



## Looming: Train Investment (& Service?) Cuts, Highway Spending Increases, Oil Subsidies “Continuing to Gush”

A House appropriations subcommittee, in the first formal step towards a federal transportation spending bill for fiscal 2011, which begins Oct. 1, 2010, puts Amtrak’s capital and operating funding 55% and 5%, respectively, below Amtrak’s request. There is \$1.4 billion for state grants for high speed/intercity rail (HSIPR), down from this year’s \$2.5 billion. See funding table on page two.

The subcommittee, in its July 1 “markup,” pushed highway spending \$3.1 billion over this year’s level and \$4.1 billion over the Administration’s request.

Meanwhile, a lengthy New York Times report highlighted heavy U.S. subsidies to the oil industry. See p. 2.

The Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, on an 8-5 party-line voted, rejected a Latham (R-IA) amendment to cut HSIPR grants to \$1 billion, drastically reduce Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts and eliminate TIGER (the intermodal program in which rail has fared well; March News, p. 2).

The subcommittee’s \$1,203.5 million Amtrak capital number is problematic as:

- Americans with Disabilities Act station compliance work must get full funding, now defined as \$231 million; and
- \$277 million of Amtrak’s \$305 million debt service request is mandatory. (The balance was to pay off loans on favorable terms, reducing future debt service.)

This would leave \$695.5 million for other capital, \$775.5 million short of Amtrak’s \$1.471 billion request (\$1.025 billion general plus \$446 million to begin acquisition of new cars and locomotives).

Service cuts are possible if Amtrak must park cars for safety reasons because it can’t perform certain capital-funded overhauls. Whether committee directions would force this isn’t known.

No further House action is scheduled; Senate sub- and full committee markups are planned for July 20 and 22. However,

transportation and other programs likely will wind up in either:

- an omnibus appropriations bill which might include new spending such as \$75 million for Positive Train Control, a good result of the July 1 markup; or
- a continuing resolution that maintains  
*(continued on p. 2)*

### Take Action

There’s still time to improve Amtrak and high-speed rail funding for 2011. Tell your Senators and Representative this is important to you!

Visit [act.narprail.org](http://act.narprail.org)

### North Carolina Adds Third Raleigh-Charlotte Train



NC DOT Rail Division Director Patrick Simmons (arms up) cheers as volunteer train host Ellen Holding christens locomotive on the first mid-day Charlotte-bound train in Raleigh. At right at the June 5 celebration is NARP member and Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains Treasurer R. Eugene Kirkland, who heads the NC Train Host Association ([www.bit.ly/nchosts](http://www.bit.ly/nchosts)).

### Visionary Academic Engineer/Planner Vuchic Retires

*Our profession is not only about finding technical solutions. It is also about how to achieve results...One of our responsibilities as professionals is to educate, to help politicians. There are many good politicians who are looking for constructive solutions and need our professional knowledge. We should provide it. I am happy that many of my students are testifying at various levels and writing in newspapers and educating decision-makers and the public.*

For 44 years, Dr. Vukan R. Vuchic has been a leading intellectual supporter of sane, balanced transportation with a strong rail emphasis—as teacher, worldwide lecturer and consultant, and author

of four definitive text books and about 125 articles published in many countries.

*Transportation for Livable Cities* (1999) and two more recent books comprise his “Transit Trilogy” and have Japanese, Chinese, Serbian and Spanish translations.

In a recent op-ed column, he criticized SEPTA’s decision to remove the designations of its regional rail lines (May 26 *Phila. Inquirer*); supported linking new Hudson River tunnels to Penn Station (co-authored with NARP’s Ross Capon, Feb. 1, 2009, *Newark Star-Ledger*).

Dr. Vuchic recently retired as UPS Foundation Professor of Transportation Systems Engineering and Professor of

*(continued on p. 4)*

## Release of Federal High Speed Rail Funds Begins

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on July 6 announced release of \$35 million to extend Amtrak's Boston-Portland *Downeaster* 26 miles east to Freeport and Brunswick, Maine.

The award went to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority. The 28-month project is under way. It includes the two ADA-compliant stations, upgrading or installing signals, improving 36 highway-rail grade crossings and various other right-of-way improvements.

Earlier, on May 27, DOT announced release of nearly \$80 million:

- \$66.6 million for program management and preliminary engineering for Tampa-Orlando Airport high-speed rail;
- \$6.2 million for track relocation to raise speeds and reduce delays on California's Capitol Corridor;

- \$5.7 million for environmental assessments of planned stations for the Milwaukee-Madison extension that will see trains running up to 110 mph;

- \$1 million for planning projects to improve New York's Empire Corridor—FRA's release says "the near-term vision for the corridor is to increase passenger train speeds to 110 mph," but CSX insists on 30 foot separation (track center to track center) or equivalent safety protection between existing tracks and 110 mph track, which is a problem; and

- \$100,000 for New Mexico's first state rail plan.

*Note: Tampa City Council Member Mary Mulhern is leading a group of business activists pressing Florida DOT to apply to extend its HSR project from downtown to Tampa International Airport.*

Out of nearly \$8 billion in 2009 Recovery Act HSR grants announced in January, \$114.6 million or about 1.4% of funds have been released.

Meanwhile, FRA announced June 28 that it was accepting applications for \$2.1 billion more grants, representing the bulk of the high speed rail funds in the regular 2010 appropriations law. The application deadline is August 6. ■

*For more information, see the Federal Railroad Administration press releases at [www.bit.ly/franews](http://www.bit.ly/franews)*

### New NARP Brochure

A newly-revised pamphlet introducing prospective members to the Association is at [www.bit.ly/narpnew](http://www.bit.ly/narpnew).

FY 2010 Transportation Spending Detail (in millions of dollars)	2010 Enacted	2011 Amtrak Request	2011 Obama Request	2011 House Subcmte	2011 Subcmte. vs. 2010
Operations	563	592	563	563	0.0%
General Capital	594	1,025	767		
Fleet Plan		446			
ADA Compliance	144	231			
Debt Service	264	305	285		
Total Capital & Debt Service	1,002	2,007	1,052	1,203	+20.1%
<b>AMTRAK SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>1,565</b>	<b>2,599</b>	<b>1,615</b>	<b>1,766</b>	<b>+12.8%</b>
High-Speed & Intercity Rail	2,500		1,000	1,400	-44.0%
<b>PASSENGER RAIL TOTAL</b>	<b>4,065</b>		<b>2,615</b>	<b>3,166</b>	<b>-22.1%</b>
Federal Highway	42,049		41,099	45,181	+7.4%
Federal Transit	10,733		10,799	11,307	+5.3%
Federal Aviation	15,598		16,468	16,506	+5.8%

### 2011 Funding

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2010 spending levels (though downward adjustments based on actions in the regular 2011 funding process are possible).

**Earmarks:** For intercity passenger rail, the subcommittee allotted funds to upgrade track in New York's Empire Corridor and grade crossing safety in Wisconsin; to separate traffic in North Carolina's Research Triangle area; and to improve stations in Chicago, New Orleans and Washington, DC. There were also many earmarks for rail transit nationwide. ■

*Chairman Olver's statement and a detailed funding table and list of earmarks are linked from <http://appropriations.house.gov/>*

## Amtrak's Three New Board Members

The Senate voted June 22 to confirm these new Amtrak board members:

- **Anthony Coscia (D)**, chair of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Board of Commissioners;

- **Bert DiClemente (D)**, a real estate executive and former top aide to then-Senator Joseph Biden; and

- **Jeffrey Moreland (R)**, who in 2007 retired from BNSF as Executive Vice President for Law and Government Affairs and Secretary of the board. In this position, he oversaw economic regulatory policy, state government relations and corporate communications. He joined predecessor Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway in 1978, after serving as an attorney with the U.S. Securities and Ex-

change Commission.

The Board has one remaining vacancy. In a June 28 Amtrak release welcoming the new Directors,

- Coscia said "a vibrant, competitive, and comprehensive passenger rail system is a critical component of a 21st Century multimodal transportation system."

- DiClemente: "I believe to the core of my being that Amtrak's best days lie ahead of us."

- Moreland: "Amtrak has made progress in recent years, and I believe these positive trends will continue...It is important to the U.S. transportation system that Amtrak maintain a nationwide rail system and develop high-speed rail corridors in many areas of the country." ■

### U.S. Oil Industry Subsidies

In a lengthy July 3 article, "As Oil Industry Fights a Tax, It Reaps Subsidies," *The New York Times* said "an examination of the American tax code indicates that oil production is among the most heavily subsidized businesses, with tax breaks available at virtually every stage of the exploration and extraction process."

The *Times* said Deepwater Horizon owner Transocean moved its corporate headquarters outside the US in 1999 to minimize taxes. BP "used a tax break for the oil industry to write off 70% of the rent for Deepwater Horizon—a deduction of more than \$225,000 a day since the lease began." ■

## Deputy Secretary Porcari, Rep. Blumenauer At NARP Reception

Deputy U.S. Secretary of Transportation John Porcari addressed the gathering at NARP's 2010 Capitol Hill Reception April 27.

"The Secretary [Ray LaHood]...gladly accepts...the help and assistance of all of you who've worked together to build a true high-speed national rail network. We're off and running.

"This kind of excitement for passenger rail [not] seen in generations puts the onus on all of us to do it right. And the leader of the "Do It Right Coalition" is Joe Szabo, the Federal Railroad Administrator. ... Joe and his colleagues, the entire team at the Department of Transportation is committed to doing it right and to making tough choices.

"We have an Interstate [highway] system that's the envy of the world and we



Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR),  
House Passenger Rail Caucus Co-Chair

### Reaching Out to Students

As part of our work to educate and involve young people in passenger train advocacy, NARP hopes to be present at student welcome fairs on several college campuses as the 2010-11 academic year begins. We seek volunteer help from interested NARP members—especially if you are a student, work at a college or university, have a connection or affiliation with a particular school, or live near a campus. Contact NARP (202-408-8362, [narp@narp.org](mailto:narp@narp.org)) to find out how you can help. ■

want to make sure we have other transportation choices as well. One very important one is high-speed rail. While we are moving towards higher-speed rail continually as part of this process, our citizens...will be able to see the results quickly.

"We're committed to doing that safely as well. The two efforts are not only compatible, they're inseparable. With Positive Train Control, the safety culture [pervades] the Federal Railroad Administration, and the DOT-wide Safety Council that Secretary LaHood set up, that works across all the transportation modes...

"We look forward to working with all of you, and we especially look forward to rebuilding our American manufacturing base for high-speed rail as part of that process and that's something we're very committed to doing.

"With your help, with the outstanding support of Congressman [Earl] Blumenauer and others, we will get there. I look forward to working with you."

Szabo was present and Blumenauer addressed the gathering prior to Porcari. Blumenauer praised the Administration's initiative but cautioned train advocates that much remains to be done:

"The public is with you, that's why

### NARP Comments on Positive U.S. DOT Strategic Plan

*"DOT will take [these] additional actions to...[reduce] carbon emissions, [improve] energy efficiency, and [reduce] dependence on oil: ... Begin development of a national network of high-speed rail corridors by investing in an efficient, high-speed passenger rail network..."*

The U.S. Department of Transportation's draft Strategic Plan, *Transportation for a New Generation* ([www.bit.ly/dotstrat](http://www.bit.ly/dotstrat)), adds livable communities and environmental sustainability to a traditional goals list. Livability means "increased access to convenient and affordable transportation choices; improved public transit; improved networks [for] pedestrians and bicycles, and improved access



Deputy Secretary  
Porcari Addressing NARP

they've never killed Amtrak. But now we need to build on that foundation. ... Each of you ... is making a difference in terms of revitalizing our cities, saving energy, protecting the planet." ■

### CORRECTION

Amtrak's *Cardinal* study considers adding an Indianapolis-St. Louis section, *not* eliminating the Chicago leg (April News). This, and expanding service to daily, would require board approval, must be negotiated with CSX and Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis and likely would await fleet expansion.

to transportation for special needs populations and individuals with disabilities."

Intercity and high-speed passenger rail is mentioned frequently; connectivity between trains and other modes is emphasized. The Recovery Act's \$8 billion is consistently referred to as a "down payment." The call to reduce transport carbon emissions also bodes well for trains.

NARP praised the draft but urged a more "aggressive push to develop intercity passenger rail" and said DOT should be leading the conversation about funding sources.

The public can comment on the plan and vote others' comments up or down at [dotstrategicplan.ideascale.com](http://dotstrategicplan.ideascale.com). ■

### BLOGLINES

Visit the NARP Blog ([www.narp.org/blog](http://www.narp.org/blog)), updated regularly, to read about:

- Louisiana's groundbreaking law allowing for passenger rail financing authorities.
- What the Gulf oil disaster can teach us

about the consequences of over-dependence on oil, which results partially from bad transportation policy.

- The work of Montana college students to build political support for restoring the

*North Coast Hiawatha.*

- Advocates' work to make Amtrak more accessible to cyclists who want to take their bikes with them.
- And more! Comments are welcome.



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our mission: a modern, customer-focused national passenger train network that provides a travel choice americans want.

Vuchic

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City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania. He initiated the university's graduate program in Transportation Systems Engineering in 1967.

"Transportation Systems for Livable Cities" was the theme of a June 11 Retirement Symposium honoring him. The keynote speaker was Engineering Prof. Wolfgang Meyer, member of the global think tank Club of Rome and former president of UITP (International Assn. of Public Transport) and director of KVB (Cologne's big light rail and bus system). His topic: "Climate Change—Challenge and Opportunity for Public Transport in Cities."

Four panels followed featuring Dr. Vuchic's colleagues and former students.

At the closing dinner, Vuchic said one of his goals was to bring theoreticians and practitioners together. Citing Amtrak as an example, he expressed concern that special interest lobbies often have greater power than professionals.

Vuchic said, "The best example is the continuous campaign against Amtrak. The media always emphasize that Amtrak has obtained federal assistance and is 'losing money,' although federal support of Amtrak amounts to about one per cent of the funds allocated to highways. This

Trails and Rails Developments

The Trails & Rails partnership between Amtrak and the National Park Service has put together a recorded audio guide for the Sunset Limited that people can download onto their iPods, cell phones or other portable devices and listen to on board. The guide is at www.amtrakrailguide.com. Similar "podcasts" for other



—Felice Macera

From left: Andrew Bata, NYCTA; Nicholas Ziv; Prof. Jean-Claude Ziv, CNAM Univ., Paris; Robert Paaswell, Interim President, City College of New York; Rachel Weinberger, Assistant Prof. of City & Regional Planning, Univ. of Penn.; Vukan Vuchic; Prof. Wolfgang Meyer, Cologne; NARP's Ross Capon

fact is seldom mentioned even at national conferences such as Transportation Research Board."

Dr. Vuchic's Retirement Symposium was largely organized by TSEAC—his University's Club of Transportation Alumni, which has also endowed a "Vukan Vuchic Scholarship."

Among the dinner speakers: U. of Penn. Dean of Engineering Eduardo Glandt, CCNY Interim Pres. Paaswell and Northwestern University Prof. David Boyce.

Prof. Jean-Claude Ziv of the prestigious

routes are being considered.

Descriptions of hundreds of national parks, monuments and historic sites and how to get to them by train are at www.amtraktoparks.com. The National Park Service also has an educational game for kids, Railroad Connections, at www.bit.ly/rrcnct

CNAM University in Paris announced that CNAM will give Dr. Vuchic an Honorary Doctorate for his academic and professional achievements.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

New Richmond train starts July 20: Virginia's newest Northeast Regional leaves Richmond north at 7 AM, Washington south at 3:55 PM.

On-board upgrades to be announced: After hearing complaints from NARP members, Amtrak notified conductors that it remains Amtrak's policy, when space is available, to tell passengers that they can upgrade coach-to-sleeper and Roomette-to-Bedroom.

Wisconsin bus connection schedule changed: The new Milwaukee-Wausau Lamers Bus Lines schedule is at www.bit.ly/wibus