement (see box), included this condescending passage:

EPA CITES RAIL LINK CONCERN

"Our preliminary review of the EIS and Clean Water Act permit application reveals deficiencies in [the state's] data and analysis. We have concerns about a number of areas that need to be resolved as we complete our review. Among those are: the design of the Charles River Crossing; rail linkages in our transportation corridors; air quality as a result of the tunnel design."

—Julie Belaga, Regional Administrator,
Environmental Protection Agency,
June 21 statement at state/federal EIS hearing in Boston

"Railroad enthusiasts want the project to include a rail link between North Station and South Station. Artery planners say there is no room for another tunnel under the city once the artery is depressed—a convincing argument if confirmed by the EPA."

Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation & Construction Frederick P. Salvucci once spoke favorably of the rail connection. But at least since 1983, he has opposed it and worked hard to convince local rail supporters that pushing for these links was a waste of time.

In a Sep. 1983 letter to NARP, his office acknowledged the

desirability of a rail link but ruled it out due to cost, "lack of a funding source and the need to meet a rigid federal assistance timetable." A month later, the NARP Board resolved to support "depressing the Central Artery only if a North-South Stations railroad connection is included."

Later, state explanations emphasized the lack of space for both north-south rail lines and new highway lanes and the fact that federal highway funding would only be available if the number of highway lanes was increased (see box).

USE LIMITED SPACE FOR RAILS, NOT HIGHWAY-WIDENING!

"Plans [to widen the Central Artery to] 8 lanes preclude the rail connection you desire. With or without a rail line in the tunnel, 6 traffic lanes would not be enough to gain any relief from traffic congestion from this multi-billion dollar Federal-aid highway project. Spending this money without providing any additional highway capacity is unacceptable." (ED.: Emphasis added. NARP believes the Dept. of Transportation is supposed to solve transportation problems, not highway problems.)

—Secretary Samuel K. Skinner in July 18, 1989 letter to NARP

"The [above] statement implies that the planned highway will give significant relief. Particularly in light of [forthcoming] Clean Air Act provisions, we think our grandchildren would not care about the difference between 6 and 10 congested road lanes but would notice a great deal of difference between a public transport network that looks roughly like the present one and a network that includes rail connections."

—NARP/New England Sierra Club June 20 letter
U.S. DOT Administrators Larson, Carmichael, and Clymer

Federal transportation priorities indeed are anti-rail. We think the Boston project is a good place to start changing those priorities.

20 years ago, when faced with federal policies that overemphasized highway construction, Massachusetts Gov. Francis W. Sargent (R) played a key role in developing the "Interstate transfer" provision that helped cities nationwide "trade in" money for unwanted freeways in favor of transit projects.

Today, Massachusetts officials seem unwilling to take a

BOSTON GLOBE OP ED COLUMNS FAVOR RAIL CONNECTION

"Without [a rail tunnel] the traffic congestion on the Central Artery will make even the 8-lane Central Artery highway tunnel obsolete on the day it opens. Considering the need to reduce air pollution and traffic congestion, the Central Artery Regional Rail Tunnel is an opportunity to provide Boston with a transportation service that will be indispensable for the quality of life of Boston, its suburbs and all of New England."

—Scott R. Spencer and John F. Tucker 3rd, Jan. 22, 1990

"Given the ever-increasing metropolitan congestion of air-polluting, gridlocking automobiles, monster trucks and airplanes, it is absolutely essential that the long-delayed railroad tunnel across Boston be included in the mammoth Central Artery underground reconstruction project. No more federal funds (yours and mine) should be paid over for this \$4 bill. highway extravaganza until provision has been made to include the railroad connection."

—Lawyer/Rail Consultant Armistead B. Rood, June 4, 1989

similar stand. The Boston project is huge; they fear any complicating factor (like a challenge to federal pro-highway policies) would kill it. And they see the 4 billion federal dollars as crucial to reviving the state's faltering economy.

But the project's cost means NARP members nationwide are justified in telling your legislators and Secretary Skinner that you support the project only if it is modified to include rail links, in line with current understanding of the environmental and other reasons to emphasize rail development rather than new road capacity.

You might also let Gov. Michael S. Dukakis (State House, Boston, MA 02133) know you would be happy to see his huge project go forward if it includes a rail line, which would send a pro-environment message to policymakers nationwide. Given his strong pro-transit stand during his presidential campaign, such letters should help him appreciate the irony of his present position—trying to make a freeway-only project with virtually no transit benefits the cornerstone of his career as governor.

A new group formed primarily to fight for the 2 rail links, the Committee for Regional Transit, planned its first meeting for July 16. To join, contact NARP Dir. Andreas Aeppli, 617/621-0851. We commend Gov. Dukakis for his efforts to revive Old Colony commuter rail service and filed comments in support of that project; more in a future issue. ■

PRESIDENT BUSH SIGNS AUTHORIZATION

On July 6, President Bush signed into law Amtrak's first "free-standing" authorization bill since 1979. Details next issue. The law excludes the ICC provision that prompted a veto; mandates more Amtrak studies: of self-sufficiency by 2000; possibilities of expanding service into new areas. The appropriations process, which determines how much Amtrak will actually get in FY '91, has begun; ask your legislators to work for Amtrak's full request (\$684 mill. plus \$59 mill. for Northeast Corridor program).

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

"Capitol" and "Broadway" reroutes are set for Oct. 1 (Dec. News). New "Capitol" stops: Alliance, OH & Waterloo, IN (bus for Fort Wayne) plus these existing "Lake Shore" stations: South Bend & Elkhart, IN; Bryan, Toledo, Sandusky, Elyria, and Cleveland, OH. New "Broadway" stops are Youngstown, OH; Akron, OH; Garrett, IN (bus for Fort Wayne); Nappanee, IN; plus one of these Ohio points: Tiffin, Fostoria or North Baltimore. Akron and Youngstown stations will be staffed; staffing will continue at Ft. Wayne for the connecting buses; no decision yet on staffing for the new western Ohio stop.

The reroutes will end Amtrak rail service at Valparaiso (except for Amtrak's Chicago commuter train which will end Dec. 31 unless a non-Amtrak funding source is found), Warsaw, and Fort Wayne, IN; and Lima, Crestline, and Canton, OH. As an offset to Ft. Wayne's loss, we have asked Amtrak to give the city its first Amtrak service to upstate New York and New England via a "Lake Shore Ltd." bus connection at Bryan, OH—where "Lake Shore" already stops—or at Waterloo.

New Amtrak "Bloomington-Normal" station opened June 11 in Normal at 100 E. Parkinson St.—near Illinois State University—replacing the old Alton station at Front St., Bloomington. (Send NARP s.a.s.e. for Amtrak's

NARP TOUR: YOUR LAST CHANCE!

Aug. 1 is the signup deadline for our Sep. 16-Oct. 7 European rail tour (Feb. News). If this reaches you after Aug. 1, check with Rocky Mountain Tours anyway (24-hour phone, 505/984-1684).

NARP IS MOVING, PHONES CHANGING

Effective Aug. 1, NARP will be at 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20002. Office telephone: 202/408-8362; after-hours hotline: 408-8363. No change on the post-office box for renewals and contributions, but correspondence sent there (a bank "lock-box") is much slower to reach our office.

CALIFORNIA VOTERS (continued from page 1)

PCL assembled \$500,000 to collect the signatures and \$600,000 for the campaign. 116 earmarked specific dollar amounts for specific projects (see map in July '89 News).

\$508 mill. of Prop 116 funding goes to Amtrak projects (see below). Another \$100 mill. is for purchase of standard Amtrak/commuter rail rolling stock. (116 aims to prevent unnecessary use of incompatible equipment types on the many different new rail lines the state anticipates.) The rest of 116's money is for commuter rail and rail transit, with some funding for rail freight, bicycle, and ferry projects.

● **Proposition 108**—"The Passenger Rail and Clean Air Bond Act of 1990," a \$1 bill. rail bond issue approved for the ballot by the state legislature (56.2% yes vote). 108 simply lists routes eligible for its funds, including—as in 116—most commuter rail and urban rail "new starts" and extensions discussed in recent years (including "San Francisco-Santa Rosa-Sonoma," San Jose-Gilroy-Monterey, and Stockton-Livermore) plus these Amtrak lines: San Diego-Los Angeles-Santa Barbara, Los Angeles-Fresno-Bay Area/Sacramento, Bay Area-Sacramento-Auburn, and San Francisco-Eureka; and

● **Proposition 111**—A combined constitutional amend-

new Chicago-St. Louis timetable.)

Weekend time restrictions on Northeast Corridor excursion fares ended June 1 for local travel south of Philadelphia and for travel between New England and south of Philadelphia. Empire Corridor \$7 return fares are still valid for the summer, but only Monday-Thursday.

The New York-Mobile sleeper was taken off the "Gulf Breeze" June 1. One New York-Atlanta sleeper on the "Crescent" will be extended to New Orleans July 10.

American-European Express changed its route pattern May 1. AEE now operates on "Broadway" Chicago-Philadelphia-New York twice a week, on "Capitol" Chicago-Washington three times a week. Information & reservations: 1-800-677-4233.

Princess Rail Tours will drop its "California Sun Express" luxury dome car service July 31. Car has been operating in daily service on Amtrak's "Coast Starlight" Los Angeles-Oakland since Apr. 1.

USDA inspectors in Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal are checking for medflies this summer. Passengers departing the Los Angeles basin area by train (or other means) are advised not to carry fresh fruit or vegetables with them. Rail passengers will be asked at the departure gate if they are carrying any.

CALIFORNIA VOTERS (continued from page 3)

ment (revising state spending limits) and gasoline tax increase expected to bring in \$15.5 bill. in added revenues over 10 years. 111, which got a 52.4% yes vote, raises the state's gasoline tax (now 9 cents) by 5 cents Aug. 1 and one added penny per year for the next 4 years.

Some truckers opposed 111 because of its 54% increase in truck weight fees, even though auto users ultimately will pay a 100% increase! 111 also was controversial among transit "purists"—although 111's passage was essential if 108's \$1 bill.

CALIFORNIA TRANSIT VOTE IN NOVEMBER

Californians can cast another pro-transit vote in November—for a constitutional amendment allowing use of gasoline tax money to buy rail rolling stock (current transit use of gas tax money is restricted to construction of tracks, signals, stations).

was to be spent—because of the additional highway spending 111 permits. A May 25 Sacramento *Bee* editorial ridiculed both "extremist" camps.

However, \$500 mill. of 111's revenue is dedicated to transit (due to increased sales tax revenues resulting from the gasoline tax increase, "a tax-on-a-tax"). Also, under California's new "flexible funding" law, up to \$5 billion more is available at local option for transit. (Some politicians who furiously promoted 111 emphasized the transit possibilities to transit advocates while assuring the highway lobby that, as a practical matter, no communities would make the transit choice!)

Operating Funds

Contrary to some reports (including a June 11 *San Francisco Chronicle* story), 111 includes new funds for operating new services—the just-mentioned \$500 mill. Also, 116 sets up a trust fund for certain sales tax revenues currently used to fund rail operations; diversions of these funds during state budget crises will no longer be permitted.

Nevertheless, some routes listed in the bond issues may never get service, as ridership projections may be too low.

\$658 Million for Intercity Rail Passenger Capital!

Prop 116 has \$508 mill. and 108 at least \$150 mill. for Amtrak capital improvements, so Californians approved an amount for such improvements \$21 mill. greater than total federal Amtrak-plus-Northeast-Corridor-Improvement funding for FY 1990! Moreover, the state is expected to pay 100% of its projects' costs.

While the spendout rate remains uncertain and Californians won't be approving any money next year, additional legislative rail bond issues totalling \$1 bill. each (\$150 mill. each earmarked for Amtrak) will go on California's Nov. '92 and Nov. '94 ballots.

The Nationwide Messages

The most important message is that voters are fed up with an all-road approach to transportation problems. There's been speculation that some of the pro-rail votes were cast by die-hard motorists who hope others will get off the roads, but this is a moot point given the strong ridership performance of California rail transit to date.

Secretary Skinner may be tempted to say: "See! We don't need a federal railroad program. The states can fund it all themselves." But California's money is for state-specific projects not in Amtrak's existing and planned capital budgets, and few states are as wealthy as California or as able to provide major new services without crossing state lines.

Furthermore, it would be absurd if every state waited until

things got as bad as they have in California to take strong pro-rail action. With proper federal encouragement and funding, California likely would have taken stronger action sooner. The need for a federal railroad program and expanded federal transit funding should be obvious to anyone who cares about the problems of air pollution, congestion, safety, oil-imports, and mobility for those without cars.

We'll grant Mr. Skinner that 90% federal funding is not essential, but the federal share must be at least as high for rail as for roads—in theory and in practice. (Currently, to stretch the small transit budget, the Bush Administration has an "overmatch" policy giving priority to projects with the largest share of non-federal support. This biases the transit program against projects in economically weaker areas.)

For rail supporters in states which allow citizen initiative petitions, the message is clear: you can get more money for rail by using such initiatives instead of relying exclusively on state legislators. 22 states allow citizen initiatives: Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Ohio, plus all states west of the Mississippi River except Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Texas.

(For a copy of the Prop 108 and 116 pages from the California secretary of state's ballot pamphlet and TRAC's complete list of 116's projects with dollar amounts, send NARP \$1 plus an s.a.s.e. with 45 cents postage.) ■

THE PUBLIC LEADS THE WAY!

New nationwide transportation polling research for American's Coalition for Transit NOW found 80% support for fixing existing roads, 72-78% for various transit options, and only 63% for construction of new highways.

We hope the "road gang," including your state DOT, will not fool the public in next year's highway/transit reauthorization as they did in 1982—using "fix-the-roads" publicity to generate support for a bill largely aimed at building new roads.

Certainly there is abundant evidence that Californians favor a different approach. A May poll of Sacramento County voters found 52% "believe higher priority should be given to constructing mass transit systems than to building highways. Just 10% say emphasis should be given to freeway construction" (Sacramento Bee, May 31).

The only statewide bond issue Californians rejected in recent years was Gov. George Deukmejian's (R) \$1 bill. highway construction bond (Prop 74) in June 1988, when voters also defeated Prop 72, a proposal to transfer \$700 mill. in general tax revenues from other state services to roads.

But the road gang is alive and well even in California, whose DOT is circulating "California's Recommendations for a Post-Interstate National Surface Transportation Program." In a June 15 letter to House Public Works & Transportation Chairman Glenn M. Anderson (D-CA), California Assembly Speaker Willie L. Brown Jr., Senate President Pro Tempore David Roberti, and transportation committee chairmen of both bodies said the legislature was not consulted in the drafting of this document and wrote: "We are particularly concerned with the document's emphasis on highways and privatization, at the expense of mass transit, alternative fuels, and air quality."

What is your state DOT up to?