

“The vision put forward by the Department of Transportation is a step in the right direction toward reducing travel time, improving service, and increasing safety and reliability.”

REP. DON BEYER (D-VA.)

Washington Continues To Promote Infrastructure Bill

The opening days of 2017 have featured a number of positive signs for increased investment in passenger rail, from President Trump’s pushing railways in his inaugural address to Democrat’s introducing a trillion dollar infrastructure proposal that would invest billions in rail and transit.

We’re asking you to call your elected official—today if possible—and deliver two key points:

1.) I support a bipartisan transportation bill that invests in safe, efficient passenger trains and transit.

2.) Investing money in new equipment for Amtrak and high-speed rail will put Americans back to work, and boost U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Congress needs to hear this critical message from day one. Call now! Go to www.narprail.org/action to get the tools.

If you can’t call, NARP has set up an email tool at the above link. However, we encourage

you to reach out in person to convey this important message. (Read our Guide to Effective Engagement below to find out why).

A Guide to Effective Engagement

The following guidelines, given by a senior staffer for a U.S. Senator, were compiled by a NARP Council Member. We believe it contains very useful information on how to best engage with your elected officials.

Face Time Is Ideal

By far the most effective way to be heard and get your congressperson’s attention is to have a face-to-face meeting. If they have town hall meetings in the district, go to them. Or ask for an appointment and go to their local offices. If you’re in Washington, find a way to go to one of their public events (such as a constituent coffee). Check each congressperson’s website regularly because all public events are listed there. When you go, ask questions—lots of them—and push for answers. Be respectful

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Amtrak Restructures To Improve Passenger Service And Competitiveness

Amtrak President and CEO Wick Moorman announced in a press release on January 4 that the railroad has streamlined its corporate structure in an effort to improve service for Amtrak passengers, while also making Amtrak a more competitive transportation option.

According to Amtrak, the new corporate structure will also grant the organization more flexibility under the new account structure created under 2015’s Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). As a result of the new structure, Amtrak can provide a greater level transparency to customers and Amtrak stakeholders.

Moorman, who started with Amtrak in September stated, “This new structure aligns with our focus on improving the way we do business, modernizing and enhancing the customer experience, and investing in the future.”

The restructuring comes only weeks after the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released its recommendation on improving the Northeast Corridor as part of NEC Future. The program was started in 2012 and is designed to “create a framework for the future investments needed to improve passenger rail capacity and service through 2040.”

“This is an important move for Amtrak and

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Amtrak President and CEO Wick Moorman
(Photo Credit: Amtrak)

LIRR Train Derails Following Issue Of FRA Safety Advisory

A Long Island Rail Road train derailed in January after it failed to stop at the station. The derailment occurred during rush hour on January 4, 2017 at the Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn.

The train was traveling twice the speed limit as it headed into the station. The resulting derailment injured 103 people, though no injuries were life-threatening.

“We are thankful that no one lost their lives during the LIRR accident,” said NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews. “This derailment though, and other recent accidents, highlight the continual need to improve and increase safety practices on all passenger rail lines.”

Reports have revealed that the accident could potentially have been prevented if Metropolitan

Transportation Authority (MTA) officials had implemented new safety practices following the Hoboken, NJ accident.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a safety advisory to passenger rail agencies in December, which recommended to increase communication measures on trains. However, MTA officials admitted that the organization did not increase communication practices between train engineers and other crew members as the train approached the station. MTA officials did note that the agency was in the process of increasing safety measures when the derailment occurred.

The cause of the derailment is still under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board. ■



Photo taken by FDNY of the LIRR Derailment in Brooklyn. (Photo Credit: FDNY)

FRA Releases Recommendations For NEC As NY, NJ Focus On Gateway Program

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) took a major step in advancing train travel along the Northeast Corridor with the release of new recommendations to modernize the region and Amtrak’s fleet.

Released at the end of 2016, the NEC Future report (www.necfuture.com) is the culmination of four years of study and outreach that examined the burgeoning needs of the NEC, including a larger, modernized train fleet capable of higher speeds. The FRA collected information, data and ideas from the general public and civic groups within the region, as well as elected and state officials between Washington, D.C. and New York.

“While we’re unsurprised at the universal demand for more train service, NARP is gratified that the FRA went the extra mile in soliciting the opinions of everyday passengers. This corridor is a vital artery for the entire region, and identifying the right investment strategy will have massive consequences for U.S. economic growth in the 21st century,” said NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews.

The result of four years of work is a critical outline for a 30-year investment plan to strengthen and expand capacity for the NEC. The plan focuses heavily on bringing the current rail infrastructure of the NEC to “a state of good repair,” then adding train capacity and frequencies sequentially.

The (now former) FRA Administrator Sarah E. Feinberg emphasized the importance of the new plan. Feinberg stated, “In order to keep moving forward, we need a new vision for the Northeast Corridor—a corridor that can move an ever-increasing population safer, faster and more reliably than before.”

The FRA highlighted several notable benefits of moving forward with plan. These included:

- Cutting travel time by 35 minutes between D.C. and New York City.
- Reducing travel time between New York City and Boston by 45 minutes.
- Eliminating the need to switch trains for passengers connecting between Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station to the city’s airport.
- Adding new tracks to increase the NEC to four tracks in most locations, which would allow for more frequent and faster service.
- Adding direct and frequent service to Hartford, Conn., and Springfield, Mass.
- Increasing, and in some cases doubling, the number of regional trains and providing up to five times more intercity trains.

“The hard work of prioritizing, phasing and funding these improvements comes next and Amtrak will continue to seek opportunities to develop world-class high-speed service across the **GATEWAY**, p. 5


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and polite, but the louder and more vocal you can be at those meetings the better.

But Phone Calls Work Best

In-person meetings with members of Congress don't happen every day, so the most important thing to do on a regular basis is telephone their office. Members of Congress pay attention to telephone calls. Every single day in our office, the Senior Staff and the Senator get a report on the three most-called-about topics for that day at each of their offices—that is, the Washington office and the local offices—and exactly how many people said what about each of those topics. They're also sorted by zip code and area code.

One Call Isn't Enough

Call Repeatedly. If there's an important vote or committee hearing coming up, call every day. But as long as important legislation is being considered, call several times a week. Remember, someone in that office is keeping track of how many calls they're getting and for which issues.

What to Say When You Call

Talk to the Right Person. When calling the Washington office, ask for the staff member in charge of transportation. The local offices won't always have specific ones, but they might. If you get transferred to that person, wonderful. But if they're busy or out of the office, get their name, and then just keep talking to whoever answered the phone. Don't leave a message unless the office doesn't pick up at all—but it's much better to talk to the staff person who first answered than leave a message for the specific individual in charge of your topic.

Give Them Your ZIP Code. They won't always ask for it, but make sure you give it to them, so they can mark it down. Extra points if you live in a zip code that traditionally votes for them, since they'll want to make sure they get/keep your vote.

Make It Personal. "I voted for you in the last election and I'm worried/happy/whatever..." Or "I work in tourism, and I am appalled by cuts to Amtrak." Or "as a single mother..." Or "as a white, middle class woman..."

Focus on Something Specific. Don't run down a whole list. Stick to one or possibly two items per phone call, ideally something that will be



From left, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer of N.Y., Sen. Bill Nelson, Sen. Bernie Sanders, and Sen. Patrick Leahy, participate in a news conference on Capitol Hill. (Photo Credit: AP)

voted on or taken up for consideration in the following few days. But call anyway, even if there's no vote coming up. The important thing is that they get phone calls.

Be Clear About Your Concerns. "I'm extremely disappointed that the senator voted to reduce the already inadequate investment in passenger trains." "Please thank the Congressman on my behalf for voting for Amtrak's national network grant."

Don't Be Intimidated

The staff may get to know your name and you may feel they're sick of hearing from you. It doesn't matter. Call again anyway. The reality is that the people answering the phones—often college interns—generally turn over every six weeks anyway, so even if they're really sick of you, they'll be gone in six weeks.

It's a Numbers Game

The senior staff person for a major political figure said that Republican callers generally outnumber Democrat callers 4-1, and when it's a hot button issue that single-issue-voters pay attention to (like gun control, immigration, etc...), it's often closer to 11-1. These calls have been incredibly effective at swaying party attitudes on these issues, and it's a playbook worth copying from. ■

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the future of our national rail network," said NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews. "Amtrak is taking the steps necessary to provide effective service for rail passengers as demand in this country grows for reliable transportation, and new visions for the future of rail are developed."

The change cut in half the senior management team into six direct reports. These reports include:

- **Operations** – Scot Naparstek, Chief Operating Officer
- **Marketing and Business Development** – Jason Molfetas, Executive Vice President
- **Finance** – William Feidt, Chief Financial Officer (new appointee, replaces Gerry Sokol)
- **Law** – Eldie Acheson, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary
- **Administration** – DJ Stadler, Chief Administrative Officer
- **Planning, Technology and Public Affairs** – Stephen Gardner, Executive Vice President

Amtrak also highlighted that changes will occur with train

operations, marketing, human resources, facility functions and more. These changes include:

Train operations will be managed regionally through three general managers and supported by Mechanical, Engineering, Network Support, Police and Security organizations.

The Marketing and Business Development group will be expanded beyond its traditional role to include product development, planning, and contract management functions of the current business lines.

A new Administration group will serve to efficiently manage key administrative and support functions including Human Resources, Labor Relations, Procurement and Enterprise Project Management.

Certain corporate planning, IT and station and facility functions, as well as the Government Affairs and Corporate Communications division, will be transferred to the new Planning, Technology, and Public Affairs group. ■

• • • S T A T E S N E W S • • •

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) received a significant boost in financial support from D.C., Virginia, and Maryland for its next fiscal year which begins July 1. The request for additional funding was made by Metro’s General Manager, Paul J. Wiedefeld, this past October in order to continue repairs and maintenance on the network. Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) proposed a budget that offered a \$42 million increase in the state’s subsidy for Metro, while Virginia increased its subsidy to nearly \$40 million and D.C. increased its by nearly \$50 million.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority reached a settlement with Kern County, clearing the final California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) litigation for the Fresno to Bakersfield rail segment. The agreement will allow work to progress in the Central Valley which already features more than 119 miles of active construction. The high-speed rail link between the Central Valley and Silicon Valley is scheduled to be complete by 2024, with passenger service beginning in 2025.

Vermont’s Agency of Transportation has finalized a study on the feasibility of commuter rail service that would link Burlington, the state’s largest city, with St. Albans to the north and Montpelier to the east. The study, released to the public on January 18, offered what it termed “conceptual” possibilities for the service. One scenario would provide a total of six round-trips each weekday, the other 11. The study pegged operating costs at \$4.9 million for the former and \$8.9 million for the latter scenario, not including the cost of liability insurance. Capital costs for the service would run between \$301-\$363 million, assuming, among other things, six or seven locomotive-hauled train sets, each with six passenger cars.



A Metro train arrives at the U Street Metro Station in Washington, D.C. (Credit: AP)

Even though the state of Missouri cut a half a million dollars in funding for its state supported Amtrak service, state officials are promising service won’t be reduced. According to the director of multimodal programs at the Missouri Department of Transportation, Michelle Teel, frequent users of the Missouri River Runner Train line should expect a fully operational service. Currently, Missouri pays Amtrak \$9.6 million to operate two trains that run from St. Louis to Kansas City, and as a result of budget cuts will now owe the passenger rail \$500,000, as of July 1. A possible negotiation may fall upon fare hikes as an option to compensate for the funding gap. ■

NARP Board Director Elections

Nominations are now being sought from qualified NARP members interested in being elected to one of three available Board Director posts at the upcoming April Meeting. These positions will be for three-year terms, ending in April 2020. For more information on how you could make a difference as a NARP Board Director, including the specific duties,

responsibilities and required qualifications, go to <https://www.narprail.org/about/leadership/become-a-narp-director/>. If you are interested in seeking a Board Director position, you must complete and submit a Candidate Information Statement (linked from the this webpage) by the March 31, 2017 deadline. ■

NARP Offers First Student Fellowship

This spring, NARP will offer its first student Fellowship opportunity at the association’s annual Spring Council Meeting and Day on the Hill (April 25, 2017).

The Fellowship will include a number of hands-on learning experiences in public policy and administration focused on transportation issues, including opportunities to meet with members of Congress and their staffs, as well representatives from the U.S.

Department of Transportation, Amtrak, and various rail trade associations and interest groups.

The Fellowship will be geared towards students whose academic or career interests are in transportation, railroads, political science, public policy, public administration, urban and regional planning, and business or nonprofit/association management.

This is an all-expense paid opportunity that

will afford students great networking opportunities and a chance to understand the workings of a non-profit.

This fellowship is open to both undergraduate and graduate students who are U.S. citizens or legal residents and enrolled as a full-time student as a U.S. accredited college or university.

Applications for the fellowship are available at www.narprail.org/fellowship. ■

NARP Member Benefits

■ If you haven't done so already: claim your Travelers United Advocate Membership, and further broaden the support for consumer focus at <https://travelersunited.org/welcome-narp/>

■ Review the full and growing list of NARP benefits by logging into <https://www.narprail.org/MyBenefits>. ■

Make Plans Now To Attend NARP's Spring 2017 Advocacy Summit & Meeting

NARP's State Representatives & Board; interested members and other rail advocates are preparing to come to Washington D.C., for NARP's Spring 2017 Advocacy Summit & Meeting, April 23 -26, 2017. The host hotel is again the Sheraton Hotel in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The Advocacy Summit kicks off on **Sunday afternoon, April 23** with Board of Directors meeting, to be followed by a Welcome Reception, both open to all attendees. Highlights on Monday, April 24 will include advocacy engagement sessions, industry-related presentations and preparation for NARP's 'Day on The Hill'. A prominent lunch speaker will be featured.

On Tuesday, April 25, attendees will travel to Capitol Hill to meet with the members of their Congressional delegation and personally make the case for investing in America's passenger rail system. The 'Day on The Hill' will conclude with the Annual NARP Congressional Reception, where NARP President/CEO Jim Mathews will present NARP's annual Golden Spike Awards and the Dr. Gary Burch Memorial Safety Award.

Important Membership Reminder

■ Please do NOT use any old envelopes, membership renewal forms, or donation requests you may have saved from previous NARP mailings prior to March 2016. These forms and the PO Box address on the old envelopes are no longer in use and your checks or credit card payment submissions will NOT reach NARP. Please only use the new envelopes and renewal/donation forms you receive with our current mailings, which are addressed to: NARP, PO Box 17082, Baltimore, MD 21298-9485. If in any doubt, you may always send checks and other payments directly to our office at: NARP, 505 Capitol Ct, NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC , 20002-7706

■ There are still openings for state representatives on the NARP Council of Representatives in several states, including one each in Alabama; Arizona; Delaware; Florida; Hawaii; Idaho; Missouri; Nevada; North Carolina; North Dakota; Ohio; South Carolina and Wyoming. If you are interested in becoming more involved with NARP and advancing our goal of 'A Connected America', please visit our website, www.narprail.org under 'About' to 'Leadership' to 'Council of Representatives' to 'Open Seats' for more information on applying and for a complete up-to-date list of the positions available. ■

Wednesday, April 26 will focus on NARP-related business sessions including the election of three Board Directors to serve 3-year terms. Wednesday's lunch will feature a notable closing keynote address.

Please visit the NARP event page, <https://www.narprail.org/events/spring-2017-meeting/>, for the most up-to-date information on discounted guest rooms at the Sheraton Silver Spring; the meeting's complete agenda and full details on registering for NARP's signature springtime advocacy event. ■

GATEWAY, from p. 2

Corridor," said Stephen Gardner, Amtrak Executive Vice President, Infrastructure and Investment Development, in regard to the next steps for the NEC. As the FRA and Amtrak move forward to gain support from the new administration for its recommendations and develop a funding plan, officials in New York and New Jersey moved forward with their own efforts to improve the NEC through the Gateway Program.

The Gateway Program, which is a critical aspect of rebuilding the NEC, will see the construction of a new tunnel for Amtrak trains below the Hudson River. In addition, the program will also include the repair of the current tunnel that was damaged during Superstorm Sandy in 2012, and the rebuilding of other Amtrak lines to New York City.

The Gateway Program Development Corporation, which oversees the project, voted on January 12, 2017 to begin the first phase of construction to rebuild Amtrak rail lines. The first phase will help maintain the current

load of 85,000 daily passengers between Newark, NJ and New York's Penn Station.

The vote also places the Gateway Program on the federal "emerging projects" listing and allows the corporation to apply for \$6 billion in federal loans that can be applied to the total cost.

Other projects within the Gateway Program include:

- Construction of a replacement of Portal swing bridge over Hackensack River (Phase One).
- Expansion of New York's Penn Station one city block south of the existing station (Phase Two).
- Renovation of Secaucus Junction station (Phase Two).
- Construction of a new Portal Bridge South at Kearny (Phase Two).

The Gateway Program is estimated to cost \$23.9 billion with the first phase reaching completion in 2022. Phase two of the program is expected to be completed by 2030.

WEB EXCLUSIVE! Brightline Unveils New Trains Ahead Of Testing

When Brightline begins carrying passengers between Miami and Orlando, it will be the first time in more than 100 years that a private company has started a passenger rail line in the U.S.

In January, future Brightline passengers received a sneak peek of the unique train sets that will set this important milestone in passenger rail. “Bright Blue” is the new Brightline train that will carry people at speeds of up to 125 mph from Miami to Orlando, or roughly a three hour trip time.

Brightline debuted the train set in anticipation of starting testing on a 10-mile stretch of rail between West Palm Beach and Lantana. Tests have focused on dynamic testing of the rolling stock, system integration tests between the train and railway infrastructure, and a series of tests required by the Federal Railroad Administration.

Brightline expects the first phase of the line to open this summer, with the second phase opening before the end of the year. ■

... And Save These Dates ...

NARP’s 50th Anniversary Celebration – Chicago, IL

- ✓ Thursday, November 2 to Sunday, November 5, 2017
- ✓ Four days packed with an exciting array of presentations, speakers, exhibits, tours, and events
- ✓ Celebrating NARP’s accomplishments over the past 50

years and looking ahead to the future of passenger rail in the United States

- ✓ Host Hotel: Millennium Knickerbocker - E. Walton Place at N. Michigan Ave.

Check the NARP Events Page for more information!

NARP Traveler’s Advisory

❖ In Springfield, MA, to accommodate a long-term track work project, several Springfield Shuttle trains will be canceled and bus service will be provided. On weekdays, Trains 470, 490, 493, and 495 will be canceled until May 31, 2017. Trains 476 and 479 will have normal schedules until March 1, 2017. Both trains will be canceled from March 2 through May 31, 2017. In addition, Southbound weekday buses will depart all stations 30 minutes earlier than the respective trains.

❖ Track work being performed by North County Transit District will affect Pacific Surfliner service in March. Train 592 will be canceled on March 10, 2017. On March 11 and 12, 2017, trains 562, 565, 572, 573, 582, 583, 592, 1566 and 1567 will be canceled. Southbound Train 796 will operate normally to Los Angeles, where bus service will be provided to Fullerton, Anaheim, Santa Ana, Irvine, San Juan Capistrano, Oceanside, Solana Beach, Old Town and San Diego. Southbound Trains 564, 580, 768, 774, 784 and 1790 will operate normally to Irvine, where express bus service will be provided from Irvine to San Juan Capistrano, Oceanside, Solana Beach, Old Town and downtown San Diego. Northbound Trains 579, 591, 595, 763, 769, 777 and 785 will be replaced with buses at all stations from San Diego to Irvine (except Old Town). At Irvine, customers can transfer to their respective Pacific Surfliner trains, serving all remaining stations on the route. Train 1761 will originate in Irvine without a bus connection. ■