



NARP Launches “Grow Rail Campaign”

The National Association of Railroad Passengers released its “Grow Rail Campaign” on June 25. Coinciding with NARP’s 40th anniversary, the campaign supports the Association’s vision of passenger rail growth over the next 40 years.

NARP aims to shift discussion from “What passenger train gets cut next?” to “Which routes do we add and how quickly can we add them?” Of equal importance, we seek to reinforce efforts, such as by Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA, bottom of this page, left column), to increase U.S. railroad track capacity to permit speedy, reliable passenger *and* freight service.

The map—on page two—shows the intercity passenger rail network America will need. In a news release, NARP President George L. Chilson said, “In the near future, road and air congestion, worldwide competition for oil, and growing environmental concerns will make \$4 a gallon gas seem cheap, today’s traffic jams modest, and affordable flights a distant memory.”

Many of the proposed routes will need to be upgraded to support marketable passenger rail service. Some may say “we can’t afford to do this.” NARP says we can’t afford *not* to.

Chilson and NARP’s Ross Capon gave pre-briefings to railroad industry officials. Capon included the map in the Power Point presentation that was part of his June 26 House testimony (below). The *Tennessean* (Nashville newspaper) gave

NARP good July 26 coverage, and followed July 8 with a supportive editorial and on-line op-ed piece by Capon. The plan will be presented at *Railway Age’s* annual “Passenger Trains on Freight Railroads” conference (October 22-23, Washington, D.C.).

Full campaign coverage—including Frequently Asked Questions, fact sheets, and media coverage—is at <www.narprail.org/vision>. ■

A Message from NARP President George Chilson

Dear Fellow NARP Member:

On June 25, NARP launched the Grow Rail Campaign. Our goal is to push the passenger train debate in a positive direction. Our forward-looking vision dramatizes the comprehensive passenger train system Americans will want—and need—in the next 40 years.

Our vision proposes a comprehensive “Grid and Gateway” network that will

make passenger trains a widely available travel choice for all America. It increases the scope of America’s passenger train network from 22,000 to 45,000 route miles – making it roughly equivalent in size to the Interstate Highway System. It connects 237 of the nation’s 292 metropolitan areas and state capitals. (Motor coaches would connect the

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Capon Testifies at House Hearing on “Benefits of Intercity Passenger Rail”

NARP Executive Director Ross B. Capon testified at an upbeat hearing on “Benefits of Intercity Passenger Rail.” House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Chairwoman Corinne Brown (D-FL) conducted the June 26 hearing.

She said, “We were once the premiere country in the world in passenger rail service and now we are dead last...We need to start with reauthorizing Amtrak.”

Ranking Member Bill Shuster (R-PA) said “we need to find a way to build enough rail capacity to reduce freight congestion and permit the efficient operation of Amtrak routes...We need...a new national infrastructure program, and public-private cooperation is essential to this.”

Two panels of state and local officials were followed by a panel of rail advocates and environmentalists.

Capon, leading off the last panel, cited three obstacles to getting public investment for increased railroad track capacity: the “budget types” who always say “we can’t afford it”; those who argue that spending public money to help profitable, private railroads makes no sense; and the railroads’ intense opposition to any government action that affects their competitive relationships with each other. He said the last point was the toughest to answer.

Earlier, Montana Lieutenant Gov. John Bohlinger (R.) delivered a superb defense of the long-distance train, starting with a list of the diverse kinds of people who ride the *Empire Builder*. He said people drive hundreds of miles from off-line cities to reach the train. Noting that Montana already has the nation’s ninth highest gasoline tax and 10th highest diesel fuel tax, he urged Congress not to require low-

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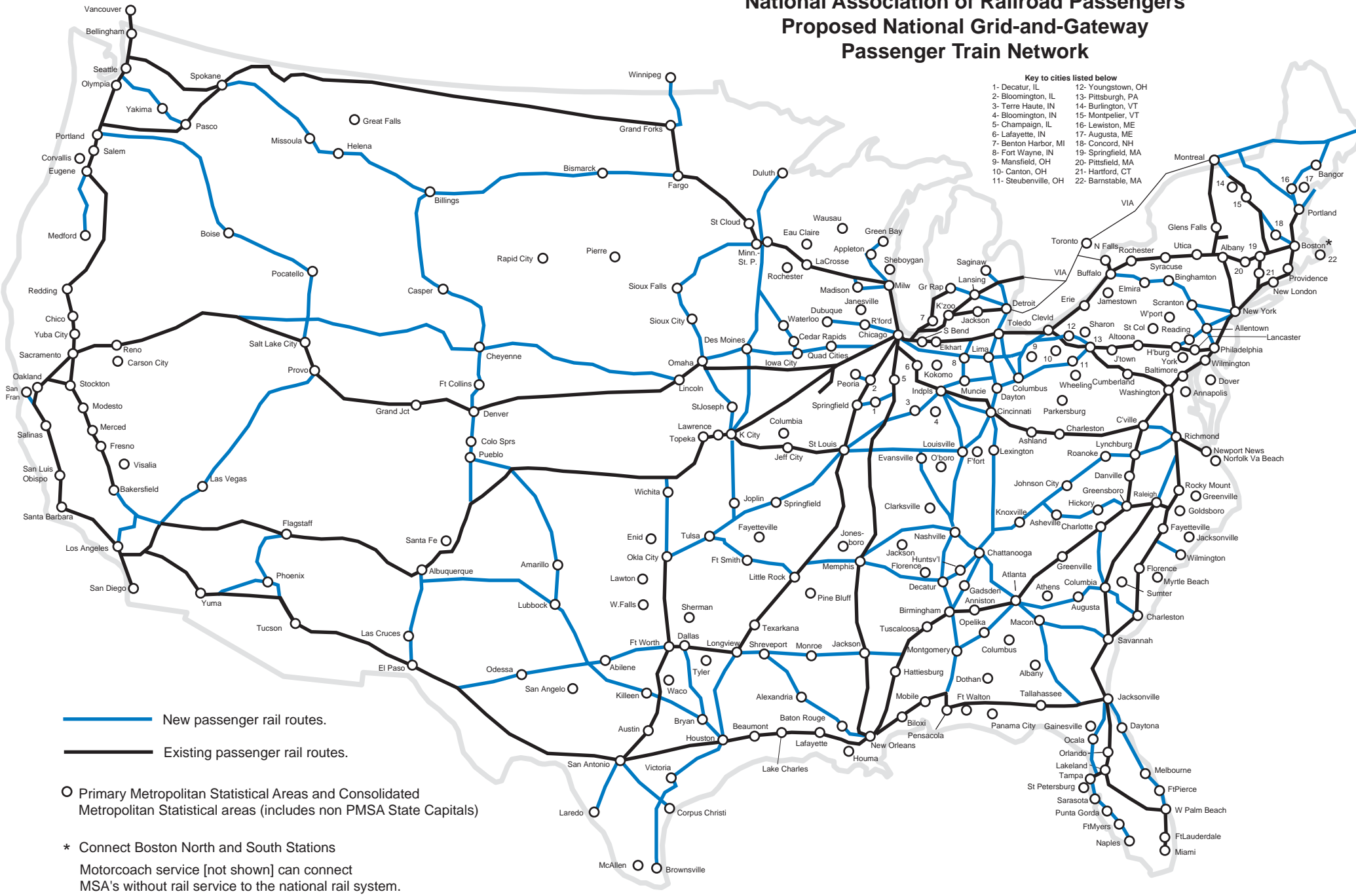


—Darryl Yates

Ross Capon (foreground) testifying at House hearing. Other panelists (from left): Harriet Parcels (Executive Director, American Passenger Rail Coalition), Larry Blow (Senior Associate, United States Maglev Coalition), and Colin Peppard (Transportation Policy Coordinator, Friends of the Earth, U.S.).

National Association of Railroad Passengers Proposed National Grid-and-Gateway Passenger Train Network

- Key to cities listed below**
- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1- Decatur, IL | 12- Youngstown, OH |
| 2- Bloomington, IL | 13- Pittsburgh, PA |
| 3- Terre Haute, IN | 14- Burlington, VT |
| 4- Bloomington, IN | 15- Montpelier, VT |
| 5- Champaign, IL | 16- Lewiston, ME |
| 6- Lafayette, IN | 17- Augusta, ME |
| 7- Benton Harbor, MI | 18- Concord, NH |
| 8- Fort Wayne, IN | 19- Springfield, MA |
| 9- Mansfield, OH | 20- Pittsfield, MA |
| 10- Canton, OH | 21- Hartford, CT |
| 11- Steubenville, OH | 22- Barnstable, MA |



— New passenger rail routes.

— Existing passenger rail routes.

○ Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical areas (includes non PMSA State Capitals)

* Connect Boston North and South Stations
Motorcoach service [not shown] can connect MSA's without rail service to the national rail system.

Grow Rail

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remaining 55.) It envisions a *complete mobility system* that provides convenient transfers between intercity passenger trains, air, bus and transit services.

Our vision is practical. It utilizes existing rail lines with just four exceptions totaling only 208 miles – two in federally designated high-speed corridors; one in the Scranton-New York City corridor that state and local governments are working to restore; and one on the West Coast of Florida that is in the state plan. It expands the capacity of our rail infrastructure to accommodate both the growing demand for fast, reliable freight service as well as a combination of short, medium and long distance passenger train services. It calls for incremental upgrades to bring all passenger lines up to a minimum of FRA Class 4 (79 mph) standards.

We have based our vision on government statistics for travel volumes and population trends. We have incorporated

routes proposed by U.S. DOT, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, States for Passenger Rail Coalition <www.s4prc.org> and individual states as well as routes that are important in creating the national grid.

Our vision is similar to the one proposed more than a half century ago to describe the Interstate Highway System. It does not include an operating plan with specific trains, stops, frequencies, schedules and fares. Such specifics, along with refinement of the map, will evolve over time. Rather, it illustrates the *comprehensive, interconnected passenger train network* that our country needs – and can have with strong federal leadership and funding. It is the first national transportation vision proposed in more than half a century.

NARP's vision could not come at a better time. The soaring gas prices we've seen are but a taste of what the future will bring. Concerns about climate change and its impact on future genera-

tions as well as concerns about safety and peace-of-mind will make trains an increasingly attractive way for Americans to avoid the stress of traffic-clogged highways and airports, especially as our population ages.

Join this campaign! Spread the word in your community and your state. Reach out to other organizations with shared goals – environmental and smart growth groups, community service organizations, chambers of commerce, schools, colleges and universities. Attend town hall meetings and meet face-to-face with lawmakers. Tell them how making this vision a reality will improve your quality of life.

The more voices we have calling for growth, expansion and improvement of passenger train service, the more effective our chorus becomes.

Get active in the Grow Rail Campaign!

—George L. Chilson
NARP President

Appropriations Update

Appropriations committees have approved \$1.375 billion (Senate) and \$1.4 billion (House) for Amtrak in Fiscal 2008. They also approved \$100 million (Senate) and \$50 million (House) to match state intercity passenger rail investments.

But reductions are possible in impending budget showdown between Congress and President Bush. **Tell your Members of Congress not to cut Amtrak funding!**

House Hearing

(from page 1)

population states to pay for long-distance trains. He also said a system without such trains "is not a national passenger rail system."

Some other hearing highlights:

- Wisconsin DOT Secretary Frank Busalacchi: "If gasoline went to \$7 and there was a mass exodus of people wanting to ride transit and passenger rail, we would not be ready. We are not ready two years from now. We must get ready."

- Illinois State Rep. Elaine Nekritz (represents some northwest Chicago suburbs): "The public is ahead of the policymakers."

- Indiana State Senator Robert Jackman (R): "The only way to expand

passenger rail service is with an investment by the federal government."

- Kevin Brubaker of the Chicago-based Environmental Law & Policy Center: "**Springfield, IL, just learned they would lose commuter air service. The local chamber shrugged. This would have been unheard of a few years ago.**" [Springfield Chamber President Gary Plummer told WAND (Decatur, IL NBC affiliate) June 13, "If the [airline] ridership was low, that means that people were finding other ways to get there and so maybe the impact will be proportionate to the ridership. You know, with the Amtrak service improved, I think a lot of people are traveling that way."]

- "The Macomb [IL] Chamber of Commerce testified that Pella Windows would be creating 500 new jobs in their community and that this decision had a great deal to do with the fact that the city has Amtrak service."

- "The approved environmental impact statement for 110 mph passenger rail service between Chicago and St. Louis...concluded that passenger trains were three times as fuel-efficient as cars and six times as efficient as planes on a per-passenger-mile basis."

- Colin F. Peppard, Transportation Policy Coordinator, Friends of the Earth: "In 2005...Americans drove less per capita for the first time in 25 years [and] Amtrak carried more than 5.2 billion passenger-miles, putting out [about] 670,000 metric

tons of CO2. Had these miles been logged in airplanes or automobiles, CO2 emissions would have been four to five times greater, amounting to approximately 3 million metric tons."

The subcommittee also held a hearing July 10 on Amtrak's capital needs and postponed a July 26 hearing on Amtrak labor negotiations. On July 10, Amtrak President Alex Kummant said Amtrak was meeting with four unions "this week"—making "good progress" with two and "still working" with two others. ■

Capon's statement is available at www.narprail.org; a subcommittee-drafted "Summary of Subject Matter" is available at <<http://transportation.house.gov/hearings>>, scroll down to 6/26/2007.

UP's Commitment

Temporary addition of about three hours to *California Zephyr's* schedule (April Travelers' Advisory) began June 21 (not 13). Union Pacific has agreed to restore pre-agreement scheduled run times in specified increments as slow order delays are removed over three years.

UP and Amtrak have also agreed to manage all delays such that 90% of CZ trips would be no more than 90 minutes late at endpoint, and agreed to specified reductions in the number of slow orders on *all* UP-owned trackage used by Amtrak.



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OUR MISSION: A MODERN, CUSTOMER-FOCUSED NATIONAL PASSENGER TRAIN NETWORK THAT PROVIDES A TRAVEL CHOICE AMERICANS WANT.

FRA Administrator Joseph H. Boardman Addresses NARP Board

Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Boardman addressed the NARP Board in Washington on May 1. He came to his present position in April, 2005, with impressive rail experience and knowledge.

As New York transportation commissioner, he chaired American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' Standing Committee on Rail Transportation. Under his leadership, the committee produced two, widely-admired reports outlining the nation's rail freight and passenger investment needs (*NARP News*, February 2003).

FRA has about 800 employees—of which all 449 field employees are safety inspectors. FRA's annual budget, excluding Amtrak, is \$150 million.

Boardman said, "I meet with every railroad at least once a year. One of my key agenda items is Amtrak on-time performance...All transit systems have to run on time in order to grow the system...We really need to improve service and performance over the CSX lines." He said CSX is "becoming increasingly cooperative."

Noting that funding problem essentials are the same whichever party is in power, Boardman said, "For rail to get adequate funding, it has to be a part of an even bigger highway and transit plan...You have to provide legislators with an idea of your plans so they can make informed decisions."

Referring to Amtrak, Boardman said, "If you don't have a national network, then you have no network at all." He believes

the "Southeast Corridor from D.C. to Miami should be our new focus," considered for DOT's Corridors of the Future program, and merits the support of all five states. The CSX proposal contemplates separate, double tracked passenger and freight lines, with a maximum speed of 110 mph for passenger operations.

The "Corridors" program is part of the congestion strategy that former DOT Secretary Mineta launched in May, 2006.

To support Southeast Corridor improvements, the FRA has a web site with information about the corridor and key projects, at <http://seccorridor.fra.dot.gov/>.

North Carolina DOT's application to have the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor qualify as a Corridor of the Future emphasizes Washington-Richmond-Charlotte and can be found at the website listed above, click on "CSX".



—Ross Capon

FRA Administrator Joseph H. Boardman addresses the NARP Board at its May 1, 2007 Washington, D.C. meeting. He highlighted efforts to promote development of the Southeast Rail Corridor.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

GrandLuxe Vacations (formerly American Orient Express) offers "GrandLuxe Limited" service on luxury cars added to selected departures of Amtrak's *Silver Meteor* (Washington-Miami), *Southwest Chief* and *California Zephyr* initially in Nov., Dec., early Jan. From \$789 a person; details at www.grandluxerail.com or call 800-320-4206.

One-Stop, Monday-Friday Acela Express began July 9. Train 2105

departs New York at 6:50am, Philadelphia 7:55am, arrives Washington 9:25. Train 2120 departs Washington 3:55pm, Philadelphia 5:23pm, and arrives New York at 6:30pm.

Empire Corridor schedule changes—CSX trackwork west of Albany forced changes effective July 2. **Eastbound trains run 15-30 minutes earlier**; westbound trains operate 15-30 minutes later. Albany-New York City schedules do not change.