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Fare Hearings Subdued But DVARP Makes Its Point

SEPTA officials looked visibly relieved after the last of five public hearings on their proposed fiscal 2002 operating budget and fare increase. Anticipated crowds of noisy protesters failed to materialize, and political opposition to a fare increase is muted.

The lack of fireworks didn't mean everything was all right with the fare increase though. Specific details of SEPTA's proposal came under heavy criticism, even from people who recognized SEPTA needed to raise fares to help offset increased wages, fuel prices, and other costs. The fare plan may not survive intact to the SEPTA Board's vote on it next month.

The plan to reduce fares on four in-city commuter rail lines while applying higher than average fare increases to the remaining commuter rail riders was widely criticized, and SEPTA appeared to be retreating from the idea. DVARP argued that that measure was proposed more for political reasons than to boost rail ridership or increase system efficiency, and SEPTA's response to DVARP questioning only bolstered that conclusion.

DVARP also singled out the proposed 50% increase in transit transfer charges to 60¢ as a particularly counterproductive idea, and called for the total fare increase to be scaled down too. Points from previous years' budget statements were revisited, demonstrating that there is still much SEPTA can do to increase revenue without raising fares, and to lower costs without cutting service. Speeding up rail and transit service was cited as a "win-win" deal where riders get better service and SEPTA gets lower costs simultaneously. DVARP's view could best be summarized as "SEPTA isn't serious enough about change."

DVARP people busy

DVARP's stance on the fare increase and tactics for fighting it were discussed and approved at the April meeting. Then a team of volunteers turned the points into a statement and researched facts to bolster it. The job was easier this year than the last time SEPTA fares were increased—volunteers could use the internet to research fares in other cities and exchange drafts and reports.

Tony DeSantis delivered our testimony at the Doylestown hearing, and spoke to reporters and radio stations covering the event. At the Media hearing, Matthew Mitchell took the lead on questioning the SEPTA witnesses. Communications Director Dave Cackowski spoke on behalf of the organization at the Philadelphia hearing.

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Don't miss an issue of the DVRP— make sure your DVARP membership is renewed!

Please check the mailing label on the back of your newsletter to see if we have received and recorded your 2001 membership renewal. If it says RENEW NOW, use the coupon on page 15 to renew today.

Schedule Change Alert

R8 Chestnut Hill West construction, new timetables effective June 4.

New SEPTA City Transit Division schedules expected to take effect June 17

From the Editor's Seat **Forward, Into the Past?**

Fifteen years ago or so, when I first joined DVARP, we had just completed a remarkably detailed study of opportunities for new or restored passenger rail service in the greater Philadelphia area. It was quite a wish list, including things like the branch up to Northeast Philadelphia Airport and of course restoring the Reading, Newtown, and Quakertown services that had just been cut by SEPTA.

We called it the Year 2000 Study, and it was subtitled "For an Energy-Short Scenario" (scenario happens to be a 50 cent word meaning a prediction of the future). At the time, that was a pretty smart thing to be thinking about. We weren't too many years removed from the oil embargo and from gas rationing, and there was plenty of reason to believe it could happen again, and to be prepared.

But instead, oil supplies rose and prices fell. The imperative for a vast expansion of public transportation systems was lost. Instead we got an decade of federal budget deficits and reduced spending that affects us to this day. While we never put it into the title of a report, DVARP's policy recommendations were based on a more realistic 'capital-short' scenario.

In studies like our Cross-County study, we stressed the attainable rather than the ideal, even as we still wished there would be enough funding for all the service envisioned in our Year 2000 study. Much as we wished it would have been proven wrong, the underinvestment in new or restored SEPTA service in the past twenty years has validated our belief in the capital-short scenario.

The realistic capital-short scenario also was instrumental in our position on the Schuylkill Valley project, but not the only consideration. On the other hand, SEPTA's position is based on an assumption that they can get two billion dollars of free money. Even if they could, there's still the issue of whether the region can afford to wait seven years or more for this service. Just ask the folks in Phoenixville.

With gas prices going up and energy shortages in the news again, you might wonder if it's time to dust off that energy-short scenario. I don't think it is. There's no sign of an interruption in our oil supply, even from the Middle East, and even though we need to do more in the way of energy conservation, no politician, Republican or Democrat, is going to call for the kind of measures any time soon that would make that line in Northeast Philadelphia viable again. Remember what happened to Jimmy Carter. And by historic standards, gas isn't all that expensive anyway. It just looks that way after years of cheap oil.

So my prediction is for continued growth in transit ridership, but nobody coming with a magic wand to put passenger rail lines everywhere: we're stuck with a capital-short scenario for the foreseeable future.

Forward into the Past

The Inquirer wonders why Americans aren't flocking to these 'neotraditional' housing developments that are becoming popular with builders. Much as I'd like to say it must be the fact that there's no train station in the center of town, I think it's that communities are like trees in that they need good roots and need support when they're growing up. Just like you can't just plant a full-grown tree in your yard, you can't just put up the buildings and expect it to be a community immediately. Not to mention that a train station and good passenger rail service gives focus to the center of a community.—MDM

Coming Up

We're already working on next month's newsletter, which will include a special section on the Amtrak Reform Council's annual report: which proposes to break up Amtrak into separate infrastructure and operating companies, and possibly privatize one or both as well.

In July, we'll report on the findings of SEPTA's long-awaited fare policy study. Nowhere else will you find the kind of in-depth analysis of important rail and transit issues that you get in the DVARP, so make sure you've renewed your DVARP membership, and don't miss an issue!

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Big Amtrak Budget Squeeze

Delays in getting Acela Express service running have hurt Amtrak's bottom line. With a congressional deadline looming closer every day, the company is looking everywhere for places to save money. DVARP has learned that service personnel are being laid off in Pittsburgh, and cuts are reported elsewhere.

The frenetic efforts to balance the budget have stoked numerous rumors, which in turn led to a much-hyped Fox News story claiming Amtrak was days away from bankruptcy. There is a grain of truth to the point: Amtrak is running close to the fiscal edge, and an unlikely chain of events could bring on insolvency, but this isn't all that new. Lots of other American companies rely on borrowed working capital, and if those lines of credit dried up suddenly, there'd not be enough money to pay the bills.

But clearly Amtrak is under great stress this year, and passenger service is going to be affected for the worse. While the new budget submitted by President Bush calls for ending the annual delay in paying half of Amtrak's appropriation, that relief won't come until the new federal fiscal year begins in October.

On the Railroad Lines

Schedule Change Highlights

As usual, the Wilmington Line sees lots of minor schedule changes because of continuing changes in Amtrak schedules. The schedule conflict that kept one train out of Churchmans Crossing has been resolved.

On the Norristown Line, the biggest news is the addition of 100 more parking spaces at Spring Mill, plus stops there for the Schuylkill Valley Flyer.

Chestnut Hill West riders have to carry an unwieldy timetable supplement for a few weeks, until a summer track reconstruction project begins and new schedules go into effect. At that time, mid-day service will be halved to hourly and most trips will take 5 to 10 minutes longer.

No changes were made on the schedules of the Airport Line (R1), R2 Warminster, and R3 Media/Elwyn and West Trenton lines. No changes were made to weekend service on the R2 Marcus Hook/Wilmington/Newark and the R6 Norristown line.

R2

Train 4602 has been slowed 5 minutes. It departs Wilmington at 6:02 am, instead of its old 6:07 am. Train 9212, the Newark Express, has been slowed 2 minutes, departing Newark at 6:52 am, not 6:54 am. Train 0250 has been renumbered 9252, and has a whole new set of times. It departs Newark at 4:48 instead of 5:04. It arrives at Suburban at 6:01 instead of 6:17, and still terminates at Temple, but at 6:10 instead of 6:26. It still makes all stops. Train 4672 has been speeded up 2 minutes, it departs Wilmington at 8:48 pm instead of 8:46 pm, but arrives at Suburban at 9:38, just like before. It skips Eddystone and only Eddystone, as it did before.

Train 7203 has been slowed 4 minutes: It departs Suburban at 5:44 am instead of its old 5:50 am, and arrives in Newark at 6:56 am, instead of its old 6:58 am. Train 9235 has been slowed 5 minutes, it still departs Suburban at 1:27 as before, but arrives at

Wilmington at 2:22 instead of 2:17. The extra minutes are added between Claymont and Wilmington. Train 9241 has new times: a 3:06 departure from Temple instead of its old 3:14; 3:17 at Suburban instead of 3:27, and 4:31 in Newark instead of 4:41.

Train 9243 has been speeded 10 minutes; it still departs Temple at 3:58 but arrives in Newark at 5:18 instead of 5:28. Four minutes of the speed-up is between Market East and Temple, giving the train a 4:09 departure from Suburban instead of a 4:13 departure. Now that conflicts with Amtrak have been resolved, the train can use the right track to stop at Churchmans Crossing (at 5:11). Train 0269 has been slowed 3 minutes: it still departs Suburban at 7:37 pm, but arrives in Wilmington at 8:33 instead of 8:30. Again, the slowing is entirely between Claymont and Wilmington.

R5

On the R5 Paoli/Thorndale, a new reverse commute train numbered 9597 has been added. It begins its trip at 5:30 am at North Broad Station, then departs Suburban Station at 5:43, and operates semi-express to Thorndale, skipping Merion, Narberth, Wynnewood, Rosemont, and Daylesford. It also has connections to 200 series buses at Strafford and Paoli.

A few changes have been made on the Lansdale/Doylestown Line. Train 6512 now departs 30th Street at 5:32 m and is 4 minutes slower now, arriving in Lansdale at 6:34 now, 1 minute later from its previous time. Also, train 578 is slowed 3 minutes on the Paoli side, but speeded up one minute on the way to Lansdale, even with a new stop added at Elkins Park (5:45).

R6

Morning train 661 (the Schuylkill Valley Flyer) now departs Norristown Elm St. 2 minutes earlier at 6:58, instead of 7:00. A new stop at Spring Mill was added at 7:12 am, and the train arrives at Suburban at

7:40, a minute earlier than before. Former Cynwyd train 9654 has joined with former Norristown train 6638 to become one thru train, 0638.

The outbound Schuylkill Valley Flyer (6650) departs at 5:14 from Suburban, the same as before, but finishes at 5:55, a minute later, due to a new stop at Spring Mill at 5:42.

R8

The R8 will not take a new schedule until June 4, where times on the CHW side will be slowed 5-10 minutes per trip for a construction project. But the following changes have been made: Train 897 has been slowed 4 minutes on the CHW side. It departs Suburban at 6:25 am, but arrives at CHW at 6:58, not 6:54. Train 801 slowed 2 minutes, departs Suburban still at 6:48 am, but arrives at CHW at 7:21 am, not 7:19. Train 9829 was pushed up 7 minutes. It departs Temple at 1:04, not 12:57, and arrives in CHW 5 minutes later, at 1:44., not 1:39

Train 855 was slowed 1 minute on the CHW side. It still departs Suburban at 6:47 pm, but arrives in CHW at 7:20, not 7:19. Train 870 was pushed up 4 minutes. It nw departs CHW at 10:43, arrives at Suburban at 11:15, and arrives at Fox Chase at 11:44.

Schedule analysis by Isaac Shomer

Taking a Whirl

SEPTA unveiled another new circulator bus service this month. The WHIRL routes will get R5

Transit News Update

More Than a Token Gesture

Perhaps recalling the token hoarding that accompanied the 1990-91 fare increases, SEPTA is ordering 3.3 million new tokens. This is not enough to replace the existing tokens in circulation, so it does not appear that SEPTA will go to a new token if and when fares increase.

Streamliners Redux

SEPTA is requesting proposals for the remanufacture of 18 PCC cars, with an option for 8 more. The 1947-48 PCCs are to be rebuilt with electronic chopper control, air conditioning, and a wheelchair lift placed in the front half of the center doors. This reconstruction is intended to extend the service life of the PCC another 15 years. The contractor is to choose from the forty or so inactive PCCs stored at Luzerne Depot. No federal funds are to be used in this project, and the specs include such cost-cutting measures as the utilization of seats from SEPTA's retired Volvo articulated buses. As part of this project, Route 15 on Girard Avenue is to resume as a streetcar route. Part of Callowhill Depot will be refurbished as a streetcar barn for Route 15, and for subway-surface Route 10.

riders from Exton station to housing and office developments in West Whiteland Township. Two different routes are operated: the WHIRL Commuter, during peak hours to and from residential areas and offices, and the WHIRL Circulator—which helps office workers get to shopping centers, medical offices and other places of interest, but doesn't stop at the train station.

Like other recent new services, SEPTA put the WHIRL out for competitive bids. Krapf's Coaches won the contract, and will operate it using small 25-foot buses. Fares will be free for the first six months, and \$1.00 after that. West Whiteland Township is sponsoring the free fares; other partners in the program are the Chester County Planning Commission and the TMA of Chester County. A federal CMAQ grant is helping to fund the service.

Everyone's a Safety Ambassador

Robert Buck, Operation Lifesaver coordinator for SEPTA, is getting SEPTA maintenance workers into the rail safety act. Crews working at stations or on crossing signals often witness drivers doing stupid things like stopping cars and trucks on the railroad's right of way. Now they've been given copies of safety pamphlets they can pull out of their pockets and slap on the offender's windshield. We hope this practice gets repeated here and around the country.

The fleet of refurbished PCCs is tentatively scheduled to enter service no later than 2003.

Newtown Shuttles Axed

As DVARP predicted, Routes 301 and 302, which replaced the long-lived but unsuccessful Fox Chase-Newtown shuttle, were canceled last month because of low ridership. Extended service on Routes 24 and 130 will meet some riders needs, but restoring train service to Newtown will be necessary for SEPTA to make a dent in traffic in this now-developed section of Bucks County.

New Schedules

The April schedule change brought added service to several Frontier routes, including added early-morning trips on the 94, 96, and 201, and late-night trips on the 96 and 201. Morning service on other routes have been moved up a few minutes for more reliable connections, so don't miss the bus, call 215-580-7777 for full details and new schedules.

On the weekends, service has been added to several routes, most notably the 203, which links the R3 Woodbourne station with Oxford Valley Mall and the Sesame Place theme park.

Concert Buses Return

SEPTA's special service to the Mann Music Center is back for another season. Several improvements have been made: the route now serves the Convention Center (at the Marriott hotel Phlash stop), and a discount fare is available to SEPTA passholders.

Buses leave Rittenhouse Square at 6:20 on concert nights, stop at the Marriott at 6:35, and make commuter rail connections (16th-17th and JFK) at 6:37 before running express to the Mann. The fare is \$3.00 each way, with a dollar off if you have a pass. Tickets for the Philadelphia Orchestra (including lawn seats are now available at the gate, so take a spur-of-the moment night off, pack a picnic, and get some culture with your dinner!

News compiled by Matthew Mitchell and correspondents: Howard Bender, Bob Clearfield, John Dawson, Tony DeSantis, Phil Fraulino, Michael Greene, Scott Maits, Don Nigro, Creighton Rabs, Owen Robotino, Isaac Shomer

Additional news from CSND Railnews Network, NARP, National Corridors Initiative, Philadelphia Inquirer, Railpace, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, Trains

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Fare Proposal

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RRD fare cut puzzling

Most of DVARP's cross-examination of the SEPTA witnesses pertained to the proposal to decrease fares on four commuter rail lines by accepting city transit passes for travel on those trains at all times. The effect of the proposal would be a 23 percent fare decrease for some riders, and an even higher decrease for riders switching from nearby zone 3 stations to the affected lines.

While the questioning was intense, it remained civil and respectful, even on matters where DVARP and SEPTA disagree. Because getting answers was our goal rather than embarrassing SEPTA in public, we alerted SEPTA of our plan to question them at length several days in advance.

Official DVARP Statement

SEPTA's Fare Proposal—Too High and Too Uneven

Fiscal Year 2002 Operating Budget and Fare Proposal Hearing—May 16, 2001

The Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers (DVARP) is the region's largest and oldest organized ridership group. The association has 660 annual dues-paying members. Our primary focus is the cost-effective improvement and expansion of passenger rail service in the region. Our non-profit, non-partisan organization has a diverse group of experts among our officers and volunteers.

SEPTA's Planning and Operations—Not Serious Enough About Change

Given the numerous continued and documented inefficiencies of the system, SEPTA is clearly not serious enough about change.

The Federal Transit Administration evidences that SEPTA runs the slowest commuter railroad in the country—24 percent slower than the national average. A faster railroad would attract additional revenue and save operating costs.

Since John Leary has become General Manager, SEPTA has closed not one of its least utilized commuter rail stations. This inaction is contrary to the 1997 recommendation of the Phoenix Management Services' business audit of SEPTA to eliminate lightly utilized stations so as to gain travel time improvements, attract additional revenue and save operating costs.

Thanks to our volunteers

The following volunteers were part of the effort that researched and delivered our fare and budget testimony. We couldn't have done it without them.

- Michael Greene
- John Dawson
- Tony DeSantis
- Isaac Shomer
- Matthew Mitchell
- Don Nigro
- Patricia Nigro
- Creighton Rabs

SEPTA also has ignored Phoenix's recommendation to change the stopping pattern on bus and most trolley routes from the current one of every block to one of every two to three blocks. Such inaction ignores an opportunity to gain travel time improvements, attract additional revenue and save operating costs.

Bus and trolley boarding and alighting is slow because SEPTA does not insist or even encourage passengers to exit from the rear so that boarding would not be delayed. If embraced by SEPTA, the buses and trolleys would gain travel time improvements, attract additional revenue and save operating costs.

The management of SEPTA is also rife with inefficiencies that do not pertain directly to travel time. Employees like subway cashiers and street supervisors are not being well utilized, but SEPTA has done nothing to re-examine and reform these aspects of the operation. Despite all of the money that is funneled toward the effort, SEPTA's employees are poorly supervised. Many railroad conductors lack hustle. Too many buses operate ahead of schedule. The result is unreliable service, a discouraged public, and less revenue for SEPTA. Instead of fully addressing inefficiencies such as these, SEPTA is reflexively and exclusively reaching for a fare increase.

SEPTA's Fare System Is Customer Hostile

The 1997 Phoenix report recommended that SEPTA "evaluate, select and implement a new fare collection system." In 1999, SEPTA began fare collection and fare policy studies. At SEPTA's invitation, DVARP participated on the advisory committee to the fare policy study. With much good work having been undertaken, we are disappointed and highly critical that SEPTA's new fare structure is being proposed before the release of the two fare study reports. There are many aspects about SEPTA's present fare collection system that is customer-hostile. A more user-friendly system would:

- A. Offer single trip intermodal fares between the railroad and the other divisions;
- B. Offer convenient interagency fares;
- C. Permit payment for multi-transfer and multi-zone trips in a single transaction; and
- D. Have all fare instrument costs set at amounts that are evenly divisible by 25 cents so as to simplify the handling of change.

These are the capabilities needed by riders and potential riders which are currently lacking in the system. SEPTA has failed to propose any meaningful changes. Instead, what the authority advocates in terms of fare policy and collection appears to be driven for the convenience of management rather than for the convenience of the customer. This is particularly demonstrated in SEPTA's obsession with reducing the number of zones at the expense of having the fare closely correlated with the value of the trip. Such flattening of the fare structure reduces its economic efficiency and forces everyone to pay higher fares to make up for it.

The Proposed Fare Increase Is Too High and Too Uneven

The proposed 60 cent transfer charge is at least twice that of any of the operators that SEPTA evaluated in the fare policy study peer comparison. It also amounts to a 50 percent increase over the current 40 cents charge. This will do even more to discourage riders from transferring between bus and subway routes and will result in additional SEPTA expense given how bus has a higher cost of operation per passenger mile than does rail transit. To avoid high transfer charges, passengers will stay on their bus for the entire length of the trip.

The increase in transfer fare shows how fundamentally flawed the SEPTA fare structure is. Passengers make transfers because they can't get a one-seat ride to their destination. Just the act of transferring is a significant deterrent to transit ridership. Add on a stiff fare penalty, and hardly anyone will be willing to make transfer trips unless they have no choice. That's why the rule of thumb in the industry is to charge the minimum amount possible for transfers: just enough to deter abuse (i.e., people taking free transfers and selling them on the street).

Of course things are different at SEPTA. Here the transfer functions as a surrogate zone fare; in part because SEPTA thinks that it is politically impossible to charge zone fares within Philadelphia like it does in the suburbs.

So while the stiff transfer fare means riders going from Northeast and Northwest Philadelphia to Center City do pay more than riders going from North Philadelphia to Center City, it has unintended bad consequences. In particular, it discourages riders from using the subway and el for the trunk-haul part of their trips. By staying on the bus and riding all the way to Center City, they will save 60 cents.

Buses work best as feeders to rail routes, picking up lots of people for shorter trips. Consider SEPTA's own route-by-route cost-efficiency reports showing that the most successful routes are feeder lines like the 6 and 52, while long-haul lines like 20 and 58 do poorly.

DVARP urges that the proposed transfer charge be reduced. We recommend a transfer fare of 25 cents. For transfer charges that serve as surrogate zone charges such as at Frankford Terminal, DVARP recommends a transfer charge of 50 cents.

The proposed \$1.90 base fare is obscene. It will be the second highest in the nation, and it dissuades potential new riders from ever starting to use the system. Generally, no first-time rider uses a pass or a token fare instrument. Instead, he or she almost always pays with cash. Having such a high hurdle for the first time discourages potential regular patrons of the system from ever becoming such. Besides, the ride is just not worth \$1.90. That fare coupled with the proposed 60 cent transfer charge pushes the roundtrip cost up to \$5.00—a 25% increase over the present \$4.00 cost.

DVARP urges that the proposed base fare charge be reduced to \$1.75. This would amount to a nine percent increase over the present base fare.

There is reckless planning and gross inequities in the proposed railroad pass fares. SEPTA proposes that commuters on the four lines completely or predominantly inside the city, Cynwyd, Chestnut Hill West and East, and Fox Chase, would be able to use a City Transit Division TransPass for their fare. This represents a 23 percent decrease from the current zone two TrailPass.

To make up for the lost revenue, SEPTA proposes increasing the pass rates on the other nine lines more steeply than other fares. The proposed TrailPass price increases are all about 15 percent, while the City TransPass goes up 9 percent. The proposed 23 percent discount for some railroad commuters while others would incur a 15 percent increase is a huge disparity. Presently, daily commuters pay \$91.50 for a monthly pass whether they board the train, for example, at Wissinoming, Wissahickon, Lansdowne or Chestnut Hill. Should the proposed fare increase be adopted, the Chestnut Hill patrons would see a reduction to \$70.00 while the others would pay \$106 for a monthly pass. This is grossly unfair. Why should commuters from Doylestown, Norristown, Media or Torresdale have to pay \$17 to \$21 more a month while Chestnut Hill commuters get a \$21.50 monthly discount? It is such a steep discount for some that is forcing a such steep railroad pass increase for others. The proposed TrailPass increase of 15 percent is two-thirds higher than the proposed TransPass increase of nine percent.

In response to DVARP questioning, SEPTA management admitted that it expects no substantial increase in ridership on the four lines, despite the drastic fare reductions. This and the last-minute nature of the addition to the fare proposal reinforces our conclusion that it is included for political or public relations value. Fare simplification cannot be the explanation. Under the proposal, the railroad still has six zones. Under the proposal, the four lines at issue continue to have two zones for the less frequently used fare instruments. SEPTA management must not be allowed use a permanent revenue giveaway to solve a short-term image problem.

While we agree that parking constraints limit the potential ridership increase on these lines, we think SEPTA is wrong in assuming there will be no adverse effects on SEPTA or the communities served by these lines. Based on experiences elsewhere, we anticipate that incentives of \$400 to \$600 or more per year will indeed cause some commuters to change their travel patterns. While total parking at the affected stations will not increase, those lots will fill up much earlier in the morning, crowding existing commuters out and ultimately off the system. Even if there is a cascade effect of passengers taking parking places in the lots that others have vacated, this supposedly 'best case' scenario means more vehicle-miles of auto travel by commuters as well as a loss of revenue to SEPTA. A scenario where SEPTA actually loses ridership because of this shortsighted decision is quite plausible. We must question whether a management that would propose a measure like this is putting its own expediency ahead of the mission of SEPTA and the good of the citizens it is supposed to serve.

DVARP urges that the proposed TrailPass fare increases be reduced to that of no more than nine percent over current fares. DVARP also urges SEPTA to move closer towards—and not further from—a fare structure that is consistent across political boundaries, a fare structure that is governed, without prejudice, by zones—not only for the Railroad Division but also for the transit divisions.

Both the proposed TrailPass fare and the transfer charge increases widen the inequities in the fare structure rather than reducing them. Over the years, DVARP has championed economic efficiency in SEPTA's fare structure. By this, DVARP is referring to tailoring fares to the value of service provided. When SEPTA charges too little for some of its services, it loses revenue and has to raise fares for other services even more. When SEPTA charges too much for some of its services, riders will stay away or use other routes, even if they cost SEPTA more to operate. Fares should be consistent across arbitrary political boundaries, and a consistent premium should be charged for premium service. In the case of railroad fares, they should be higher than bus fares given the railroad's relatively fast service and its seats for all policy.

South Jersey Report

Tuckahoe Service Gains Support

A May 8 public meeting, held at the South Jersey Railroad Museum in Tuckahoe, explored ways to fund rehabilitation of 14 miles of track between that town and Cape May County Park. Rehabilitation would enable extension of Cape May Seashore Lines passenger trains, which now travel 13 miles between the Park and Cape May City.

Hoping to spur the local economy and preserve local history, the meeting was sponsored by the Greater Tuckahoe Area Merchants Association and the Upper Township Historical Society. Bob Riggins of the Association commenced the meeting, recognizing the various public officials and organizations present, including DVARP.

The funding issue was addressed by a local state assemblyman, Nicholas Asselta. In office since 1995, Asselta is sponsoring a General Assembly bill for \$3.6 million to rehabilitate the track. Also sponsored by senior assemblyman Alex DeCroce and co-sponsor John Gibson, Bill A1645 was introduced in January 2000 and has, for more than a year, been referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. With many pending bills to consider, the Committee needs public support to give the track rehabilitation bill priority and send it to the Assembly floor for further action. Notably, the bill identifies CMSL as operator of the state-owned track, referring to "rehabilitation of the Cape May Seashore Lines' main rail track" between mileposts at the Park and Tuckahoe, as well as additional, future track rehabilitation to a connection with the Atlantic City Rail Line.

Assemblyman Asselta urged those in attendance to contact the Appropriations Committee Chair, Richard H. Bagger, and request that the committee post the bill for action by the General Assembly. Because the State Senate must pass a corresponding bill, he also suggested contacting local Senator James S. Cafiero, sponsor of companion Senate Bill S1326. To further indicate public interest, he asked that copies of such correspondence be sent to NJ Transit Executive Director Jeffrey A. Warsh and State Transportation Commissioner James Weinstein. Senator Cafiero, present at the meeting, voiced his intent to usher the companion bill through the Senate. To show the depth of support and guard against a funding shortfall, Asselta recommended that interested parties form a financial partnership, advancing funds to supplement the state contribution.

Promoting his railroad, CMSL President Tony Macrie cheered the group with news of growing ridership, including a discernible increase since the recent opening of Cape May City's expanded Transportation Center. Explaining the need to rehabilitate the little-

used track south of Tuckahoe, he pointed to problems including dense brush, deteriorating ties and bridges, and ballast erosion from off-road vehicles. To garner support from local businesses, he expressed hopes of carrying freight on the line, a service last provided by the Southern Railroad of New Jersey in the 1990s. To allay fears of increased traffic, he pointed out his trains' ability to carry bicycles. Promising to breathe life into Tuckahoe's dormant rail facilities, he discussed plans to add storage tracks and, in response to a question, hopes of refurbishing the switch tower to match the recently restored station.

Paul Mulligan of NJ-ARP underscored the potential economic benefits to Tuckahoe, proposing that tour buses use the location to transfer their riders to passenger trains. Both Macrie and Mulligan stressed the trains' ability to provide "real transportation," challenging the tourist train image which has dogged the CMSL.

Representatives of lineside towns also welcomed the track rehabilitation effort. One, from Dennis Township, hoped to recover the Dennisville station, now located at Historic Smithville, and set up a tour of historic homes over new sidewalks built for rail-bound visitors. Another, from Woodbine, wanted freight service and cited local traffic sources including a landfill, mining operations, and a propane importer.

In the meantime, pressure is mounting to extend the Route 55 freeway, which provides the most direct highway link from Philadelphia to Cape May but now discharges traffic onto busy, two-lane Route 47 near Port Elizabeth. The extension of Route 55 some 22 miles to the Garden State Parkway would cost \$500 million or more and be fraught with environmental problems. This controversial project has recently fueled debate on the letters page of the *Press of Atlantic City*. The alternative of passenger rail service has been absent from the debate, except when one writer cynically asked "Who would use it?"

In response, passenger rail advocates can argue that an extended, upgraded CMSL, especially with a connection to the Atlantic City Rail Line, would be a viable, cost effective alternative to extending Route 55. Those resident in the Garden State can heed Assemblyman Asselta and press for rehabilitation of the CMSL route to Tuckahoe.—OR

Where to write

Individual New Jersey Assemblymen you might want to write to, including Nicholas Asselta and Richard H. Bagger, can be contacted at: New Jersey General Assembly, State House, P.O. Box 098, Trenton, NJ 08625-0098 (adding to the address the name of the individual Assemblyman being contacted). Individual New Jersey State Senators, including James S. Cafiero, can be contacted at the New Jersey

Senate, State House, P.O. Box 099, Trenton, NJ 08625-0099 (adding to the address the name of the individual Senator being contacted).

Addresses for the NJ Transit and NJDOT heads are:
Jeffrey A. Warsh, Executive Director
NJ Transit, One Penn Plaza East
Newark, NJ 07105-2246

Mr. James Weinstein, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Transportation
1035 Parkway Avenue. CN 600
Trenton, NJ 08625

Up and Down the Corridor

compiled by Tony DeSantis

MBTA Announces New Station

Boston's commuter rail system has a new Old Colony Line stop at JFK/UMass Station on the Red Line in Dorchester. The station will save time and money for hundreds of students and individuals who need to access the area. Limited service at the station will be provided by trains on the Middleboro/ Lakeville Line and the Plymouth/Kingston Line. All weekend service on both branches will stop at the station.

New Service To Newport

In April 2001, NJ Transit will begin operating direct service on the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail on the Bayonne Branch to Newport Station originating at East 34th Street Station in Bayonne. Direct service on the West Side Branch originating from Westside Avenue Station in Jersey City and serving Newport Station was launched in November 2000.

PATH Fleet to be Renewed

A recent budget announcement by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey includes new PATH cars to replace equipment now approaching 40 years old. Also, 95 more recent cars will be overhauled. Platforms will have to be lengthened for longer trains, so PATH can accommodate increasing passenger demand.

Granite State Gains

A bi-state coalition of legislators is seeking funding to extend MBTA's Lowell commuter rail line to Nashua, New Hampshire. The 11-mile extension would cost \$21.5 million (Schuylkill Valley Metro planners take note), though some stations may be excluded from the total. If built, the extension would reduce the number of out-of-state commuters who now drive to Lowell to catch the train (just like NJ Transit has a problem with Pennsylvania commuters).

Headaches in Hoboken

A year-long project to rebuild the north tube of the Bergen Tunnels begins next month. The tunnels are just outside NJ Transit's Hoboken Terminal. The tunnel is 124 years old and is badly deteriorated, though not unsafe. Breaks in the tunnel lining that permit water to leak in will be repaired, among other work.

To accommodate work, 11 weekday trains have been eliminated from the schedule, and schedules of more than a hundred others have been adjusted, including the Waterfront Connection trains from Newark and Trenton. NJT has worked hard to make sure riders are aware of the project, and to mitigate its impact on commuters.

NARP Region 3 Meets in Pittsburgh

by John A. Dawson

It has been eight years since Region 3 (DE, NJ, PA) last met in Pittsburgh, and that meeting was enlivened with an unexpected visit from Rick Santorum, then the local Representative in Congress. This time we had no such fireworks, but we did have a number of issues peculiar to the western end of Pennsylvania to talk about. And it was opening day for the new PNC Park, with the Pirates playing an exhibition game.

A train ride to Pittsburgh is a delightful way to spend a weekend. The scenery is magnificent, and once there, you have an opportunity to ride some lengthy light rail lines or take an inclined plane up to Mount Washington. But it is a long way from Philadelphia, and while it provided an opportunity for locals to attend a NARP meeting, unfortunately few from the eastern end of the state or Delaware, and none from New Jersey, chose to attend.

Ever since the Broadway Limited was replaced by the Three Rivers, at that time an all-coach train, western Pennsylvanians have felt they have been given short shrift by Amtrak. With the once-heralded PRR main line through Ohio and Indiana downgraded to a dark secondary, and the sleepers and diners gone, ridership declined and Pittsburgh became a backwater stop in the Amtrak network. Never mind that Conrail had rebuilt the line east to Harrisburg and that it was now in the best shape it had been in decades, and that Amtrak had initiated the Capitol Ltd., direct service to Washington using bilevel Superliner equipment. But the New York train was poorly equipped as Amtrak had saw fit to direct its limited resources elsewhere.

The Pennsylvanian was extended westward to Chicago, giving Pittsburghers three trains to the

Midwest, but the schedule required early departures from and late arrivals at the end points, although it did open the possibility of business trips to Pittsburgh from the east. Then with Norfolk Southern and CSX carving up Conrail, schedules went to pot and late (often very late) trains became the norm.

Now in its latest move, Amtrak has dismissed four of its seven car inspectors at Pittsburgh. These are the people that not only water and service the trains during their layover in Pittsburgh, but inspect the cars for safety defects and make minor repairs to keep the cars in service and the passengers comfortable. With only three inspectors left, they will be able to do little more than basic servicing. Arriving cars with known problems will be set out of service, thereby inconveniencing passengers, and even worse, cars with undiscovered defects could pose safety problems.

Further, this move blocks adding any trains that originate or terminate at Pittsburgh, all trains currently run through, as the FRA requires a full inspection at all terminal points. It does seem to be a shortsighted move with safety and customer satisfaction implications. And it also indicates that Amtrak is looking hard for places to cut costs.

The principal speaker, Scott Leonard from NARP's Washington office, reviewed the financial history of rail passenger operations. In 1950 the private railroads still supported their passenger service and government spending on other modes was relatively modest. In 1971 Amtrak took over the passenger service, inheriting rundown equipment and facilities from the railroads who were eager to exit the passenger train business. Although government investment in airway and highway facilities was now soaring, Amtrak's capital and operating expenses were held to a minimum. Leonard noted that while countries in western Europe spend about 20% of their transportation capital on rail, the U.S. spends only about 0.4%. Amtrak would like to see this climb to 2.5%.

For FY02 Amtrak is asking for its full authorization of \$955M. The Bush administration has proposed keeping the budget at last year's level, \$521M, but it has also proposed to advance the money immediately, rather than delaying a portion to the following year, in effect raising FY02 spending to \$834M. The High Speed Rail Investment Act would allow Amtrak to sell \$12B worth of bonds over ten years. The act stands a good chance of passage in the Senate, with all six of the senators from the tri-state region supporting the bill, and it will be introduced shortly in the House.

The Amtrak Reform Council (ARC) has expressed the following concerns:

- Amtrak is both an operator and a vehicle for capital investment;
- Ownership of the Northeast Corridor diverts Amtrak from its core business of operating passenger trains;
- Oversight is divided between too many agencies; and
- There is no secure source of capital funding.

The ARC has advocated separating ownership of rail lines from operation, but it is not clear how this would help absent additional investment. *[editor's note: look for a special report on this proposal and the possible privatization of Amtrak in next month's DVRRP]*

Leonard noted that Amtrak's critics tend to use cumulative numbers, rather than annual numbers, when making their case. This, of course, makes the numbers look as large as possible, but it is a practice they do not follow with respect to programs they support. By the way, while Amtrak was originally created as a for-profit operation, this language was later removed from Amtrak's enabling legislation, a fact which also seems to elude Amtrak's critics.

He also stated that freight was not yielding as much return to Amtrak as anticipated. The reasons are not clear, but Amtrak may have overreached. This writer did note that the westbound Three Rivers he took on Friday carried six material handling cars (box cars), a mail car and twelve RoadRailers; and the return trip on Sunday carried five MHCs, a mail car, and 17 RoadRailers. He also noted that the eastbound Pennsylvanian on Saturday night had 27 freight cars in its consist, the maximum permitted. Someone ought to be making money somewhere.

What Next, Amtrak?

by John A. Dawson

NARP attracted a distinguished lineup of speakers to its spring directors' meeting held in Washington, DC., a list that included Senator Max Cleland (D-GA); George Warrington, Amtrak CEO; Norman Y. Mineta, U.S. Secretary of Transportation; Paul M. Weyrich, Vice Chair of the Amtrak Reform Council; Lou Thompson, Railways Advisor to the World Bank; and Vukan Vuchic, Professor of Transportation at the University of Pennsylvania (and a longtime DVRRP member).

What made the discussion interesting was the diversity of viewpoints expressed about where Amtrak should go from here, or more generally, strategies to preserve passenger rail service in the U.S. As we well know, Amtrak is under the gun to become operationally self-sufficient by 2003. If it fails, the Amtrak Reform Council has a legislative mandate to prepare a plan to liquidate the railroad.

Cleland, Warrington, and Vuchic, while differing on the details, generally supported the traditional or mainstream view that we should provide Amtrak with the capital support it needs to maintain and modernize its rolling stock and fixed infrastructure, as well as to develop high-speed corridors around the country. This view relies on maintaining more or less the existing institutional relationships, but pushing aggressively the expansion of corridor services, while preserving a connecting network of long-distance trains.

Weyrich and Thompson brought decidedly different views to the table. Weyrich is a noted conservative who strongly supports public transportation and intercity rail service, a stance which has been helpful in defusing the partisan aspects of the debate. While supporting Amtrak as an institution, he advocates spinning off responsibility for ownership and maintenance of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) to a new organization. He feels the NEC is a bottomless pit absorbing all of Amtrak's available capital. In his view, Amtrak should primarily be an operator of passenger trains running on tracks owned and maintained by other organizations.

When British Rail was privatized, responsibilities for track maintenance and train operation were separated and awarded to separate companies. Opinions on the results of this policy range from disastrous to beneficial, depending on who you are listening to. However, there does seem to be a consensus, that at best, it has proven to be a mixed blessing. It is important to note that Weyrich is not pushing privatization, but rather separating responsibilities.

The World Bank makes development loans to third world countries, and Lou Thompson serves as its principal advisor when rating the merits of requests for rail investment. After noting that about 40% of the world's passenger rail traffic is in India or China, he focused on developments in Latin America, where, except for Cuba, state-operated railroads are a relic of the past. While details vary by country, the common route taken has been to decide how much service was to be provided at specified prices, and then to request bids from private operators of how much subsidy they would require to run their piece of the network.

Although this privatized the operation, the operator was not expected to run its passenger service at a profit, but rather was expected to hold the public subsidy to a minimum. Thompson expounded at length on the benefits this has brought to suburban rail service, noting that Buenos Aires now enjoys better and more service today than it ever had under the state-run system. However, he did state in response to a question that Latin America has lost about 80% of its intercity service, an outcome that

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most of us would not want to see repeated here. As background, it should be noted that Latin American rail service was traditionally provided for the poor, often at great loss, with relatively few luxury services. The more affluent generally flew, drove, or used express buses.

It appears that we will be entering a period of uncertainty about where we should go with our intercity rail service, and the debate is just beginning. I personally believe that we do not gain much by continually rearranging the institutional pieces. Instead, we need a period of relative stability with adequate capital support. Saying that the NEC is a black hole is just saying that it is capital intensive. These needs are going to be there, regardless of whether Amtrak or some other organization manages the corridor.

If a separate NEC corporation were established, it might prove very difficult to obtain a significant level of federal support, and I shudder to think about the problems that would be encountered in trying to reach agreement with eight states and the District of Columbia over how the NEC should be managed and supported.

Returning to more immediate strategies, passage of the High-Speed Rail Investment Act is considered essential if Amtrak is to stand any chance of meeting the Congressional deadline for operational self-sufficiency. Chances for passage look better than ever, but are no means assured. In the Senate the bill has to first clear the Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee, a committee chaired by John McCain (R-AZ), who is philosophically opposed to Amtrak's existence. However, Senator Cleland (D-GA) told us he believed that McCain will call the bill up, hold a hearing, and allow a vote. A companion bill is expected shortly in the House.

DOT Secretary Mineta indicated that the Administration has not yet established its position with respect to the bill. This probably means that it is not yet on Bush's radar screen, but hopefully he would not oppose a bill enjoying a significant level of support from Republican members of Congress.

Region 3 (DE, NJ, PA) was well represented at the meeting, with Doug Bowen, John Dawson, Paul Hart, Larry Joyce, George McCallum, Al Papp, and Sharon Shneyer in attendance.

***Don't miss next month's feature
on restructuring Amtrak!
Make sure your DVARP membership
is renewed for 2001***

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Amtrak News

North Philly Loses Ticket Office

One of the casualties of Amtrak's austerity program (page 3) is the ticket office in North Philadelphia station. It was closed last month. Elevators there also have been taken out of service due to vandalism. It is not known when they will be working again.

Rumor has it that while the Metropolitan Lounges at 30th Street and other major stations won't be closed, you will need to pay a membership fee to use them. Presently, holders of a special Executive Privileges card can use the lounge when they show a same-day Metroliner ticket.

FEC Deal Done

After months of negotiations, Amtrak has finally made a ten-year deal to serve important coastal destinations in Florida including St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, and Cape Canaveral. Amtrak will reroute some of its Miami service onto the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) once station, track, and signal improvements are completed. Florida DOT will coordinate funding for the projects.

Passenger service over the FEC is expected to start next summer, with a second round-trip on the route added by 2004 or 2005. Eventually, Amtrak service through Florida will be doubled to six trips a day: two on the coast to Miami, two to Tampa via Orlando, one to Miami via Orlando, and one to Tampa via Ocala.

4200 Horsepower Enough?

That service to Daytona is going to be even more welcome now that Amtrak has extended its sports-related marketing to NASCAR auto racing. Besides sponsoring one of the cars, Amtrak is going to run a special train from New York and Philadelphia to the race in Dover June 3. Amtrak promises a special occasion, and will even decorate the train in a NASCAR theme.

More seriously, taking the train will be a great way to avoid the well-known traffic jams on race day in Dover. DelDOT deserves recognition for seeing the opportunity and making arrangements with Amtrak for the service. Call 1-800-441-RACE for tickets and more information, or call Amtrak. If the reservations agent isn't aware of the Dover train, NARP says to mention Arrow code G/PRO/DVR.

New Acelas Include Weekend Trip

More Acela Express trips were added to the schedule last month, including the first two pairs of weekend trains. On weekdays, the addition amounted to another two Boston-New York round trips. Philadelphia gets one more frequency, though. The

non-stop morning express from Washington to New York was not doing well enough ridership-wise to justify skipping Philadelphia.

More schedule changes and Acela Express service will be coming all summer, so Amtrak passengers should be alert. DVARP's online schedule project is keeping up with the frequent changes, or you can visit www.amtrak.com or call 1-800-USA-RAIL for latest schedules.

Acela Express on-time performance has been admirable, especially considering the rough first weeks of operation. Through the first five months, it has been on-time 93 percent of the time (using the 15-minute standard of its airline competition). Hidden in the figures is a promising sign: nearly 30 percent of trains were 10 minutes early or more at their final destination, suggesting that a schedule speed-up is possible.

Bikes at Night

A baggage car has been restored to the Twilight Shoreliner (which many of us still think of as the Night Owl). It will now include a bicycle rack such as is found on the Vermonter. For a few dollars, passengers can reserve a space for their bikes when they buy their tickets.

Wire Work Finally Underway

Replacement of the nearly century-old catenary over Northeast Corridor tracks between the Connecticut state line and New Haven has started. The design and condition of the wires limits train speeds on that part of the corridor. Because work will be done mostly at night while full service is maintained, the project will take at least eight years. The 180 track-mile job will cost \$300 million.

Amtrak Likely to Stop at Airport

Amtrak has announced that it plans to serve the Newark Airport station once schedules and other details are worked out with New Jersey Transit and the Port Authority. The station is expected to open this fall. Airline check-in counters will be located at the rail station, so passengers can check their baggage, catch the airport monorail, and proceed right to the terminal gates. Delaware Valley flyers heading overseas may find the new station especially appealing.

Yet Another Maine Line Delay

Rail advocates can only mumble words of frustration, as it has become clear that Amtrak won't be able to meet a summer start-up target for service from Boston to Portland, Maine. Now fall is the best anyone's hoping for. Track rebuilding is supposed to be completed next month, and looks on schedule, but local communities have had trouble reaching agreement with line owner Guilford Rail Systems on leases

for station sites. Legal liability issues are to blame. Without those deals made, work to build station platforms cannot begin.

Amnotes

An important but unheralded safety project is going on in New England. Six areas where the Northeast Corridor travels through rock cuts will be stabilized using concrete or steel nets, to keep boulders from coming loose and falling on the tracks where they could cause a high-speed derailment.

Elsewhere in New England, CSX is working on the old Boston and Albany line used by the Boston section of the Lake Shore Limited. As a result, the east bound Lake Shore will terminate at Albany, with passengers taken by bus to their final destination. The train continues to Boston later, when the maintenance window is over, and train 449 operates from Boston normally. The disruption will continue into early June.

Stamford has been added as a stop for some Acela Express trains. Many large corporations have moved their headquarters to that part of Connecticut, and Amtrak is angling to get their executives on board the trains.

As expected, HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson has resigned his seat on Amtrak's board of directors. Thompson was an active and enthusiastic board member while governor of Wisconsin, but his seat needed to be freed for new DOT Secretary Norman Mineta.

A CSX track maintenance blitz is forcing Amtrak to terminate the Sunset Limited in New Orleans for a week in late June/early July. No alternate transportation to or from Orlando will be provided. NARP is taking credit for convincing Amtrak not to terminate the train in San Antonio and strand even more passengers. A permanent change in days of operation for the tri-weekly Sunset has also taken effect.

Commuter Rail Shows Highest Annual Patronage

Across the country, more and more Americans are watching traffic congestion from a distance as they travel in the comfort and convenience of a commuter rail train. In the year 2000, commuter rail ridership went up by 5.2 percent, as compared to the previous year, according to the American Public Transportation Association. A total of 411 million rides were taken on commuter rail trains in 2000, the highest number of trips since national commuter rail statistics were first recorded in 1980.

Light Rail Changed Attitudes

Addressing the Denver Transit Alliance Conference on April 13, 2001, Mayor Rocky Anderson told of the light rail success story in Salt Lake City. He called this a "baptism by light rail" which resulted in

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the passing of a transit tax to fund more light rail and buses and next, the development of a commuter rail system. TRAX now carries 20,000 on weekdays and more on weekends. These passengers are coming from all walks of life. Public transit has an effect that in his mind is more important than saving money.

CSX Off the Hook

A year after failing an FRA track standards audit, CSX has rectified most of the problems with rails being out of gauge or otherwise undermaintained. Many of those problems were in former Conrail territory around Philadelphia. A new long-term agreement between the government and the railroad was signed, providing for oversight of CSX maintenance procedures.

Slower Times for Loco Builder

General Electric is laying off another 10 percent of its employees at the locomotive factory in Erie. After several years of record sales driven by railroad mergers and new AC technology (plus Amtrak orders), orders for diesel locomotives have fell, necessitating the job cuts. G.E. still employs 4,600 people in Erie, and expects to roll out about 600 high-tech locomotives this year, including a strong export business.

Nets Unsuccessful

The experiment with big drop-down nets at railroad crossings in Illinois is being terminated. High maintenance costs and damage to vehicles driven by people ignoring the flashing lights and trying to get across before the nets came down are being blamed for the decision.

Locomotives Come Through

The modern diesel locomotive is essentially an electric generator on wheels, so the current shortfall in electric capacity has led several short line railroads to help out by hooking up idle engines to the power grid. Spot market prices for electricity have gone up to the point where locomotive-generated power is profitable. A typical 3000 HP diesel can generate 1.6 megawatts, enough to serve over 1,000 homes.

A spokesman for Montana Rail Link says his company benefits twice from the generation venture: profits from sale of the electricity, and helping to keep enough power available so local industries that are the railroad's customers can stay in operation and supplying loads for the railroad to haul.

Banner Year for Transit

In a remarkable reversal of trends, mass transit use in the U.S. is growing faster than auto use.

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According to the Federal Highway Administration, vehicle-miles traveled grew less than a tenth of a percentage point in 2000, while transit ridership increased 3.5 percent and Amtrak ridership continued to grow too.

The American Public Transit Association says that ridership increases in New York City made up half of the increase nationwide

Texas Official to Head FRA

President Bush's nominee to be Federal Railroad Administrator is Allan Rutter. Rutter served under Bush in Texas as a transportation advisor and also was deputy executive director of the Texas High-Speed Rail Authority. The appointment looks to be a good one for passenger rail advocates. Rutter not only is familiar with issues surrounding emerging passenger train corridors, but demonstrated an ability to work with both Democrats and Republicans in his Texas years.

Dole Deputy for FTA

The Bush administration also nominated Jenna Dorn to head the Federal Transit Administration. Dorn is a Reagan-administration DOT veteran, and worked under former Secretary Liddy Dole there and at the American Red Cross. Dorn, a Nebraska native, also worked in the Labor Department during the presidency of George H.W. Bush.

Service Denied to Hooligans

In what may be a first for US mass transit systems, new rules approved by the Bi-State Development Agency in St. Louis call for the "exclusion" of fare-evaders, vandals, and other offenders. After four citations for rules violations, a new Exclusion Board can forbid the offender from riding the buses or trains for as long as 90 days, though the maximum exclusion for fare evasion is only 30 days. Individuals arrested for violent crimes, vandalism, or drug use or dealing, can be excluded on the first offense.

The new policy took effect only late last month, so the effect on the security of the system isn't known yet. However, it will be worth watching, and considering here.

Will the Merger Door Reopen?

A 15-month moratorium on major railroad mergers called by the Surface Transportation Board is set to expire next month. The STB will then issue new rules for its handling of merger applications. The goal is to ensure that the expected final round of mergers, which will turn the four biggest railroads into two transcontinental systems, will avoid the

service problems that plagued the Conrail breakup, and preserve competition in the railroad industry.

Keystone Corner

Grade Crossing Grant

Pennsylvania's share of a federal high-speed rail safety grant comes to \$439,500. The money will be used for improved protection at the few remaining grade crossings on the Harrisburg line.

The DOT has also given a million dollars to Operation Lifesaver, in support of its varied rail safety efforts.

NS Boosting Enola Switching

Norfolk Southern announced that it plans to rebuild tracks at the Enola Yard near Harrisburg, anticipating an increase in switching activity there from 125 cars a day to 600 cars a day. Enola will be used as a hub for the growing north-south freight business.

DVARP Details

We're Moving!

Since 1994, DVARP has been holding its monthly meetings at Temple University's Center City campus, 1616 Walnut St. TUCC is in the process of moving to 1515 Market St. and we have not yet been notified when meetings like ours will be moved. For the next few months, please check with us either by phone (215-673-6445) or internet (www.dvarp.org) to confirm meeting locations before you go.

The new location will be even more convenient—right above Suburban Station. There's even more reason now for you to check the back page of each newsletter for meeting dates, circle your calendar, and spend part of a Saturday afternoon discussing issues and coming up with ideas for improving our rail and transit service. All members and guests are always welcome to attend and take part in our meetings.

We're Busy!

The recent fare and budget hearings were not the only place DVARP officers and board members were seen working for better rail service lately. President Don Nigro was the guest of the Green Valley Coalition in Bethlehem, for its environmental conference. He talked about the opportunities to restore passenger trains to the Lehigh Valley from Philadelphia and New York, listed the benefits of that service, and told the Coalition what they could do to make that service happen. Meanwhile, Tony DeSantis spread our message at an environmentalist event in Bucks County.

If you know of an event or group that might benefit from a DVARP speaker, why don't you give us a call, or send an e-mail?

DVARP Membership/Renewal Coupon

Last call for 2001 Renewals!

Name _____ Phone (optional)
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Please choose a membership category below, enclose check, and mail to:
DVARP, PO Box 7505, Philadelphia PA 19101

- () Regular: \$16.00 to \$25.00 () Limited income: \$10.00 to \$25.00
() Supporting: \$40.00 to \$75.00 () Benefactor: \$100.00 and up

Dates of Interest

Subways, Railways, and Stations: transit tour of Philadelphia organized by the Foundation for Architecture. Fee: \$20.00 Tour dates to be announced: phone 215-569-3187 or visit <http://www.foundationforarchitecture.org/> for details and reservations.

SEPTA Public hearing on making permanent the experimental operation of bus routes 105 and 106 to Suburban Square Shopping Center, Ardmore. Thu., May 31, 6:30 pm, Lower Merion Twp. Building, 75 E. Lancaster Ave., Ardmore.

New SEPTA R8 commuter rail schedules take effect June 3.

High Speed Rail Day: Thu., June 7, 8:30-4:00, US Capitol, Washington DC. Briefing by George Warrington and members of Congress. Sponsored by the American Passenger Rail Coalition, HSGTA, NARP, Rail Labor Division, and Railway Progress Institute. Reception at Washington Union Station 5:30-7:30pm at which Tommy Thompson will receive an award from the APRC.

DVRPC Regional Transportation Committee: Tues., June 12, 10:00 am at DVRPC, The Bourse, 5th and Market, Phila.

NJ-ARP: Wed. June 13, 6:30 pm at Good Friends Chinese Restaurant, Princeton Junction, NJ. For permission to attend, contact Jim Ciacciarelli, 732-574-2577.

NRHS Philadelphia Chapter: Fri., June 15, 7:30 pm at Jefferson Alumni Hall, 1020 Locust St., Philadelphia. For more information, phone Bill Gardiner, 215-632-7016.

DVARP Amtrak Committee: Sat., June 16, 12:00 noon at Food Court, Liberty Place, 17th and Market Sts.

DVARP General Meeting: Sat. June 16, 1:00 at Temple University Center City, 1616 Walnut St.

SEPTA City Transit Division schedules expected to change June 17.

WILMAPCO Public Advisory Committee: Mon. June 18, 7:00 pm at 850 Library Ave., Newark, DE. For more information visit www.wilmapco.org or Delmarva RPA: For meeting information, contact Ken Berg, 410-648-5961 for location and more information.

DVRPC Regional Citizens Committee: Tues., June 19, 12:00 noon at DVRPC, The Bourse, 5th and Market, Phila. For more information, visit www.dvrpc.org.

SEPTA Citizens Advisory Committee: Tues., June 26, 5:45 pm at SEPTA Board Room, 1234 Market St., Mezzanine level.

DVRPC Board Meeting: Thurs., June 28, 10:30 am at DVRPC, The Bourse, 5th and Market, Phila.

SEPTA Board Meeting: Thurs., June 28, 3 pm at 1234 Market St., Philadelphia.

Electric Railroaders' Association, Inc., Chicago Convention: July 4-7, Executive Plaza Hotel, 71 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill.

Events include a visit to the Illinois Railway Museum, an excursion on Chicago's rapid transit system, and a visit to the new streetcar route in Kenosha, Wis. For info contact Electric Railroaders' Association, PO Box 3323, New York, NY 10163-3323.

To add your event to this calendar, phone DVARP at 215-673-6445 or e-mail calendar@dvarp.org

DVARP Meeting Schedule

- Saturday, June 16, 1:00 to 4:00 at Temple University Center City, 1616 Walnut St., Philadelphia.
Please check with guard for room number
- Saturday, July 21, 1:00 to 4:00 at TUCC, location to be announced
Please check www.dvarp.org for information on meeting move to 1515 Market.
- August meeting TBA

DVARP meetings are always open to the public!

SEPTA On Site

Thu., May 31 Spring Mill
Tue., June 12 Forest Hills
Thu., June 14 Ivy Ridge

Thu. June 28 Wissahickon
Thu. July 12 Allegheny
All meetings during morning rush hour

Thu. July 26 Bala

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Legislative Affairs Coordinator
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