



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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RETURN REQUESTED

The Next U.S. President . . .

NARP Joins '2020 Consensus' Process

The highway trust fund expires in 1991 and, with the Interstate program virtually complete, Congress may then make unprecedented changes in the program rather than rely heavily on plugging new dollar figures into old sentences. Big changes, of course, usually hurt some and help others.

A massive power struggle thus could be approaching with various transportation interests seeking to make significant gains or at least "break even" as a result of the 1991 highway reauthorization.

Recognizing the importance of the approaching decisions and aware of Congress's positive responses to powerful coalitions in the past, the American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is "attempting to reach a national consensus on a transportation program for the years beyond 1990, to around 2020." This began as a highway exercise at AASHTO's Aug. '86 conference—"Understanding the Highway Finance Evolution/Revolution," at Smugglers Notch near Stowe, VT—but some states felt AASHTO should be looking at all modes, so an intermodal thrust developed.

Last Feb., AASHTO created the Task Force on the Consensus Transportation Program "to work to achieve public and private sector consensus on, and commitment to, a redirected national highway and transportation program." The Task Force "in turn created a Highway Technical Advisory Committee and a Modal Technical Advisory Committee from AASHTO member departments [i.e., state DOT's], and a broadly-based Advisory Committee on Highway Policy (ACHP) comprised of both public and private sector organizations"—whose 100+ members include NARP, the American Public Transit Association, and the Association of American Railroads.

ACHP's chairman is Highway Users Federation President (and ex-Federal Highway Administrator) Lester P. Lamm. ACHP will hold at least one public forum in each state. Two "pilot" forums are set: Lincoln, NE, Aug. 13; and one in Maryland Aug. 27. The rest of the forums will be between Sep. and next March. Forums will be directed by a representative of the Highway Users Federation staff and the cooperating state DOT head or his/her designee.

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. . . Will Have Major Transport Decisions, And May Be Sympathetic to Passenger Trains!

The current highway/transit authorization expires in 1991, and the question of what the next such authorization will look like may attract more attention than usual for a transportation issue during the term of the next U.S. president (see story at left).

That and other factors may cause transportation to play a larger-than-usual role in the presidential campaign now getting under way. Congestion afflicting airways, airports, and suburban highways fills front pages across the nation.

On a more selective basis, such success stories as San Diego and Portland light rail, Boston commuter rail, and Amtrak's New York-Washington and Los Angeles-San Diego corridors illustrate rail's potential to alleviate air and road congestion.

To the extent that rail passenger supporters allow transportation matters to influence their decisions in the presidential race, we want to know which candidates share our view that the U.S. has barely scratched the surface of realizing the benefits of moving people by rail.

The most important indication of a candidate's position and likely actions is what he or she has done or has said to the general media. This is far more important than what a candidate writes to a group or individual but fails to say to the general media. Our main interest, after all, is in a candidate's

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TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Chicago-Oakland "California Zephyr" will remain on Burlington Northern (via Ottumwa) between Chicago and Omaha. Amtrak studied moving train onto Chicago & North Western (via Cedar Rapids), but concluded that revenue improvement would be marginal, while crew costs would be higher and running times longer. Amtrak said any future consideration of rerouting "Zephyr" would depend on further upgrading of

C&NW tracks to permit faster speeds, along with commitments from C&NW cities to "provide all station facilities without capital or operating costs to Amtrak."

"Pioneer" passengers be advised: this train is incurring major delays due to Union Pacific trackwork. Many eastbound trains are missing "California Zephyr" at Salt Lake City, with passengers being bussed, flown, or placed in hotels by Amtrak. Delays may last all summer.

Effective June 5, New York-Pittsburgh "Pennsylvanian" features National Park Service guide *Fri. only* in each direction between Altoona and Johnstown. Guide provides commentary on local history, scenery.

All Aboard America Coach Fares (Mar. News) [\$118/158/198 for 1/2/3 zones] will be discontinued for sale after July 5. But regular All Aboard Fares will continue to be available, at these rates: \$159/239/299 for 1/2/3 zones of travel. Regular AAA Fares permit 3 destinations and can be used in sleeping cars.

Most Amtrak fares rose 2% on June 1. However, there was no increase on Chicago-Detroit route, which now has special "\$1 Return Fare." Round-trip travel on this route now costs only \$1 more than the one-way fare.

Eastern Mass. Commuter Rail: Major Success Story

In the late 1960's the Boston-area commuter rail network used rundown equipment on largely rundown tracks. Ridership was also "running down." Serious plans were drawn to kill the system, put costly rapid transit extensions on the "close-in" portions of some lines and serve the outer suburbs with buses.

In the 1970's, however, the region made a firm commitment to save and improve the system. Tracks, bridges, signals, and stations have been upgraded, and new rolling-stock purchased and some older cars modernized. During 1979-82, acquisitions included 18 new and 19 rebuilt locomotives and 60 new coaches. 32 costly-to-run self-propelled rail diesel cars were converted to push-pull trailer (unpowered) coaches.

Results? Ridership grew from 7.1 million in 1973 to 12.1 million last year, in spite of the 1979 suspension of popular Back Bay Station and the heavily-used Needham branch. When Back Bay and Needham service resumes later this year, ridership may skyrocket again.

In Sep., 1984, Boston & Maine Railroad (which operated the trains until Amtrak took over this year) and MBTA jointly received Urban Mass Transportation Administrator Ralph Stanley's "Award for Outstanding Public Service," due to 24.7% ridership growth (1981-83) "with no increase in the net cost of service" and prompt MBTA/B&M actions that stabilized North Side ridership in the wake of the Jan. 1984 fire that destroyed the North Station trestle ("expected traffic jams and other disruptions for commuters never materialized").

UMTA noted "train travel has become so popular that there is an average 14% standee ratio on peak hour trains." To alleviate the continuing standee problem—and to provide capacity for restoration of service to Needham this year, Providence hopefully next year, and southeastern suburbs thereafter—MBTA has 107 more new cars and 26 more new locomotives on order.

Many in the trainless southeastern suburbs wish their trains were already back, but MBTA's Braintree rapid transit line (built in the rail right-of-way according to the 1960's "grand design") is making service restoration difficult. ■

Our New Membership Director—Jane Colgrove

Jane L. Colgrove became NARP's membership director on Apr. 8. Ms. Colgrove has had an extensive and successful career in the association-membership field.



Before coming to NARP, Ms. Colgrove had served four years as membership director of the North American Telecommunications Association (NATA), where she was responsible for a major expansion in membership and revenues and for computerization of the entire membership function. During her first two years, NATA membership doubled and revenues rose 30%.

Before going to NATA, she served for three years as membership coordinator of the American Arts Alliance, where she reversed a downward membership-renewal trend and acted as a liaison to legislative and lobbying groups. Prior to that, she served the Federal Election Commission as docket coordinator.

Said NARP Executive Director Ross Capon, "Jane brings an unprecedented level of professionalism to NARP's membership function. We feel very fortunate to have her! Her expertise will be critical in our efforts to expand revenues and membership."

Colgrove is a native of Painesville, Ohio, and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology/Music Therapy from Lindenwood College, Washington, DC. She is a member of the American Society of Association Executives, the Alliance for Women in Communications Industries, and the International Organization of Women in Telecommunications. ■

AMTRAK LEAVING DENVER UNION STATION?

To facilitate highway improvements, Denver city officials may try to oust Amtrak from one of its grandest stations. *City Edition* (Sentinel Publishing Co., Denver), in its June 15 edition, said Amtrak "will likely lose" access to the station "within 2 or 3 years, to make way for the rebuilt 20th St. Viaduct, according to city officials," who would meet "soon" with Amtrak "to begin the process of deciding where the Denver Amtrak terminal will be located, according to Will Fleissig, Dir. of Downtown Planning."

NARP members—particularly in Denver—should write Mayor Frederico Pena, City-County Bldg., 1437 Bannock St., Denver 80202, (send copy to: Colorado Public Utilities Comsn., 1580 Logan St., Denver 80203), strongly supporting keeping Amtrak where it is.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The House Appropriations Subcomm. on Transp. approved a DOT FY '88 appropriations bill June 11 with \$614 mill. for Amtrak (\$4 mill. earmarked for testing high-speed equipment) and \$27 mill. for Northeast Corridor Improvement Project. . . . The FY '88 budget resolution which passed the House June 23, Senate June 24, assumed a freeze for transportation and did not mention Amtrak. (That's good!) . . . \$9.4 bill. FY '87 supplemental with \$5 mill. for "Montrealer" track rehabilitation cleared Congress July 1; the President is expected to sign.

May News Corrections: P. 2—Sen. Lautenberg believes all NEC trains should have ATC by Dec. 31, 1989. P. 3—Train Crew Takeovers, 2nd paragraph: Salt Lake City, Denver, and Albuquerque takeovers are scheduled for July 29. On May 27, Amtrak did assume train crews New Orleans-Atlanta (Southern), -Memphis (Illinois Central Gulf), and -Houston (Southern Pacific).

The Next U.S. President *(continued from pg. 1)*

willingness to “bother” the general public with the rail transport alternative. We don’t recommend sending the candidates detailed questionnaires; they frustrate staffers and stimulate answers of questionable usefulness. Better to tell the candidate *your* views. (If you do send a questionnaire, make clear that a general statement of transportation views would satisfy you. If it is silent on rail, you’ve learned something important.)

We plan to send each presidential candidate a letter explaining our perspective on America’s transportation problems and asking the candidate for his/her reaction to our views. Here is the considerable amount of useful information already on hand. (Please send us newsclips, etc., with further revelations; we’ll try to publish them soon.)

Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-DE) announced his candidacy at Amtrak’s Wilmington station June 9, then rode with his entourage on a chartered train to Washington. The June 10 *Washington Post* front-page news story included this passage: “Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI) [Biden’s national campaign cochairman] referred to the ‘most horrible tragedy’ that befell Biden as a 29-year-old senator-elect: an automobile accident that killed his first wife and daughter [and critically injured his 2 sons, then 2 and 3 years old; their station wagon had been hit by a truck]. Biden staged his announcement in front of the train station that symbolizes his devotion to family: He has commuted to Washington by train for the past 15 years to stay close to his family.”

Biden was a key participant in the Senate debate on the crucial Specter amendment May 9, 1985. Biden argued that, though Amtrak benefits have a heavy Northeast bias, the Senate should support it because America is one nation. He criticized “a creeping regionalism in this body . . . The people of Delaware had as much responsibility for the Cubans



— Photo by Steve von Bonin

Sen. Joseph Biden Jr. (D-DE) (holding daughter on train’s observation platform) launched his presidential campaign June 9 at Amtrak’s Wilmington station. He, his family, and entourage then rode the special train to Washington.

who Castro dumped on our shores as the Floridians had. The people of Colorado have as much responsibility for making sure the major cities of the Northeast function as we in the Northeast have to see that you all out in Colorado have water to drink and irrigation for those farms that we subsidize.”

He was debating Amtrak’s leading opponent, Sen. William L. Armstrong (R-CO). One observer said Armstrong seemed unusually ill-at-ease. At one point, he appeared to agree that the farmers in Colorado who irrigate their fields should pay for their own water.

Gov. Michael Dukakis (D-MA), who has been governor since 1975 (except for 1979-82), has instigated efforts of the Coalition of Northeast Governors for improved intercity rail passenger service (Oct.-Nov. ’86 *NARP News*), is committed to full restoration of Old Colony (i.e., Boston-southeast) commuter rail service, and—in an impromptu press conference after riding the in-town portion of Portland’s light rail line May 19—said: “I’d like to say, as one of the few transit-riding governors of the nation, I’ve been on a great transit system. If ever there was proof that investment in transit is the way you invest in healthy cities, this is it. We’ve seen that all over the country. If I’m elected president, we’re going to have transit investment in this country which not only makes it possible for people to move around, move from home to work and back again, and enjoy the benefits of good public transportation, but this is such a clear example of how investing in transit helps to make cities healthy again that it seems to me this ought to be our policy in this country. It is certainly going to be my policy if I’m elected to the presidency. I think everybody who had anything to do with this deserves congratulations because it’s a wonderful example of what some of us have been preaching for a long, long time.”

Sen. Albert Gore Jr. (D-TN), was influential as a congressman in saving Amtrak routes in 1977 and again in 1979. His high-profile activity on behalf of rail passengers was especially noteworthy because it offered little short-term political payoff, and some risk. The congressional district he then represented had no Amtrak service, and only faint hope of getting any (were the now-defunct Chicago-Florida “Floridian” to be rerouted via Atlanta).

Some history. In 1977, Amtrak, trying not to antagonize a supposedly sympathetic Carter Administration, accepted a proposed budget that would have forced big service cuts—failing to warn Congress about the extent of the cuts that would be required, and infuriating some legislators by announcing some cuts Aug. 31 (to take effect Oct. 30), while Congress was in recess.

Under prodding from NARP, the Amtrak Board belatedly voted to seek a supplemental appropriation Sep. 19, prompting House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees to hold hearings Sep. 21 and 23. As *NARP News* (Sep. ’77) reported, “Amtrak’s presentation did not impress the legislators, and [the administration witness] disappointed them by his inability to give any administration position beyond a statement of opposition to the Amtrak request.”

Not surprisingly, Appropriations told Amtrak to go ahead and discontinue routes in order to live with an inadequate (\$8 million) supplemental. Enter Rep. Gore who—over the objections of both the then-House Appropriations Chairman, George Mahon (D-TX), and then-Subcommittee Chairman, John McFall (D-CA)—offered, fought for, and won adoption Nov. 30 of a floor motion to increase Amtrak’s supplemental funds to \$18 million and require all trains to run until Congress could act on a route-structure report ordered from then-Transportation Sec. Brock Adams (*NARP News*, Dec., 1977, “House Insists More Amtrak Funds” and “NARP

INTERVIEWS REP. AL GORE JR.”).

In 1979, Gore—and NARP—played key roles in opposing administration-proposed route cuts. The Gore-Fowler “route freeze” amendment lost 197-214, but created pressure that helped reduce the amount of route mileage cut from the 43% the Adams report advocated to the 14% actually implemented. As NARP Pres. Jack Martin wrote to NARP members Aug. 3, 1979, “essentially, a deal was cut to add just enough trains to secure defeat of Gore-Fowler.”

This year, a June 15 *New York Times* report on presidential hopefuls’ talks to the annual conference of mayors at Nashville began the “Gore paragraph” with: “Mr. Gore outlined an agenda that called for more Federal assistance for mass transit”

Rev. Pat Robertson (R) has suggested he would continue a too-familiar battle by opposing federal funds for Amtrak.

Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL), in a May 28 letter to Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), chairman of the Appropriations Subcomm. on Transportation, strongly supported funding transit and Amtrak at a freeze level or higher. Regarding Amtrak, he said in part, “This is one case where a program is being penalized for its efficiency. Amtrak continues to improve its revenue to cost ratio, but without relief from further cuts (-41% in constant ’81 dollars since 1981) depletion in capital investment will further erode the growth and stability of the service. The benefits of an attractive, efficient national rail passenger system far outweigh the costs . . . No rail service in the world makes a profit.” ■

NARP Joins “Consensus” Process *(continued from pg. 1)*

Try to testify at the forum in your state—send written testimony if you cannot attend in person. You can also try to get involved in setting up the forum by influencing your state DOT and/or seeking membership on the committee established to plan your state’s forum. Each forum will be planned by a “broadly-based committee, to be created by the highway user representative and the [state DOT], and involving organizations representing local governments and private sector interests with concerns about transportation.”

We hope that publicity will encourage witnesses whose interest is primarily non-highway, and that enough witnesses will discuss the need for balanced transportation and for rail investments. As one AASHTO official wrote, “Because these public forums are being sponsored by the ACHP, it can be expected that most of the testimony will focus on highways and streets; however, testimony with regard to the other modes will be welcomed, and utilized.”

The efforts of NARP members around the country will be especially important in the many states (starting with Nebraska!) where public transportation is not widely viewed as a big issue.

At the hearings, many witnesses will argue against continuing to give mass transit a penny of federal gasoline tax revenues. On the other side, Massachusetts Transportation Secretary Frederick P. Salvucci says, “There should be a broader perspective that looks at the issue not just as highways, but as transportation” (*Journal of Commerce*, May 22, “Interstate Era Nears End, U.S. Faces Tough Choices”). **Will your state support continuing the current transit penny and expanding use of gasoline tax revenues for mass transit and intercity rail passenger service?**

Truckers and many other highway users certainly will not. Truckers, in fact, may argue that their taxes should be reduced. They claim they pay 42% of what the federal government collects to build and maintain highways—and

GASOLINE TAX FIGHT HEATS UP

As Congress struggles to reduce the federal deficit, prospects appear to be growing brighter for enactment of a gasoline tax increase this year. In our view, this is good. NARP has often noted that having the world’s lowest gasoline taxes is not in the U.S. national interest.

Those who agree may wish to tell their legislators as well as the chairmen and ranking members of House Ways & Means and Senate Finance: Reps. Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL) and John J. Duncan (R-TN) and Sens. Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX) and Bob Packwood (R-OR).

Highway interests opposed to increasing the gasoline tax for deficit-reduction purposes are relying heavily on the “it-would-hurt-the-poor” argument. Thus the president of American Trucking Associations (ATA) now doubles as president of the Coalition Against Regressive Taxation (CART), which is fighting all excise tax increases, and whose address is that of ATA’s Capitol Hill Office.

In a letter *Traffic World* published June 15, NARP Exec. Dir. Ross Capon responded to the magazine’s June 1 report on a CART news conference by noting that “a gasoline tax increase would benefit the poor. Many poor people have no cars and suffer with low-quality transit because the industrial world’s cheapest gasoline removed government’s incentive for providing transit systems capable of attracting auto owners as well . . . The poor who must drive long distances to work could be exempted by means of a special rebate or other exception.”

ignore the many state studies showing that truckers do not pay the full costs of the damage they do to highways.

Virginia Gov. Gerald Baliles (D) has said the federal government should consider returning most highway building to state control, along with the taxes to pay for construction. Congress is not eager to relinquish money and power; if it does, some formula might be worked out to guarantee major urban areas a certain share of the funds. The importance of cities and their power struggles with states is well known in Washington (and could also turn into a “good government” reason for Congress keeping the power).

Some highway advocates may push federal participation in massive new freeway networks to reduce suburban congestion. (!) NARP members, on the other hand, may want to address the need for peak-hour pricing of urban-area highways as a way to avoid paving over entire suburbs.

Testimony will also look at the revenue side. Will methanol- and electric-powered cars have a big impact on gasoline/diesel tax revenues in several years? Will tolls or other taxing methods be needed?

AASHTO hopes to be able to summarize modal requirements and goals late this year, adopt a consensus program by late 1988, and then launch an “Awareness and Commitment Effort” presenting the program “to the Administration, to Congress, to appropriate federal agencies, to elected and appointed state and local officials, and to the general public.”

We are under no illusions about prospects that the consensus program will be something NARP can endorse, and our ACHP membership carries no obligation to endorse the program. However, that membership—along with your efforts to influence your governors and state DOT’s and to participate in the forums—does offer a significant chance that the consensus program will reflect a much greater awareness of mass transit and rail-related transportation needs than would be the case if we don’t make the effort. ■