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Michigan Association of
Railroad Passengers
www.marp.org

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MARP holds 2024 Annual Meeting - Grass Lake, MI

By Tom Fletcher

The 51st annual MARP annual meeting was held on Saturday, October 19, at The Lost Railway Museum in Grass Lake, Michigan. The meeting started with a great lunch that was topped off with a MARP-decorated cake. Topics covered in the meeting included the MARP Year in Review, two guest speakers, and the business portion of the meeting.

Chairman Todd Schultz reviewed some of the past year's work, including the continued work of the 24 volunteer Station Representatives. The Reps act in a passive manner to watch over the stations across the state, report any issues to MARP, and place MARP-printed timetables and the *Michigan Passenger* in the depots for passengers. We expressed our appreciation for their service.

See *MARP Annual Meeting* page 3



Above: The cake this year featured the 50-Year Anniversary of Amtrak's Blue Water. (It was especially tasteful rich dark chocolate).

Left: State Representative Jason Morgan (D-Ann Arbor) provided an upbeat talk concerning the benefits of transit.

A vision at night



A night view of Ford's newly restored Michigan Central Station in Detroit. The Detroit News reported on October 8th that Ford has moved its Model e electric vehicle headquarters staff of 200 employees into the 9th and 10th floors of the 18-story building. Each floor can provide space for 500 workers, and Ford expects to have about 2,500 employees and 2,500 other workers in the building or nearby by 2028. Axios Detroit also reports that Light Yellow Coffee & Donuts will open a take-out and dine-in coffee shop in the newly renovated arcade area. The drive-through will be located on the east side of the depot. The Axios reporter will be watching for her favorite egg biscuit sandwiches at Michigan Central. Now what better way to attract quality young employees than to also have commuter trains from upscale communities such as Chelsea, Ann Arbor, and Pontiac bringing employees right to the door step of their work place? (Steve Sobel photo)

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The Michigan PASSENGER

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The Michigan Passenger welcomes your comments and submissions on passenger rail issues. Comments, articles, and other materials sent for publication should be sent by email to jhguidinger1@yahoo.com. Clippings from newspapers, magazines, and electronic sources must include the publication's name and date. Photos sent by email must be in .jpg format. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

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MICHIGAN SERVICES

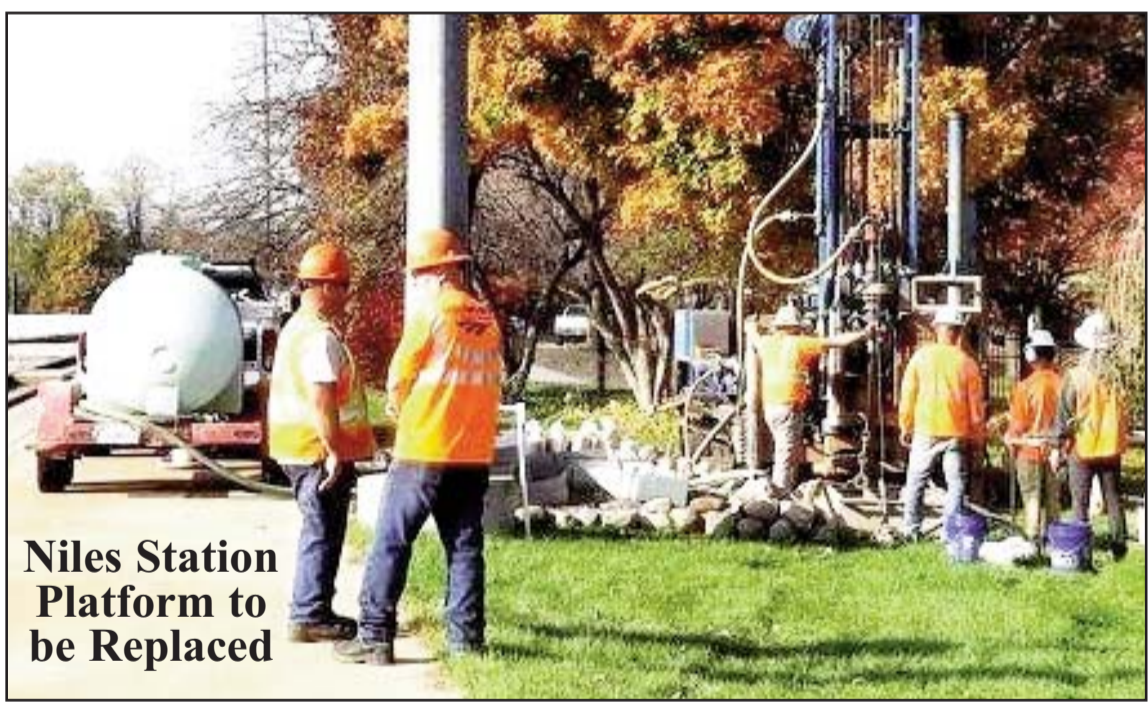
Amtrak Train Schedules Effective October 14, 2024 Chicago-Kalamazoo-Ann Arbor-Detroit-Pontiac Chicago-Kalamazoo-East Lansing-Port Huron									
Wolve-rine Service	Wolve-rine Service	Blue Water	Wolve-rine Service	Mile	Train Name	Wolve-rine Service	Blue Water	Wolve-rine Service	Wolve-rine Service
350	352	364	354		Train Number	351	365	353	355
Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily		Days of Operation	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
6:45a	2:15p	4:00p	5:50p	0	Dp	CHICAGO, IL, Un Sta (CT)	Ar	10:32a	11:45a
7:11a	↓	↓	↓	16		Hammond-Whiting, IN (CT)	↑	↑	2:02p
9:04a	4:31p	6:10p	8:04p	62		New Buffalo, MI (ET)			1:15p
9:29a	4:52p	6:32p	8:24p	89		Niles, MI			10:02p
9:40a	↓	6:43p	↓	102		Dowagiac, MI			11:04a
10:14a	5:26p	7:11p	8:58p	138		Kalamazoo, MI			1:01p
10:56a	6:03p	7:38p	9:35p	160		Battle Creek, MI			10:52a
		9:00p		208		East Lansing, MI			10:26a
		9:37p		238		Durand, MI			12:28p
		10:08p		256		Flint, MI			9:00p
		10:34p		274	↓	Lapeer, MI			8:48a
		11:31p	↓	319	Ar	PORT HURON, MI	Dp		10:00a
↓	↓		10:03p	184		Albion, MI	↑		12:01p
11:51a	6:55p		10:28p	208		Jackson, MI			8:54a
12:28p	7:25p		11:08p	243		Ann Arbor, MI			8:08a
12:57p	8:11p		11:27p	271		Dearborn, MI			7:35a
1:25p	8:44p		12:11a	281		DETROIT, MI			7:08a
1:49p	9:05p		12:13a	292		Royal Oak, MI			6:20a
1:57p	9:12p		12:42a	296	↓	Troy, MI			8:15a
2:11p	9:25p		1:01a	304	Ar	PONTIAC, MI	Dp		7:51a
									10:58a
									7:00p
									6:29p
									6:11p
									5:48p
									5:41p
									5:28p

Amtrak Train Schedule Effective October 6, 2023 Chicago-Grand Rapids

Pere Mar-quette	Mile	Train Name	Pere Mar-quette
370		Train Number	371
Daily		Days of Operation	Daily
6:30p	0	Dp	CHICAGO, IL, Un Sta (CT)
9:14p	89		Ar
9:50p	116		St. Joe-Benton Harbor, MI (ET)
10:33p	151	↓	Bangor, MI
11:34p	176	Ar	Holland, MI
			6:49a
			6:00a

NOTE: These schedules are provided for planning purposes only and may not show recent time changes. Consult with Amtrak at AMTRAK.COM or 1-800-USA-RAIL when making reservations.

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Niles Station Platform to be Replaced

Jack Kessler reports that Amtrak plans to replace the existing low level platforms at Niles with new high level platforms. The photo shows a crew drilling to collect soil samples for testing and to determine if any possible soil contamination is present. (Jack Kessler photo)

MARP STATION REPRESENTATIVES

Chuck Merckel, Coordinator (734-330-0281)

Station	Staff	MARP Volunteer
Albion	Bus	Matthew Murawski
Ann Arbor	Amtrak	Clark Charnetski
Bangor	None	J. P. Descamp
Battle Creek	Amtrak	Shuler Harmon
Dearborn	Amtrak	Mary Jo Durivage
Detroit	Amtrak	Greg Ptucha/Roberta Deering
Dowagiac	None	Matt Money
Durand	Museum	Mary Stone
East Lansing	Caretkr	John Boyse
Flint	Bus	Barb Westcott
Grand Rapids	Caretkr	Mit Renroc
Holland	None	Nathan Nietering
Jackson	Caretkr	Tom Schindler
Kalamazoo	Caretkr	Warren Fritz
Lapeer	None	Jim Slater
New Buffalo	None	Rich Knoll
Niles	Caretkr	Jack Kessler
Pontiac	Bus	Robert Tischbein
Port Huron	None	T. J. Gaffney
Royal Oak	None	David Roberts
St Joseph	None	Todd Schultz
Toledo, OH	Amtrak	James Parsons
Traverse City	None	Carolyn Ulstad
Troy	None	Thomas VandeGrift

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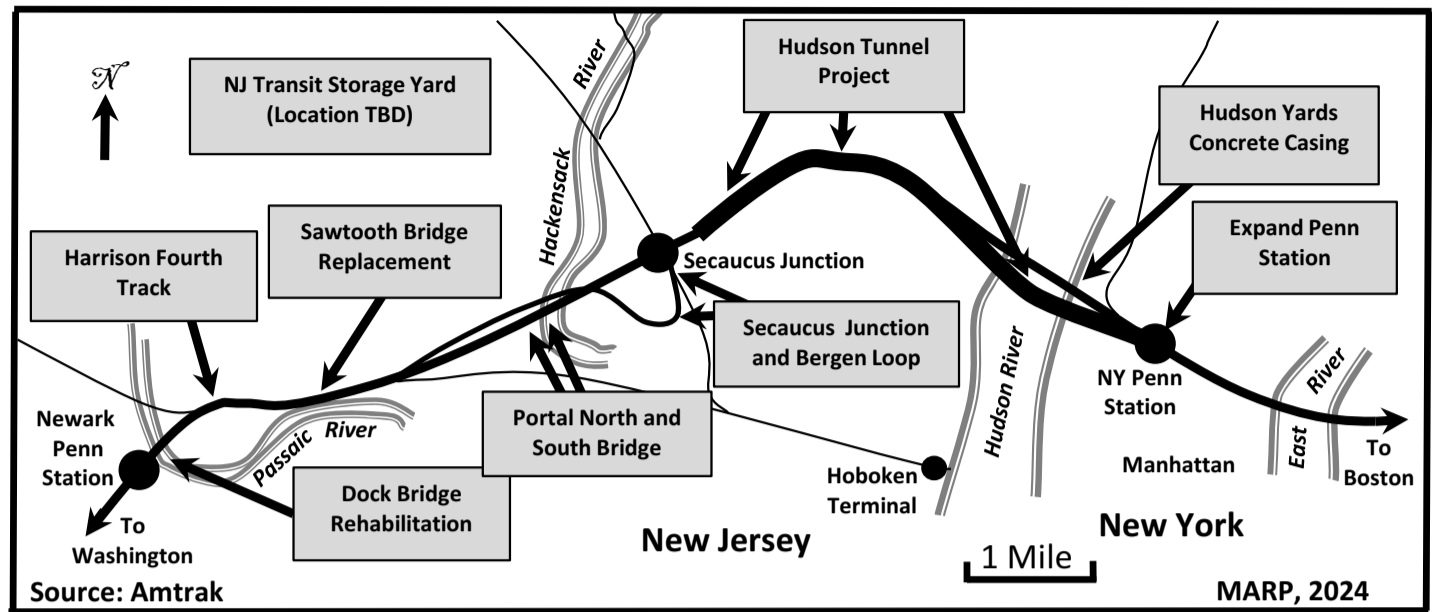
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Penn Station must be expanded for Gateway

According to a *New York Times* report on October 2, 2024, and information from the Rail Passengers Association, and many other media reports, New York's Pennsylvania Station needs to grow bigger. The Gateway Project (see accompanying map) will double the number of tracks into Penn Station from New Jersey. There will be more Amtrak trains, more New Jersey Transit trains, and more Metro-North trains all crowding into the station. The existing tracks at Penn Station can handle 24 trains per hour. The station will need to handle 48 per hour after Gateway. Plus, Metro-North is working to bring in trains from the Hudson and New Haven lines.

COMPONENTS OF NEW YORK GATEWAY PROJECT



The existing station was sized for about 200,000 people per day. Today some 600,000 passengers and visitors flow through the facility each day. Commuter and visitor travel has recovered from pre-pandemic level depression. The existing subterranean station now extends from 31st Street to the south to 33rd Street to the north, and Ninth Avenue to the west and Seventh Ave. to the east. The station is responsible for enabling \$100 million of American GDP every single day.

sit advocates have opposed the expansion and demand that Amtrak figure out how the existing Penn Station could accommodate more trains and travelers. These groups have been pushing the railroads to reconstruct the existing boarding platforms and institute through running. They believe that full through running will eliminate the need to expand Penn Station's footprint.

The question now is how the busiest station in North America can receive all these new trains?

The boarding platforms are indeed a problem. The platforms are too narrow to safely handle large crowds getting on and off trains. Everyone must be off the train and off the platform before boarding passengers can be let down to the platform. As a result, trains spend too long dwelling at the station. Fixing the platforms would reduce dwell times and allow more trains to be served.

Amtrak and the commuter railroads that use Penn Station say they have no choice but to take some additional property in Midtown Manhattan to make the station bigger. They have completed an exhaustive study of alternatives to avoid expanding the station - ideas that have been kicking around for more than a decade. On October 2 officials of Amtrak, the MTA, and NJ Transit and the other railroads gave their answer: There is no other way. "We will need to reach beyond" the current boundaries of the existing station, said Petra Messick, an Amtrak executive. The railroads want to add a 12-track, two-level addition next to the existing station on the south 31st Street side. This would require clearing three city blocks of expensive Manhattan real estate. The expansion proposal is currently moving forward and undergoing environmental review.

However, an estimated 1,045 columns would need to be removed or replaced to modernize the track and platform layout. The columns support buildings, streets, and even a subway line. Amtrak's study looked at two alternatives for rebuilding the platforms. But the result was that the cost of rebuilding only the existing station and the disruption to daily operations wouldn't yield enough benefit to make it worthwhile.

Community activists and some tran-

Through running would help. Amtrak already runs Washington-Boston trains through the station, but they intend to add more trains. Another issue is that many NJ Transit trains run east and empty through the station to the East River tunnels to reach the Sunnyside



The Seventh Avenue entrance down into Penn Station, a subterranean den of crowded corridors, shops, and fast food eateries that is seemingly always disrupted by endless construction work. It all lies under the 2 Penn Plaza office tower and Madison Square Garden. (Fernando Sandoval/MW photo, via Amtrak)

Yard. Likewise, Long Island Railroad trains run west and empty through the station to a storage yard a couple of blocks west. Combining routes so that trains ran from New Jersey onto Long Island and vice versa would allow both railroads to carry more people and make taking the train more attractive. The study did include scenarios with most trains running through the station. Everyone agrees that through running should happen to the extent feasible, regardless of the platform solution.

ning on each railroad and rebuilding all to the same standard. And, through running would require Amtrak, Long Island RR, Metro-North, and NJ Transit to come to complicated revenue and cost sharing arrangements.

Unfortunately, the through running solution would be very difficult to implement. The railroads have different electrical voltages, different signaling systems, and different clearance profiles. Metro-North's Hudson and New Haven lines add two more sets of standards into the mix. Through running would require buying new trains capable of run-

The study also considered two options for tracks underneath the existing tracks. However, fire safety is a major issue and getting to and from the tracks to the street, especially in a fire emergency, makes these options undesirable.

The solution for Penn Station continues to be discussed even as the railroads press forward with their expansion plans. The fix will require a big Federal railway program like the Interstate Highway Program. But expansion at Penn Station will have a much higher public benefit than highway and airport expansions of similar cost.

MARP Annual Meeting . . . from page 1

Looking ahead, the organization will be working in the coming year to increase MARP's influence by establishing a broader coalition, including partnering with other groups that have a passion for public transportation. Additionally, we will project a more professional stance and look at creative ways to move passenger rail forward in the state.

(IPRA) provided a presentation on their efforts to advance passenger rail in Indiana. Tod's presentation included interesting information and statistics on society, and how people interact and move in society.

Our second speaker was a return engagement with Michigan State Representative Jason Morgan (D-Ann Arbor), co-founder of the new Michigan Legislative Transit Caucus. Rep. Morgan joined us earlier in the year to announce the formation of the caucus, which

includes state legislators from both parties and both peninsulas. Rep. Morgan provided an update on their work, including proposed legislation that, if enacted, would entail substantial investment in transit and passenger rail. Conversation among legislators have revolved around the link between economic development, housing, and public transportation. Rep. Morgan commended MARP for our efforts, and he encouraged us to "keep the conversation going." We look forward

to hearing positive messages from Rep. Morgan and the Transit Caucus.

The annual meeting closed with a brief business session that saw last year's Annual Meeting minutes approved, the Treasurer's report approved, and election of Executive Committee officers for the 2025-2026 term. (See list on Page 2.) New officers include Alexander Kaufman, Steve Vagnozzi, and Eric Schertzing.

WHAT WOULD THE FRA DETROIT-NEW ORLEANS ROUTE BE LIKE?

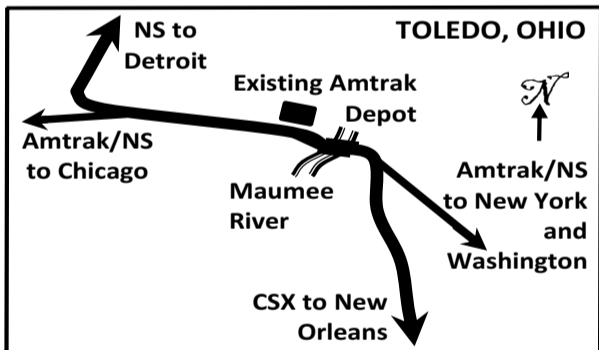
This is a conceptualization of the Detroit-New Orleans route, one of 15 long distance passenger routes identified by the Federal Railroad Administration for consideration. MARP assumes that such a route would follow Norfolk Southern from Detroit to Toledo, CSX from Toledo to Columbus, Norfolk Southern from Columbus to Cincinnati, and CSX from Cincinnati to New Orleans. This route would be about 1,230 miles long and serve a population of about 20 million persons. None of this route has current Amtrak service, although service is proposed for the 140-mile Mobile-New Orleans segment.

The schedule presented below is based on the travel time requirements as shown in the July, 1954, schedules of the New York Central for the two Norfolk Southern segments, the Chesapeake and Ohio for the CSX segment between Toledo and Columbus, and the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) for the route south of Cincinnati. This conceptual schedule employs an arbitrary 8AM departure time from each end of the route. Total travel time would be about 32 hours. Opportunities to be explored for possible connections with current Amtrak trains would exist in Detroit, Toledo, Cincinnati, Birmingham, and New Orleans.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN (area population 3,777,000) is the northern terminus and the largest city on the conceptual Detroit-New Orleans route. Detroit is presently served by three round trip Amtrak trains a day to and from Chicago. The new could use the existing Detroit Amtrak Station with minimal changes. The new train could also be extended north about 28 miles to Pontiac to access the existing Amtrak servicing facilities, although they would need to be expanded to serve a long distance train. Connections to the other Amtrak trains might be possible at Detroit, depending on the schedule of the new train.

MONROE, MICHIGAN (area population 155,000) does not have a train station. A new station would have to be built to serve Monroe.

TOLEDO, OHIO (area population 647,000) is served by four daily Chicago-East Coast Amtrak trains. The existing station is positioned to serve the new train with minimal changes. Connections might be possible at Toledo depending on the schedule of the new train. This would be the first passenger train to run south from Toledo since 1971.



FOSTORIA, OHIO (area population 13,000). Fostoria was a stop on Amtrak's rerouted Broadway Limited and the Three Rivers between 1990 and 2005. Although the station building remains today, it is located on an east-west railroad about 1,800 west of the north-south railroad which would be used for the new train. It is likely that a new depot would be needed.

MARION, OHIO (area population 36,000). Marion was a stop on Amtrak's Broadway Limited and the Three Rivers between 1990 and about 2004. Marion has a nicely preserved Union Station that could be used for the new train.



The Marion, Ohio, Union Station, now a museum, is located on a crossing of two CSX lines. (Marion Union Station Association)

COLUMBUS, OHIO (area population 2,316,000) lost its Amtrak service when Amtrak's National Limited was discontinued in 1977. It is the largest city in the US without passenger train service. The former Columbus Union Station was removed for the Columbus Convention Center. A new depot would be required at a downtown location to serve a new north-south train.

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO (area population 59,000) lost its "Big Four" depot to demolition in 1969 during the Penn Central debacle and the collapse of passenger train service. A station would need to be built for the new train.

DAYTON, OHIO (area population 1,087,000) lost its splendid Dayton Union Station (the "Tower Depot") to demolition after Amtrak discontinued the National Limited in 1979. A new station would need to be built to serve Dayton.

CINCINNATI, OHIO (area population 2,316,000) is the 28th largest urban area in the US. Cincinnati is poorly served by Amtrak with only the tri-weekly Cardinal on an east-west route. However, Cincinnati has a beautiful Union Station, and a new north-south train could use this station with minimal development needs.

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY (area population 1,601,000), retains its magnificent Louisville Union Station on Broadway. Today the building is the headquarters of the local Transit Authority. Louisville had Amtrak service on the Floridian between 1971 and 1979 and on the Kentucky Cardinal between 1999 and 2003. The Kentucky Cardinal backed into a siding west of the station building allowing passengers to use the historic waiting room. The siding remains in place today and perhaps an Amtrak presence could be re-established in the historic building with the train using the siding and backing in/out.



The Bowling Green, Kentucky, depot is now a museum. (Bedford, via Wikipedia)



The Louisville, Kentucky, Union Station presently houses the offices of the local Transit Authority. The large L&N office building, now vacant, is on left. (Cristina Carbone, Soc. of Arch. Historians)

ELIZABETHTOWN, CAVE CITY, AND BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY (combined population 338,000) are communities in the hill country of Kentucky. Elizabethtown and Cave City would need new boarding facilities. Cave City would be the stop for Mammoth Cave National Park, which is located about 15 road miles west of the small town. Bowling Green was a station on Amtrak's Floridian up until 1979 when that train was discontinued. The large, well maintained depot on Kentucky Street, now a museum, could be used for passengers again.

NEW ORLEANS ROUTE LOOK LIKE?



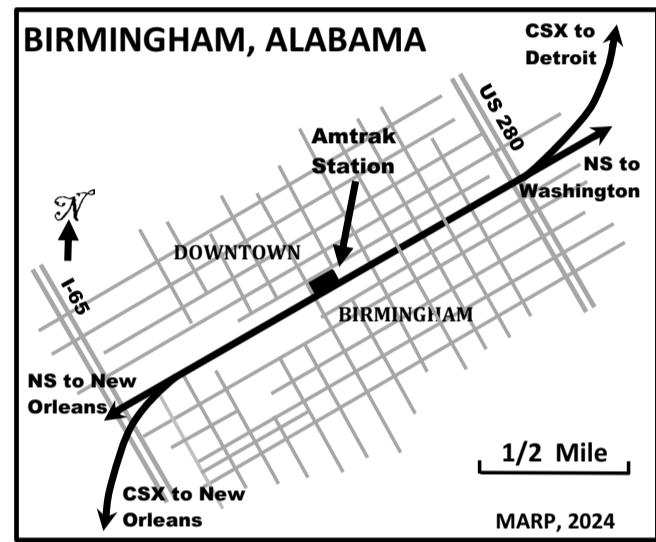
The depot in Decatur, Georgia, was used by the Floridian until 1979. (Chris Pruitt, via Wikipedia)

SUMMARY:

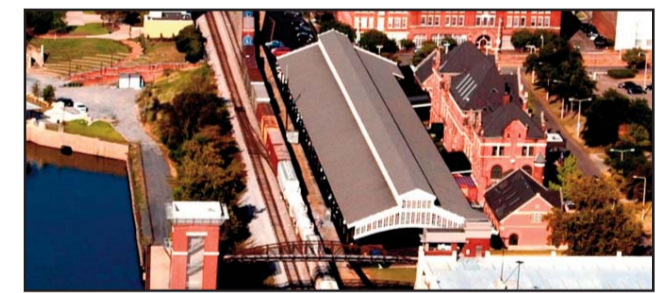
- Would serve 20 million people
- Nine urban areas over 1 million
- None of route served at present
- 1,230 Miles in length
- Formerly a major passenger route

Amtrak Pan-American Conceptual Schedule				
Detroit-Columbus-Cincinnati-Louisville-Birmingham-Mobile-New Orleans				
Pan American	Train Name			Pan American
99	Train Number			98
Daily	Miles	Days of Operation		Daily
8:00a	Dp	0	DETROIT, MI (ET)	Ar 304p
8:38a	Dp	34	Monroe, MI	Dp 223p
9:25a	Ar	58	TOLEDO, OH	Dp 144p
9:35a	Dp	58	TOLEDO, OH	Ar 124p
10:19a	Ar	92	Fostoria, OH	Ar 1240p
11:31a	Ar	117	Marion, OH	Ar 1128a
12:50p	Ar	181	COLUMBUS, OH	Dp 1009a
1:00p	Dp	181	COLUMBUS, OH	Ar 949a
1:51p	Ar	233	Springfield, OH	Ar 856a
2:28p	Ar	258	Dayton, OH	Ar 816a
3:41p	Ar	303	CINCINATTI, OH	Dp 656a
3:51p	Dp	303	CINCINATTI, OH	Ar 636a
7:01p	Ar	417	LOUISVILLE, KY	Dp 341a
7:16p	Dp	417	LOUISVILLE, KY	Ar 326a
8:21p	Dp	459	Elizabethtown, KY	Dp 221p
8:53p	Dp	502	Cave City, KY	Dp 149p
9:26p	Dp	531	Bowling Green, KY	Dp 117a
11:11p	Ar	604	NASHVILLE, TN	Dp 1132p
11:26p	Dp	604	NASHVILLE, TN	Ar 1117p
1:48a	Dp	724	Decatur, AL	Dp 905p
3:46a	Ar	809	BIRMINGHAM, AL	Dp 710p
4:11a	Dp	809	BIRMINGHAM, AL	Ar 645p
6:11a	Ar	907	MONTGOMERY, AL	Dp 445p
6:31a	Dp	907	MONTGOMERY, AL	Ar 425p
9:21a	Dp	1025	Floaton, AL	Dp 135p
11:16a	Ar	1085	MOBILE, AL	Dp 1140a
11:36a	Dp	1085	MOBILE, AL	Ar 1125a
12:25p	Dp	1125	Pascagoula, MS	Dp 1036a
12:53p	Dp	1145	Biloxi, MS	Dp 1008a
1:09p	Dp	1158	Gulfport, MS	Dp 952a
1:34p	Dp	1173	Bay St. Louis, MS	Dp 927a
3:01p	Ar	1230	NEW ORLEANS, LA	Dp 800a

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, (area population 1,416,000), is the 50th largest urban area in the US. A previous stop on the original Amtrak Floridian, Birmingham has a modern centrally located station used by Amtrak's daily Crescent between New York and New Orleans. A new north-south train could use this station with no new station facilities necessary.

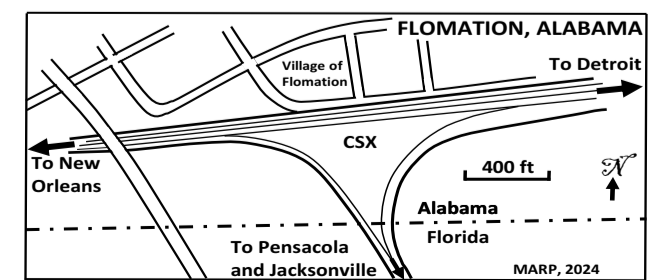


MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA (area population 1,311,000) is the capital of Alabama. The city had Amtrak service on Amtrak's Floridian until that train was discontinued in 1979. The large historic L&N Station and its equally large trainshed remain downtown on a bluff along the Alabama River. The facilities are in excellent condition and could be placed back into operation, apparently with minimal effort.



The large Montgomery, Alabama, Union Station and trainshed are on a bluff over the Alabama River. (Carol M. Highsmith, Lib. of Congress)

FLOMATON, ALABAMA (population 1,600) is the rail junction where the route from Detroit to New Orleans would meet the CSX line to the east to Pensacola and Jacksonville. A new station could be located here to serve both routes. Another site serving both routes might be at Atmore, Alabama (population 13,400), about 15 miles west, where a well-kept passenger shelter remains from the days when Amtrak's Sunset Limited ran east from New Orleans to Jacksonville.



MOBILE, ALABAMA (area population 662,000) has been a stop on three previous Amtrak trains that operated for various periods between 1984 and 2005, all of which have been discontinued. The modern L&N Depot in Mobile was demolished after flooding from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Currently, Amtrak plans to start a New Orleans-Mobile train in 2025 with two round trips a day and build a new boarding platform at a downtown location. A Detroit-New Orleans long distance train would also use this station.

PASGAGOULA, BILOXI, GULFPORT, AND BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI (combined area population 417,000) are beach front cities on Mississippi's Gulf Coast. The CSX line runs through each of these cities near the beach front and was the route of the previous Amtrak Gulf Coast Limited and, until 2005, the eastern extension of the Sunset Limited. Each city has retained their Amtrak stations and platforms, apparently in anticipation of restored service. Pascagoula has a nice wood depot on Railroad Street that still has the Amtrak platform signs. Biloxi has a platform with a canopy and Amtrak signs on Esters Boulevard, but the depot building is gone. The Gulfport station is on 27th Avenue at a railroad junction. Bay St. Louis has an attractive Spanish style building on Depot Way.



The Spanish style depot in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. (Mississippi Coastal Commission)

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA (area population 1,270,000) is the southern terminus of the new train. New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal is presently served by three Amtrak trains to New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The proposed new train could use this station with a minimal need for changes. It could make connections with the existing trains depending on the schedule of the new train.



The New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal. (Amtrak, Great American Stations)

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE (area population 2,143,000) is the capital of Tennessee and the most populous city in the state. Nashville's large Union Station on Broadway was converted to a hotel in the late 1980s after the demise of Amtrak's Floridian in 1979. Although the boarding platforms and coach yards have been removed for hotel parking and other developments, mainline tracks pass by the station and the building could be used by the new train if desired. Otherwise, a new station would need to be built in the downtown area.



The Nashville, Tennessee, Union Station is now a Marriot Hotel. The adjacent CSX tracks pass under Broadway in the right background. (WTN Peep Holes, Wikipedia)

DECATUR, ALABAMA (population 157,000) was a stop on the Floridian until 1979. Decatur's Union Station, used by both the L&N and Southern Railway, has been expertly restored by the City of Decatur. (The project was designated the best Main Street Preservation Project in Alabama in 2015-2016.) The building looks ready to receive a new daily passenger train with minimal cost and probably with city support.

Positive Economic Benefits of TOD in Dallas

A September 11, 2024, report in *Mass Transit Online* summarized the results of a study of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in Dallas, Texas. The study was performed by the University of North Texas Economic Research Group. Research workers evaluated real estate development within a quarter-mile radius of Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) rail stations. The study utilized IMPLAN software to create detailed economic models based on development spending data.

The study found TOD in the DART service area generated nearly \$1 billion in direct spending and created almost 11,000 jobs between 2019 and 2021. Led by Dr. Michael Carroll, the research confirmed long-held beliefs among economists and real estate developers about DART's positive impact on the region's economic vitality.

"DART's network is designed to connect riders across city boundaries and provide crucial access to

jobs, education, health care, entertainment and more," said Nadine S. Lee, DART President and CEO on September 6. "DART also opens up social and economic development opportunities at all of our stations." She pointed to the study in highlighting the tremendous value DART brings to all 13 service area cities.

Details of the study include:

Direct spending: DART's transit-oriented projects generated more than \$980 million in direct spending.

Total economic impact: The cumulative economic impact within the 700-mile DART Service area, tracked by the University of North Texas since 1999, reached \$17.1 billion, significantly boosting the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region's economy.

Job creation: The developments created 10,747 jobs in the DFW area.

Tax revenue: The DART station area economic impact between 2019 and 2021 contributed \$144.7 million in federal tax revenue



DART train in downtown Dallas. (DART Photo)

and \$49.6 million in state and local tax revenue.

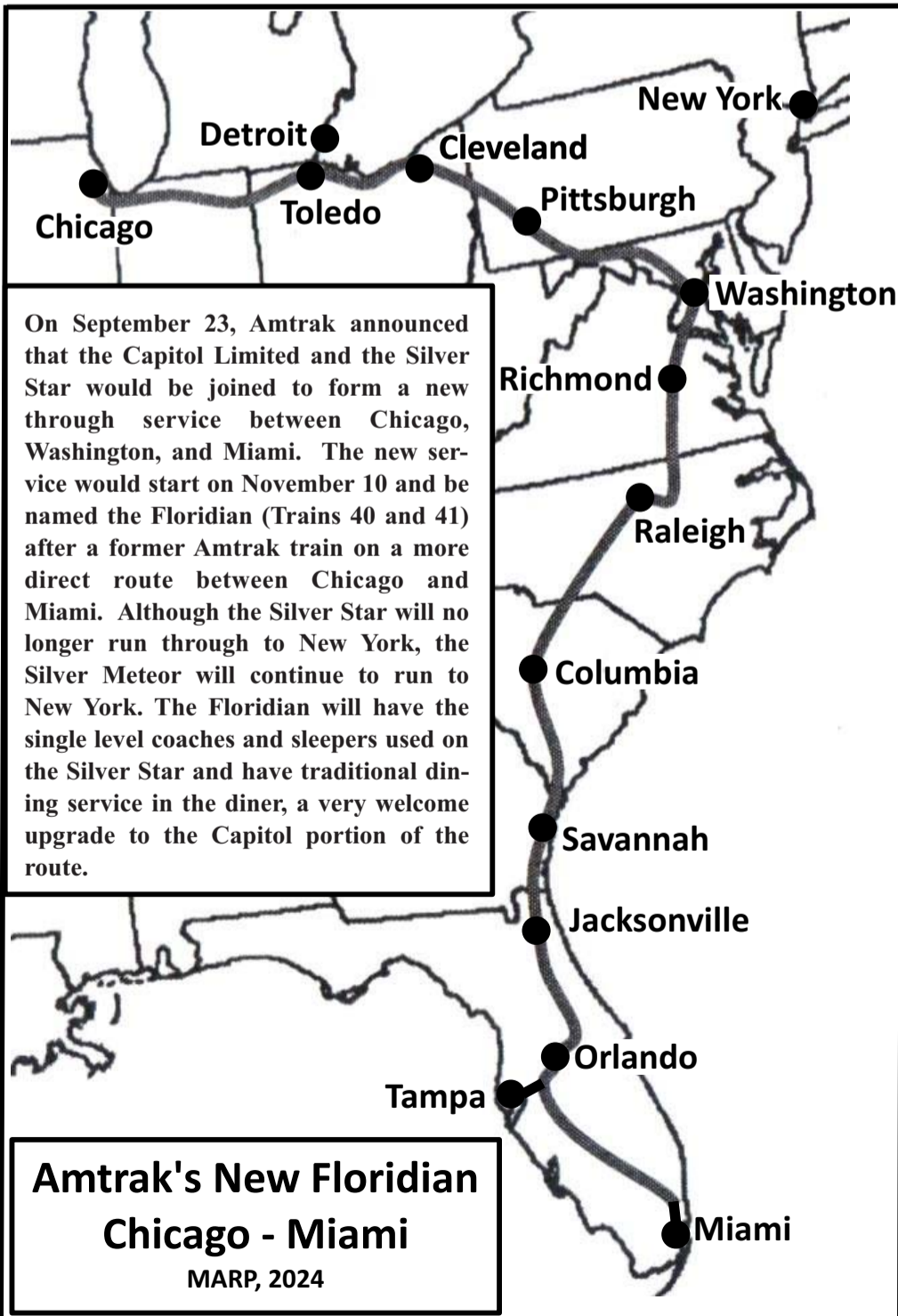
Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the DFW region demonstrated remarkable economic activity from 2019 to 2021. Dr. Carroll emphasized the growth is part of the region's broader, long-

term trend of robust economic expansion. He noted the trend of developing properties near light-rail stations is not unique to DFW, as similar patterns are observed throughout the U.S.

Lee said, "The impact of DART light-rail investments

on local development shows residential and office space rents are substantially higher than surrounding projects." Dr. Carroll highlighted the growing importance of connectivity and multi-modal access in Texas's rapidly urbanizing landscape, particularly in the DFW area.

Floridian launched



Construction Starts in Mobile on New Boarding Platform and Siding

The Station Itself Must Wait

Trains News Wire reported on October 23, that construction had started on a new boarding platform and a 3,000-foot layover track for the future Mobile, Alabama, passenger station. A groundbreaking ceremony for the platform and track held on October 22 was attended by US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Federal Railroad Administration Administrator Amit Bose, and other officials. The construction site is at the downtown location of Mobile's former Amtrak (L&N) station, destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Questions about when Amtrak's New Orleans-Mobile Gulf Coast service will begin and the names for the trains remain unanswered.

Acknowledging the lengthy process of restarting the train, Secretary Buttigieg told *AL.com* news that there is a need for a better way to "align our processes" in dealing with multiple layers of government as well as pri-

vate companies. Amtrak announced in 2021 that it planned to start the service the following year, but entanglements prompted a lengthy case before the Surface Transportation Board, a confidential agreement between Amtrak and the host railroads, and lengthy negotiations with Mobile and the Port of Mobile over the station site and funding. This has delayed the start of service, now projected for some time in 2025.

The groundbreaking did not include the station building. Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson told *AL.com* the city has a design, but will wait to see if the Amtrak service succeeds. "If we have a real need for it, then we'll spend the money at that time," Stimpson said.

"I will take city money and grant money. The prudent thing is to make sure the thing is successful."

Ann Arbor Amtrak Station Hemmed in by New Developments



Expansion of the parking lot at Ann Arbor is now stymied by a new condo development (shown here in the background) on the previously vacant property adjacent to the existing parking lot. (Charnetski photo)

By Clark Charnetski

In an October 4, 2024 article on *MLive*, Ann Arbor City Manager Milton Dohoney said that he believed that the Federal Railroad Administration is against moving the Amtrak station to a new location on Fuller Road, three quarters of a mile east of the present location and next to the University of Michigan Medical Center, a site long favored by the City.

Instead, he is now proposing that the City examine the possibility of expanding at the present location on Depot Street. “We believe that we need to explore the possibility of potential housing on top of a reimagined ticket center, and vertical development at that site is certainly physically possible.”

For a September 2017 Environmental Assessment, eight possible locations for a station in Ann Arbor were examined in detail, and only two were deemed feasible—the present location and the one on Fuller Road. The FRA discontinued funding for the project on August 11, 2021.

However, since that time, the present site has become hemmed in by real estate developments, especially the Broadway Park West Condo project next to the Amtrak long term parking lot across the tracks from the existing station building. Now the only way to expand the woefully inadequate parking is to build a parking structure over the tracks, a very expensive alternative that may not be feasible. Also, that parking structure would have to be built in front of four condominium apartment buildings with 96 units that are now under construction.

MARP continues to believe that a move to Fuller Road is the only reasonable way to provide for expanded rail passenger service in Ann Arbor. *The Michigan Passenger* will report on this issue as events unfold.

SHORT LINES

The SEMTA Detroit-Pontiac commuter trains were the subject of a September 15 article in *Trains.com*. SE MTA's board voted in September of 1983 to end the Detroit-Pontiac trains and 13 bus routes, after the feds cut its annual grant to SEMTA by \$16 million. The trains averaged 475 passengers a day and were costing the agency \$2.1 million a year. Fares covered 20% of operating costs. The last runs were to be Oct. 14, 1983, but a judge ordered them to continue until he conducted a hearing on a lawsuit filed by the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers seeking to prevent the service cuts. Judge Robert Templin dismissed the suit on Oct. 17, the same day the trains ran for the final time..... **Amtrak says that the new Chicago-Miami Floridian will operate only for a limited (unspecified) period of time** due to track closures necessary for the East River Tunnel Rehabilitation Project in New York. This will be the first two-night route east of Chicago. Michigan passengers boarding at South Bend and Waterloo, Indiana, or Toledo, Ohio, will now have a one-seat ride to Florida. MARP believes that the change was also made to free up the Superliner cars used by the Capitol Limited for use on the western trains, where these cars are in short supply. Amtrak has apparently wanted for a long time to get these cars out of the Washington yard..... **The Detroit RTA of Southeast Michigan agreed on September 19 to take over control of Detroit's QLine,** according to an *Axios Detroit* blog note on September 20. The RTA says that transferring the QLine from the nonprofit M-1 Rail organization to the RTA will better position it to grow its services portfolio. The RTA can access new state and federal funding previously unavailable to nonprofit M-1 Rail. The QLine opened in 2017, thanks to \$150 million in philanthropic donations from the Kresge Foundation, Dan Gilbert's Rock Family of Companies, Penske Corp., and others. Rip Rapson, president and CEO of Kresge, says the transfer of the QLine to a public authority was envisioned since its inception. Rapson told *Axios Detroit*, “The whole funding equation completely changes.” The move costs taxpayers nothing extra, per the RTA. The RTA will assume the QLine's \$10 million annual budget, its streetcars and other assets and the service's approximately 45 employees. The QLine will continue to receive \$5 million in annual tax subsidies that the state agreed to provide..... **L.A. Metro received an \$893 million FTA grant to support a new 6.7 mile light rail project.** *Mass Transit* reported on September 10th, that this is the first grant that the FTA awarded under the Expedited Project Delivery Pilot Program. The rail line will run along Van Nuys Boulevard in LA's East San Fernando Valley to help reduce vehicle congestion, improve air quality, and provide an affordable way to travel. The line, which serves as Phase 1 of the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor, will provide new connections to Metrolink's Ventura County Line, Amtrak, L.A. Metro's G (Orange) Line, L.A. Metro's B line and to future services in the works. An additional 2.5-mile northern extension would extend rail service from Pacoima to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink station. After a lull of 70 years, this is first local stop rail service on Van Nuys Boulevard after the last Pacific Electric San Fernando Valley Line car rolled down the Boulevard in 1952..... **The Washington Port of Bellingham will restore on-dock freight rail service that had ended in 2001,** according to a report in *Progressive Railroading* on September 26. Located about 20 miles south of the U.S.-Canada border and 90 miles north of Seattle, the Port of Bellingham recently learned the \$45 million rail reconnection project landed a \$17.9 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program grant from the USDOT..... **VIA Rail Canada will invest more than C\$25 million in an upgrade of its London, Ontario, station.** *Mass Transit Magazine* reported on July 12, 2023, that once completed in 2025, the investments will make the station a more comfortable, more accessible and

more efficient station. Placing a focus on hiring local contractors, the upgrades include civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical work to retrofit building systems. The work also includes passenger platform replacement that will meet the latest accessibility standards and new doors and paths. “As the local demand for passenger rail service continues to grow, the improvements announced today will help make passenger train travel to and from London a desirable alternative for thousands of people in the London region,” said Mayor of London Josh Morgan..... **New York City Ferry rates are going up**. According to *AM NYC*, on July 24, NY Ferry announced a price increase for most passengers, including seniors and people with disabilities, but a discount rate for teenagers. After seeing a record-breaking 7 million riders in the last fiscal year, a single ticket for the borough-wide ferry service will increase from \$4 to \$4.50 starting Sept. 9 this year. A single ride ticket will be \$2.90 and the 10-trip bundle will be \$29. The fare is also going up for senior citizens and people with disabilities from \$1.35 to \$1.45. But starting on Sept. 1, in time for the new school year, all NYC high school students can take part in the ferry's discount program on weekdays. (Imagine taking a ferry on the Hudson or the East River to high school every day.)..... **Amtrak's Harrisburg Line Track Renewal Project is progressing ahead of schedule.** According to a report in *Mass Transit Magazine* on October 11, replacement bus service will end November 7, two weeks earlier than originally promised. The project, which began in March, has resulted in the replacement of 43 track miles of rail and 113,825 concrete ties with overall project completion in December. Amtrak says the \$122 million project between Lancaster and Harrisburg, Pa., would normally have taken two years but the company says it has implemented an innovative approach with expanded track outage windows that have improved work efficiencies and shortened the schedule..... **The New York Gateway Development Commission awarded an initial tunnel boring contract,** the first heavy construction phase of the Hudson Tunnel Project. According to a report in *Rail Technology and Signal* on August 2, the \$465 million tunnel boring contract was awarded to Schiavone Dragados for the Palisades Tunnel Project, which involves the first mile of the twin tunnels on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. It includes boring two 5,100-foot long tunnels with an inside diameter of 25 feet 2 inches and six cross passages, as well as furnishing and installing a concrete tunnel lining with waterproofing membrane. The project also involves building the Hudson County Shaft, which will be used to remove the boring machines when excavation is complete. Work is expected to be completed in 2027. The new tunnels will increase capacity on the New Jersey-to-New York portion of the Northeast Corridor, the most heavily used passenger rail line in the U.S., seeing more than 2,200 train movements and 800,000 passengers every day..... **In Southern California, Metrolink is adding 32 weekday trains, a nearly 23% increase in service.** According to a report in *Progressive Railroading* on September 17. The new trains will begin on October 21. Metrolink CEO Darren Kettle calls it “Metrolink Reimagined” as it transitions from a commuter service to a regional Southern California passenger-rail service..... **A New Jersey Transit train hit a chunk of a log on the tracks killing the engineer,** *The New York Times* reported on October 14th that a light rail train traveling on the River Line between Trenton and Camden hit the log about 6 AM killing the train's operator and injuring 23 of the 42 passengers. The line is in south New Jersey along the Delaware River. A photo shows the windshield smashed and the short, thick log wedged under the front car on the train. This is a few days after a train on the same line hit a truck at a crossing just a few miles away from Monday's crash. Four passengers and the train's operator were injured in that event.

A new type of car for Brightline West

William C. Vantuono, writing in *Railway Age* on September 9, 2024, reports that Siemens Mobility AP has announced that it will construct a new passenger car manufacturing plant in Horsehead, New York. The plant will build cars for Brightline West, the new passenger railroad being built between Rancho Cucamonga (east of Los Angeles) and Las Vegas, Nevada.

The plant will manufacture a new design of high-speed trainsets for Brightline West christened by Siemens as the American Pioneer 220. Siemens will invest approximately \$60 million in the 300,000-square-foot new plant. It is expected to employ 300 workers, many of whom will be represented by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). Siemens describes the new plant as “North America’s first true high-speed rail production facility.”

Horseheads is located in New York’s Southern Tier region, just north of Elmira on Norfolk Southern’s Southern Tier line (the former Erie-Lackawanna mainline). Siemens says that the site was selected “for its skilled workforce, industrial history, and ability to best meet the needs of Brightline West.” The facility, which will be in the Horseheads Industrial Center in the Holding Point area of the center, will feature full-scale, high-speed rail car production, from components to final

assembly and functional testing. Production is expected to begin in 2026.

Mass Transit On-Line notes that Siemens has deep roots in New York State, beginning in 1875 with the first transatlantic telegraph cable between the U.S. and Europe. Today, the company has more than 2,500 employees in New York, including the Siemens Mobility North American Headquarters and 15 facilities in the company’s infrastructure, financial services, mobility and healthcare businesses.

The American Pioneer (AP) 220 equipment is based on the Siemens Velaro trainset and configured as an electric multiple-unit. It will be equipped with “gearless” distributed traction and will feature a maximum operating speed of 220 mph. Siemens is building 10 trainsets; the contract includes 30 years of rolling stock maintenance to be performed at Brightline West’s Vehicle Maintenance Facility in Sloan, Nevada. The train sets will include a ‘Party Car’ with a passenger experience worthy of the name. The first-of-its-kind lounge car will allow passengers to relax and enjoy a beverage and views of the desert along the commute.”

Brightline adds, “We’ve said from the start that Brightline West will plant the flag for high-speed rail in America and will lay the foundation for a new industry with unimaginable economic benefits.”



Above: Brightline West “Smart Class” interior rendering.



Right: Brightline West “Premium Class” interior rendering.

An attractive lineup

Below, right: Brightline West “Party Car” interior rendering.



Bottom: Brightline West Rancho Cucamonga Station, California.

Renderings courtesy Brightline West, via *Railway Age*.



Parting shot



The Union Pacific Station in Boise, Idaho, opened 99 years ago in 1925, awaits a train on the sunny afternoon of October 11, 2024. The depot, now owned by the City of Boise, is in a nicely landscaped park on a hill overlooking downtown Boise and the Idaho State Capitol. It can be rented for meetings and social events. (JHG Photo)