HSR Fantasy vs. Reality

by Richard F. Tolmach

The blue-suited gentleman smoothly touting high-speed rail in the plush hotel ballroom couldn’t have misread his audience more completely. In a distracted monotone, he presented the same video of empty promises, zooming trains and sprouting city skylines previously played hundreds of times by campaign flacks for city councils and chambers of commerce.

But this time, the audience was not gullible California citizens, but state and federal bureaucrats along with engineering consultants, wondering how any of the scenes in the video could possibly become reality, given the scant $8 billion of rail stimulus available nationwide.

Following his rambling talk, attendees got a more focused picture of what would happen in the near future from Caltrans Division of Rail chief Bill Bronte, who gave specifics of what would be in California’s rail stimulus proposal and how Caltrans intended to manage the projects.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) workshop on ARRA rail funding in Rancho Cordova May 28 presented a completely incongruous picture, with Caltrans officials making a joint presentation with the High-speed Rail Authority (HSRA), together claiming unanimity on a single set of statewide projects, including high-speed improvements linking San Jose and San Francisco, as well as between Anaheim and Los Angeles.

The list submitted on July 10 to the FRA included High Speed Rail Authority pre-applications for a total of $17 billion of projects on the San Francisco-San Jose, Merced-Fresno, and Los Angeles-Anaheim segments, along with $5 billion of conventional projects, but insiders say there is, at best, little more than $2 billion in the Federal budget for California trains.

Given the fiscal realities, the likeliest projects to get funding are ones that solve traffic congestion, not 220 mph dream trains. Topping the state wish list is the triple-track project between Los Angeles and Fullerton, which promises to smooth out performance on the most delay-prone segment of California tracks.

When U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said that by 2012, “I think you’ll see construction on high-speed rail in California,” the odds are that he was referring to projects in the 100 mph range. The Federal Railroad Administration defines high-speed rail as service that runs at least 90 mph and can reasonably

(continued on Page Two)
by Richard F. Tolmach

Emergence of new leadership on the board of the High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) at the July meeting appears to have called into question many decisions previously considered sacred cows by project insiders.

In particular, the inevitability of the Pacheco Route seems to be fading, as Northern California HSRA members find themselves increasingly isolated from staff opinion and events in the outside world.

Recent appointments have finally given the HSRA a regional balance that properly represents the 60 percent of the population that is Southern Californian, and with the appointment of a new Chair and Vice-Chair, the shift in power is palpable.

Chair Quentin Kopp’s last official act before being replaced by Anaheim Mayor Curt Pringle was to plead for the reuse of the idle NUMMI auto plant in Fremont as a location to build trains. Kopp was trying to make lemonade out of quite a bitter lemon. If built, the $4 billion Warm Springs BART extension will serve a vacant plant.

Once-mighty Santa Clara power broker Rod Diridon lost his seat on the HSRA Board, but made the embarrassing admission that not even his own daughter-in-law (a Sen. Sidimitian staffer) was able to inform him that the legislature was throwing him a curve in the original version of the Budget Act. The legislature passed language insisting that the HSRA do a complete review of the San Francisco-Central Valley segment, although HSRA had picked Pacheco on its Program Level analysis. The section read, “as part of the review activities, the Authority shall analyze alternative alignments to that identified as the preferred alignment in the certified program Environment Impact Report (EIR) for the San Francisco-San Jose corridor.”

Since passage of Proposition 1A, HSRA indicated that it did not intend to do a complete review of alignment alternatives for the Bay Area segment.

Diridon, upon learning of the language, launched a furious and eventually successful battle to remove it, falsely claiming that forcing the HSRA to do a thorough review of the segment would harm California’s ability to obtain federal stimulus funding.

Consultants conducting the San Jose-San Francisco analysis and HSRA staff made it clear to the Authority board that the Peninsula project was not ready, and therefore would be ineligible for funds. However, the Board overturned the staff report and act to apply for funds that are not actually available. (See Page 6 for full list of federal stimulus pre-applications.)

The Planning and Conservation League (PCL) and an alliance of rail, neighborhood and environmental groups originally lobbied to get the language in place, to ensure the new High Speed Rail system is built cost effectively and in a way that is sensitive to environmental and community concerns. They advocate a train that benefits the whole state, and are pushing to ensure the system is built right.

PCL pointed out that HSRA is taking the time necessary to study various alignments for other segments throughout the state. Because of their failure to do so for the Bay Area segment, PCL calls it a clear demonstration that they are choosing expediency over thoroughness.

Northern California HSRA board members erupted in anger at the June HSRA meeting when told this, and ordered their staff to submit project applications regardless.

However, the reality will likely settle into at HSRA by mid-August that only real-world trains will get first round stimulus dollars. FRA staff and attorneys reportedly are insistent projects must provide demonstrable benefits to existing intercity rail to be eligible, a fact that visibly unnerve HSRA staff attending recent meetings.

SEE STIMULUS LIST—PAGE 4

PCL legislative staffer Tina Andolina, says, “Californians did not vote for High Speed Rail so the Authority could build the train as quickly as possible. We expect them to do it right. That requires a complete review of alternatives.”

PCL pointed out in a letter to legislators that despite devastating impacts to Peninsula communities, the Authority is moving forward without any review of less destructive alternatives. The failure of the Authority to review alternatives is at the core of community concerns. A fair and thorough process would help ensure that community members have the opportunity to voice their concerns and judge the relative merits of various options. Without this process, residents will continue to feel like this project was rammed through their communities without their input.

As opposition mounts in the face of a deficient review process, PCL says, the project will face greater obstacles. “We have seen in other parts of the state that passionate communities will do what it takes to protect their communities and make their voices heard. We can avoid this type of battle only if the Authority conducts a fair and complete review,” said Andolina.

Trying to force four tracks through a contested 60 to 80 foot wide right of way, with multi-million dollar homes on each side is bound to tie the project up for years, and result in immense cost overruns. The sensible approach is to study alternative alignments that do not pose community impacts, such as rails using a highway alignment in the Altamont Corridor. Andolina pointed out that “if [HSRA] fails to study alignment options in a complete and comprehensive way, they will face another lawsuit, there will be further delays, and the state will be forced to pay more. This can and should be avoided.” Peninsula residents wanted the Authority to do up front what they will be forced to do anyway pursuant to CEQA.

DUMBARTON SUIT DROPPED

Subsequent to the April edition of California Rail News, TRANSDEF dismissed its suit challenging authority to use of funds by MTC from Dumbarton to the BART Warm Springs Extension. In the absence of adequate community support TRANSDEF felt compelled to dismiss.

“We were shocked that there weren’t more people willing to protect the Dumbarton Corridor,” said TRANSDEF President David Schonbrunn.
By David Peter Alan

California rail passengers won a major court victory when the Third Appellate District Court held that money earmarked for mass transit must be used for public transportation, and not for other purposes, even in times of low transportation purposes.

The court released its decision in Shaw v. Chiang, No. C-058479, on June 30th. Plaintiff Josh Shaw is Executive Director of the California Transit Association. Defendant John Chiang is the California State Controller. In cases where an action by the State is challenged, the state official is named as Defendant.

The court affirmed part of the finding of the trial court, which held that certain funds had been transferred improperly from the Public Transportation Account (PTA) for other purposes. In addition, the Third District otherwise reversed the trial court, holding that certain other transfers were improper and ordered these moneys returned to the PTA. The transfers in question were to other accounts for other transportation purposes, including social service, special transportation for disabled persons and school bus programs.

The case concerned funds generated under Proposition 116, the Clean Air and Transportation Act of 1990, which authorized a bond issue of nearly $2 billion for capital improvements. Two of the major beneficiaries were the California Rail Passengers (NARP), the California Railroad Museum.

The statutory provision which the court considered was enacted in light of Proposition 116 and required that funds in the PTA be used only for "transportation planning and mass transit purposes." The voters subsequently placed restrictions on loans from transportation funds and the voters approved (Proposition 2, approved in 1998) and authorized direct use of gasoline tax revenues for transit.

The trial court held that the transfer of $409 million in bond funds for past debt service did not serve a transportation planning or mass transit purpose and ordered the return of that money to the PTA. The appellate court affirmed that part of the trial judge's ruling. The trial judge refused to order other funds, used for school bus programs and special transportation for disabled persons, returned to the PTA. The appellate court reversed that part of the trial court decision.

While debt service, school bus funding and special transportation purposes in a broad sense, the appellate court found them to be invalid purposes for grants under the statute, because they did not serve a "transportation planning or mass transit" purpose as the legislation required. The court construed the statutes that govern transportation purposes in this field that "mass transit" means transportation available to the general public.

The State redirected approximately $3.4 billion in bond funds to other purposes over the past three years and, according to the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), the Schwarzenegger Administration is prepared to transfer another $952 million away from transit during the fiscal year that has just begun. According to NARP, the court decision should appear to prevent such a transfer.

Both transit managers and rider advocates have hailed the decision as a victory for transit riders. Plaintiff Shaw said on the California Transit Association website: "The ruling clearly demonstrates that rip-offs are illegal... and they've been illegal since before 2007... it's a victory for the millions of Californians who depend every day on public transit to get to work, school or health care facilities." NARP reported: "California transit riders won a monumental victory over the state government."

Bart Reed, Executive Director of The Transit Coalition said: "The court decision clearly interpreted what the law declared. The Governor and his staff rephrased the law against the will of the people of California. It just goes to show the Governor's disdain for the working poor and those in need of basic mobility."

The victory could not have come at a better time for transit providers in California, or for California's rail and transit riders. Due to its financial difficulties, the State has virtually eliminated aid to transit this fiscal year.

While the State has announced its intention to appeal the ruling to the State Supreme Court, it is unlikely that the decision will be reversed. The decision was unanimous and, in this writer's opinion, the court's construction of the applicable statutes was reasonable.

The Supreme Court can refuse to hear the case, leaving the appellate court decision stand. The Supreme Court could also reverse the decision or specifically affirm it. California's rail and transit riders have won a victory. Will they keep it? Time will tell.

David Peter Alan lives and practices law in New Jersey. He is not admitted to the California bar. David Peter Alan lives and practices law in New Jersey. He is not admitted to the California bar. David Peter Alan lives and practices law in New Jersey. He is not admitted to the California bar. David Peter Alan lives and practices law in New Jersey. He is not admitted to the California bar. David Peter Alan lives and practices law in New Jersey. He is not admitted to the California bar.
By Justin Walker

The Coast Starlight has been in the spotlight in recent years due to both high highs and dis-appointing lows in performance. Providing daily coach and sleeper service between Los Angeles and Seattle, the route is central to the vision linking Southern California, the Central Coast, the Bay Area, and the Pacific Northwest. In 2008, the service recovered the usefulness of the Starlight. This spring, for the first time in recent years, the Coast Starlight regained the U.S.-longest rail ridership title. Amtrak reports, the Coast Starlight carried 32,170 national ridership in 2009, attributed by Amtrak which had 31,222 passengers. Amtrak reports, the Coast Starlight carried 32,170 national ridership in 2009, attributed by Amtrak which had 31,222 passengers.

By Richard F. Tolmach

In a remarkable lapse of editorial oversight, the New York Times misleadingly identified Anthony Daniels, an employee of Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB), as being project director with the California High Speed Rail Authority, and portrayed Daniels as being in a prime position to influence the specific train technol-ogy to be chosen by the state agency.

The train choice is not just some arcane technical detail, it is a multi-billion dollar contract that is being bodily pushed by a half dozen high speed rail manufacturers based in Germany, France, Spain, and Japan.

In the June 14 article, New York Times Magazine author Jon Gertner described meeting with Daniels at the HSRA headquarters in Sacramento, and said “at one point, Daniels took me down to where he calls his war room, a large space with huge maps on the wall and thousands of pages of regula-tory documents piled on tables.”

Gertner then described Daniels building a case that only one proprietary technology would be fast enough to do the job for California high-speed rail, coincidentally one which is not in yet revenue service anywhere in the world.

Gertner reports, as if Daniels is telling him, that Union Pacific Railroad’s refusal to provide its right of way for the Authority to use the slightly longer BNSF Railway alignment in the Central Valley, and that the minute or two of additional running time caused by that minor diversion put the Authority into a bind.

By law—that is, according to the bond measure that authorized the rail project—the California train has to travel between San Francisco and Los Angeles in 2 hours 40 min-utes,” says Gertner. “Adding distance might add too much time. Daniels showed me a printout of a computer model dem-onstrating how a particular German high-speed train, one of the best in the world, would do on the longer route. It comes in at 2 hours 39 minutes and 53 seconds,” he said. “That’s too close for me.”

The same passage in the Times article has caused an international uproar among officials of high-speed rail technol-ogy firms and government agencies. Daniels appears to be setting himself up as the spokesperson for the Authority in a multi-billion dollar decision.

Public interest in passenger rail has clearlyapeshifted since the days of the early 1980’s, when the Coast Starlight was the last in a long string of high-speed rail projects linking San Diego and San Francisco. The route had been federal status as a high-speed rail route.

Interest in public transit has clearly been on the rise. The anti-rail sentiments of this Washington and California state rail officials met to discuss a long-time so-called “high-speed rail project linking San Diego and San Francisco.”

Scott Witt, of the Washington Department of Transportation, pointed out that the engineering work on “ensuring the nearly the length of the West Coast aren’t just a factory.” Such a project, however, would be extremely expensive and difficult to build, given the sheer distance of the 1,500-mile corridor and the geography of the Cascades Mountains between Redding and Eugene.

Whether or not a higher-speeds project ever is considered for the Coast Starlight is a question of feasibility, and the technical characteristics. None of these advances were cited, nor the new Japanese models under development. Gertner appears to have been hand-fed and consumed the entire French barapex, but avoiding a single piece of schnitzel or sushi.

The heavily-insider-oriented Times calls to mind the Alan Temko articles in the San Francisco Chronicle, which similarly promoted in advance of an actual decision the likely selection of a risky self-anchored suspension bridge on the still- to-be-built Bay Bridge East Span.

Richard F. Tolmach is an electrical engineer. His recent book is the Los Larget (www.eldoradomagazine.com) how a run-up of URS Greiner stock was linked to publicity around legislation and board actions favoring a particular technology. He also delved into the history of High Speed Rail Authority principals, giving the impression that California rail officials have abused the public transportation planning process to make it an engine for personal gain.

The Bay Bridge, another case in which High Speed Rail Authority Executive Mobil Morshed and then-Senator Quentin Kopp worked as an AGV. Japanese trains also can run 320 kph, individually powered trucks and lighter axle loads promised to make it an engine for personal gain.

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California High Speed & Intercity Preaplications

By Bob Huddy

Preliminary Intercity and High Speed Rail (ARRA) Project Applications were filed July 10 following guidance by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued on June 17, 2009 for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and 2009 Appropriations budget projects for High Speed and Intercity rail, planning fund, state matching funds, and congestion relief funds.

The Federal Railroad Administration has also done a series of “listening” sessions on the ARRAs High Speed and Intercity process of applying for funding in various locations around the country, including California.

Federal funding is divided into four tracks, with Track 1 (projects to be completed within two years of funding) and Track 2 (High-Speed Rail/Intercity Passenger Rail Service Development Programs) for the $8 billion in ARRA funds. Track 3 contains $9.54 million in Planning for 15% local match, Track 4 and 4 funding came from the Fiscal Year 2009 appropriation for State assistance.

Deadlines for final applications are now as follows: Track 1 (Projects), Track 2 (Planning), and Track 4 (FY2009 Appropriations) – August 24, 2009; Track 2 (High-Speed/Intercity Passenger Rail Service Development Programs) – October 2, 2009. Pre-applications were due July 10, 2009. Caltrans has been coordinating this effort and submitted a pre-application containing project proposals without prioritization. All of this is subject to possible changes based upon the comments received by FRA.

The criteria for project evaluation will look at a number of factors, including: the status of planning, preliminary engineering, environmental approvals, project management plans, right of way issues, service development plans, and service development programs.

The pre-application process is intended to allow time for FRA to work with proposers and identify issues prior to submission of the final applications. California appears to have substantial work already done for a significant number of potential projects which meet many of these criteria.

The Caltrans Division of Rail has been coordinating this process with local stakeholders. There are active discussions of a number of Track 1, 2, 3 and 4 projects that may be submitted for the California application with the relevant rail corridor agencies, CHSRA, public right of way owners, the freight railroads, and respective transportation commissions to finalize applications by the deadlines.

### California Rail News May-August 2009

### California High Speed & Intercity Preaplications

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(Funding amounts in $, all for Fiscal Year 2009, by projects)

High Speed Rail:
- **Sacramento-Placer County (Design, & Planning)** $7.5
- **Oakland to San Jose Track Improvement Project** $442.5
- **San Jose Diridon Station Improvement** $52.0
- **Funding Track 2** $498.0
- **Funding Track 3** $2.5
- **TOTAL** $17,138.5

Intercity Rail:
- **Sacramento-Placer County (Design, & Planning)** $7.5
- **Oakland to San Jose Track Improvement Project** $442.5
- **San Jose Diridon Station Improvement** $52.0
- **Funding Track 2** $498.0
- **Funding Track 3** $2.5
- **TOTAL** $17,138.5

Capitol Corridor:
- **Sacramento-Placer County (Design, & Planning)** $7.5
- **Oakland to San Jose Track Improvement Project** $442.5
- **San Jose Diridon Station Improvement** $52.0
- **Funding Track 2** $498.0
- **Funding Track 3** $2.5
- **TOTAL** $17,138.5

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Putting Rail Operations out to Contract: Is it a Substitute for Real Leadership?

An Essay by Michael E. McGinley, P.E., retired from 40 years in transportation at Southern Pacific Railroad, Metrolink, and in consulting engineering work.

The boards and senior executives of all manner of railroads and transit agencies are well into the second decade of “contracting out” much of the work that once could be done by in-house employees. Perhaps now is the time to step back and examine the wisdom of this choice and use our judgment to guide new endeavors such as California High Speed Rail, San Francisco-Marin Area Rapid Transit, and others.

Let’s look at this as a “business case” to find the most cost-effective operation, and as a “leadership test” to determine whether we are doing the right thing.

Contracting: the Business Case

Almost all business case studies find that contracting out routine and lower-level work is cost effective, and can save start-up time for new ventures. Metrolink in Los Angeles County and the BaltimoreLink in Baltimore, Northern and Santa Fe contract out for the design of most new facilities.

This contracting out is presumed to save money because the work is done by in-house staff of employees on the payroll to support new projects that may (or may not) materialize in the future. Contracting out also seeks to establish competition between the contractors and the firms both as to the quality of their services and their costs.

To protect the owner from errors or lapses by the contractor, most contracts contain very strict liability and indemnity provisions; these provisions are found in the contractors’ overhead for insurance to do this sort of work: no free lunch on liability.

Leadership: Not Measurable?

Currently we speak of managing a business, and we cannot manage what we cannot see or measure. Observations can measure with incredible precision the time, cost, input, output, and records for every action by employees as well as analyze, compile, and summarize reports in glorious bar charts and graphic illustrations for every single event. Perhaps we are too focused on these quantifiable aspects of the enterprise and cannot see the molecules or the larger structures.

But is management what we really need? What about leadership? And how do the concepts of management and leadership affect the contracting-out decision?

Good leaders must be well organized; they are inherently good managers. However they are very much more than managers. An excellent manager may fail to be a good leader; the manager may be good at organizing or measuring work, but simply cannot relate to people (and may irritate or demoralize them), but still be a “good manager”. Today we too often look to managers as promotion candidates for our enterprises.

Leadership: A People Business

At the risk of being too basic, let’s review what makes a great leader, besides being well organized. First, a leader sets an example by dedication to the essentials and by knowledge of the business. For a railroad or transit operation, this means being very visible in communicating commitment to safety, service, and efficiency, as well as to retaining customers, employees, and other stakeholders to see this commitment and knowledge.

Second, by having solid understanding of the enterprise, a leader can inherently filter out bad ideas and can recognize good and bad performance.

Third, a leader is involved in real time. Managers often rely on days, weeks, or even months old data, which can be useful but does not tell what is happening this afternoon. A leader is in frequent communication and is not caught by surprise when changes occur in customer patterns, safety conditions, employee attitudes, maintenance conditions, or any of the thousand things that may or may not show up in future reports.

Fourth, a leader communicates, by listening and observing and by sharing decisions and decision input dialog.

Fifth, a leader delegates most tasks not because the leader cannot do them, but rather to encourage and mentor or employ people to grow into positions of greater responsibility.

Sixth, a leader recognizes and rewards good work and gives feedback and correction to unacceptable work. A leader motivates by all of the above personal interactions and mannerisms. A leader is well organized, but usually relies on others to crunch the numbers and filter to file the reports.

Seventh, a leader takes care of the team: helping them with administrative hassles, increasing their resources, improving their working conditions, and going to battle for them when required.

Where Do Leaders Come From?

The old saying that they are born is partly true; a good leader has a natural disposition towards other people that facilitates communication and motivation, is also naturally curious and likes to learn about all aspects of the organization.

But a leader has to be made, first by mentors who coach and encourage underlings to grow into positions of increased responsibility and then (usually) by training in management, technical job requirements, and communications. Therefore the place to look for the very best leaders is often in the entry and first supervisor level employees.

For example, today we have Arthur T. Leahy, Chief Executive Officer of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. He started as a bus operator while attending college. You never have to ask if a leader like Art understands the business, the customers, the properties, or the employees.

Who Leads Contract Operations?

OK, now for reasons of cost control or because we don’t want to increase our staff, we enter into a contract with another firm to perform railroad or transit operations.

In a contract, the black ink on the page tells the tale. The employees work for the supervisors of the contractor. Period.

The contractor’s name is on the paycheck, the contractor’s supervisors decide on promotions, and all contact with the owner must follow the channels of the contract. Contractors are usually short-term arrangement. Common examples are construction of public works or manufacturing specific products (often for very short periods).

There is little incentive to develop or train employees for anything beyond completion of the contracted tasks and possibly to bid on the next contract. Perhaps this is cost effective for singular events such as building facilities, but extremely inadequate for instilling the service, safety, development, and efficiency ethos on a service industry that intends to remain in business for decades.

In other words, the contract privatizes the leader of a transportation enterprise from the employees who actually perform the work, interact with the customers, and represent the enterprise to the public. And a contracted work environment starves the enterprise from future leadership candidates.

The Exception

Amtrak functions as a contractor to some commuter agencies and to the California Division of Rail for the Surfline, Capitol, and San Joaquin corridors. Amtrak is a complete railroad and has the staff, development, leadership, and corporate resources of a decades-old enterprise.

The leadership role of the contracting parties seems to work well in this environment (however the failure of the Amtrak employees listen to their union, one to ten). What is the Division of Rail asks and one to what their Philadelphia bosses say?

The Future

Perhaps a middle ground is evolving, where the cost savings from contracting operations are becoming less obtainable due to insurance and where enterprises have graduated from “start-up” to permanent, continuing businesses. Mature organizations would likely benefit from contracting with new design and construction projects but may wish to retain some connections to major territories, hiring reservations employees in-house to assure continued reliable functioning of the service and of the team.

KEN LIVINGTON, EX-MAYOR OF LONDON, ON CONTRACTING OUT

Time andagain we have seen the nationalization of losses and the privatization of profit. It’s also the latest demonstration that it is a fairy tale that privatisation means the private sector takes the risk as well as responsibility. Unfortunately, every time a privatisation of a vital public service fails, the public sector picks up the tab. This cultural part of the private sector fleecing the taxpayer has to stop.

Part of the problem is that civil servants are taken to the cleaners in the construction of the privatisations contracts by the private companies’ sharper legal teams. One of the rationales for the tube’s PPP was that it made no sense to hand billions of pounds of public money for tube upgrades over to London Underground management and civil servants who had such a poor record of delivering.

Yet, these same civil servants were left to draw up the detail of the PPP contracts. They were completely turned over by the private sector.

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Please join TRAC and the California Rail Foundation for our annual California Rail 2020 conference Nov. 6th to 8th, 2009, at the Crowne Plaza, Ventura’s most elegant beachfront hotel, 2 blocks east of the Amtrak station at 450 E. Harbor Blvd. This year’s agenda will include:

**FRIDAY, November 6:** 6:30 PM–onward: No-host Happy Hour starts at 5. Meet and Greet at the Crowne Plaza Bar. Come and get to know your fellow TRAC members.

**SATURDAY, November 7:** 9:00 AM (registration), Meeting 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM with the following sessions:

- **High Speed Becomes Relevant** - Two new Southern California members of the High Speed Rail Authority, an energized DesertXpress proposal, and prospects of SoCal federal projects change the landscape.
- **SoCal Rail Reinvention** - How to finally break down barriers between Metrolink, Amtrak, Coaster, and bus operators to improve regional mobility by transit.
- **Tight Transit Budgets and What We Can Do** - Our panel will focus on operating budget problems faced by commuter and intercity rail, and possible efficiency improvements and opportunities for legislative action to address the shortfalls.
- **Looking Forward on the Coast** - Possible early action to boost North/South California service.

Luncheon will be provided onsite at the Crowne Plaza. Vegetarian options available (indicate on form if you have special needs).

**Saturday Conference Rates (includes continental breakfast and luncheon):**

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<th>Before Sep. 15</th>
<th>Before Oct. 15</th>
<th>Late Price</th>
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<td>$79*</td>
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(Non-members pay a $25 surcharge and get TRAC membership at a promotional rate). Make your checks out to Train Riders Association of California.

**Saturday 7 PM No-host dinner at the Sportsman,** one of Ventura’s oldest and finest chop houses, 53 S. California St. A tradition for over 56 years in downtown Ventura, the Sportsman is known for excellent service and the best steaks and seafood specialties in town. Talk to conference staff on Saturday to sign up.

**SUNDAY, November 8:** 9:00 AM–4:00 PM We are planning an excursion on the Fillmore and Western, using the rare-mileage Santa Paula Branch. Bus shuttle and buffet luncheon onboard the F&W are included. **Register early:** $99 including bus access, make check payable to TRAC.

**Lodging:** We have worked out a special $99 room rate at the Crowne Plaza. This rate is good for Friday or Saturday night. To reserve, call (877) 227-6963 and mention the TRAC conference rate.

**Train to the Conference:** On Friday, Train 775 arrives Ventura at 4:49 pm, in time for the Crowne Plaza’s happy hour. It leaves San Diego at noon, L.A. at 2:55 pm. On Saturday, Train 799 gets to Ventura at 9:35 am. From S.F. Ferry Bldg, Surfliner buses leave 8:20 am, 10:05 am and 10:45 pm, with trains arriving Ventura 5:08 pm, 7:37 pm and 7:23 am.

Sunday excursion is planned on the Fillmore and Western.