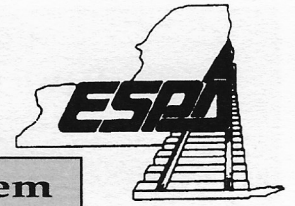


THE ESPA EXPRESS

NEWS FROM THE EMPIRE STATE PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION

<http://www.trainweb.com/esp>



Working for a More Balanced Transportation System

Vol. 41 No. 3

Fall 2016

Important Message from Bruce Becker

Dear Friends and Rail Supporters:

There is a time when all good things must come to an end and so it is with a heavy heart I must inform you that I have relinquished my position as ESPA President effective at the end of the recent ESPA Working Group Meeting held on Saturday, August 6.



Gary Prophet, our current ESPA Vice-President, has assumed the interim Presidency after a unanimous vote of the remaining incumbent officers and co-ordinators at the meeting. Gary will serve out my current remaining term until elections are held at next year's Annual Meeting in March 2017.

As you may be aware, effective July 1st of this year I have been engaged by the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) in a full-time capacity as their new Vice-President of Operations. In this position I oversee NARP's administrative and membership services, as well as all efforts regarding resource development and planning for national events and meetings. This is an exciting advancement for me and I look forward to the challenges which lay ahead, while advancing our mutual goal of "A Connected America."

As I have been doing over the past year, I will be splitting my work time between the DC NARP HQ Office and my home in Buffalo. I do not have any current plans or intent to relocate to the DC area, though you never know what the future will bring. Please be assured that I am NOT disappearing and I absolutely plan to stay active in ESPA, though you may not see me at every meeting (after 90+ meetings, it will seem weird to perhaps miss one or two). I want to ensure a smooth transition of leadership and there are a number of logistical & business-related matters on which I will work with Gary and others over the coming months. While we have seen the accomplishment of many of our goals, there are still many objectives which remain unfinished (in particular the long-overdue completion of the Empire Corridor Tier One Environmental Impact Statement). I will continue to assist in any way possible with these efforts.

It has been my sincere privilege to serve as ESPA President for the past 15 years and I can't thank each of you enough for your unwavering support and encouragement over this time.

*Bruce B. Becker – Vice-President of Operations,
National Association of Railroad Passengers*

\$1.6 Billion Empire Station Plan

Governor Andrew Cuomo has announced a \$1.6 billion plan for the New York City Empire Station that includes both the long-proposed Farley Post Office building and the existing Pennsylvania Station complex. In a September 27 speech to the Association for a Better New York, the Governor firmed up and expanded an idea he originally presented last January.

The aging Penn Station serves more than 600,000 rail passengers daily, treble its designed capacity. "With more than twice the passengers of all JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark airports combined, the current Penn Station is overcrowded, decrepit, and claustrophobic," said Governor Cuomo. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released and it has been reported that five plans were received by the April response deadline.

The accepted plan for the Farley building was submitted by a three-company developer-builder team which includes the Related Companies, Vornado Realty, LP, and Skanska, AB. Their vision consisted of a new 255,000 square foot train hall, 112,000 square feet of retail space, and nearly 588,000 square feet of office space within the Farley site. Pre-construction work will begin this fall, with the new train hall to be completed by December 2020. The developers will pay New York State about \$600 million, which would include an upfront payment of \$230 million. In addition, the developers would provide the State with a yet-undefined share of the retail revenues at the train hall and, possibly, a share of advertising revenues. Finally, the developers will negotiate a 30 year annual payment in lieu of taxes with New York City on the now property tax-exempt Farley building. The remainder of the project will be supported by \$570 million from Empire State Development, much of it coming from the probable sale of Farley's air rights. Amtrak, which owns Penn Station, the Long Island Rail Road, the Port Authority, and the federal government, would put in a combined \$425 million.

Several surprises were in the Governor's announcement. The new plan includes Long Island Railroad passenger use of the train hall and eventually will accommodate passengers from Metro North. A total of nine passenger platforms and 17 tracks will be accessible from the train hall.

In addition, the MTA has issued an RFP for the preliminary design of Penn Station improvements to pre-qualified consulting firms. A contract is expected to be awarded by the end of 2016. The re-design envisions nearly tripling the width of the 33rd Street LIRR corridor from Seventh to Eighth Avenues, and improving lighting and information systems. It is anticipated that the majority of the corridor improvements will be complete simultaneous to the Farley train hall's opening, with other elements completed sooner. The new LIRR corridor will cost an estimated \$170 million.

Finally, improvements will be made to subway stations on Seventh and Eighth Avenues which serve the Empire Station area. The improvements are expected to begin arriving as early as 2018 and will cost approximately \$50 million.

Anthony Rudmann

Ridership Up Nationally - Down in Upstate New York State

Despite a slight (1%) increase in fiscal year (FY) 2016 Amtrak nationwide ridership-to-date (and with one month to go to complete FY'16 ending September 30, 2016), railroad infrastructure work this spring and summer in upstate New York has apparently been responsible for a double-digit ridership reduction on Amtrak's Albany-Niagara Falls corridor. One of three Amtrak round-trips was annulled between April and July at the demand of track owner CSX to attend to rail repairs due to deferred rail maintenance on their heavily-travelled, but minimum-standard maintained, Chicago Line through New York State.

Smaller ridership reductions were reported on Amtrak's *Adirondack* and *Ethan Allen* routes during a time of track work to increase capacity at Amtrak's Albany-Rensselaer station; and construction work of a parallel second main track between Albany and Schenectady was finally initiated: both on Amtrak-controlled infrastructure. South of Albany *Empire Service* ridership remained almost even with the previous fiscal year.

A significant ridership increase (8.8%) on the *Lakeshore Limited* continues, due primarily to the continued good timekeeping and above-standard maintenance between Cleveland and Chicago by host railroad Norfolk-Southern.

October 2015 to August 2016 (FY'16) Cumulative Ridership

Amtrak Service (Route)	FY16	FY15	%Δ (±)
Acela (Boston – NYC – Washington)	3,183,404	3,186,210	-0.1
Regional (Boston – NYC – Washington)	7,703,095	7,536,890	+2.2
Ethan Allen (*Albany – Rutland)	46,804	48,961	-4.3
Empire (*Albany – Niagara Falls)	330,431	373,834	-11.6
Empire (NYC – Albany)	1,059,156	1,062,074	-0.3
Adirondack (*Albany – Plattsburgh – Montreal)	114,263	122,039	-6.4
Lakeshore Ltd. (Boston/NYC–Buffalo–Chicago)	356,580	327,793	+8.8
Amtrak System Total	28,695,138	28,410,118	+1.0

*to/from New York City (NYC) Source – Amtrak Andrew J Cabal

Pets on New York State Amtrak Trains

Beginning this August, Amtrak started to allow passengers to carry some pets onto corridor trains in New York State, including the *Empire Service*, *Maple Leaf*, *Ethan Allen*, and *Lake Shore Limited* routes. The *Adirondack* is also included, but pets may not be carried cross-border into Canada at this time.

According to the *Albany Times Union (TU)*... “Amtrak said it has begun taking reservations, with up to five pets permitted per train. Trips are limited to seven hours or less. There are some other limits. Pet reservations are available in coach; the maximum weight of the pet with carrier is 20 pounds; the fee is \$25, with one pet per passenger; pets must stay in carriers which should remain under the seat; pets are booked on a first-come, first-serve basis; and at this time are not permitted on trips to or from Canada.”

The TU continued... “Amtrak originally launched the travel with pets program in November 2015 on the Northeast Corridor. The railroad has carried more than 10,000 pets and their humans nationwide, and revenues have topped \$1 million. In July alone, Amtrak said it carried more than 2,000 pets.” Please visit www.amtrak.com/pets for further information.

\$6 Million in Rail Safety Grants for New York

New York garnered just over \$6M (million) of the recent \$25M Federal Railroad Administration grants awarded to upgrade safety at railroad crossings, train stations, and tracks. New York entities won funding in a nationwide competition which drew 40 eligible applications requesting \$67.5M. Twenty-three projects in 14 states and the District of Columbia were approved.

“It is vitally important that we invest in safety as rail continues to play an increasingly larger role in the country, transporting tons of freight and millions of passengers each day,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “These grants will help address some of the improvements that are critical to ensuring safe, reliable and efficient railroad networks.”

The New York State Department of Transportation won three awards totalling just over \$5 million, and two private railroads won two awards totalling just under

\$1 million. Grants to New York were the largest amount awarded to any state.

Transportation grant awards were: \$1.34M to add highway traffic signal pre-emption to seven grade crossings on the Metro North's Harlem and Port Jervis lines; \$1.9M to fund installing upgrades to three grade crossings to mitigate hazardous conditions between highway and rail traffic on Metro North and the Long Island Railroad; and \$1.91M to install CCTV cameras to record incidents at 43 grade crossings on Metro North and the Long Island Railroad. The Mohawk, Adirondack & Northern Railway won \$390,000 to resurface 10 grade crossings and replace/upgrade passive warning devices at 35 additional crossings on its Newton Falls Branch through Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties. The Finger Lakes Railway won \$500,000 to widen the track centers of its Auburn Road Yard in Solway, along with realigning the yard lead and repositioning switches.

Amtrak won a \$2.35 million grant to provide a new emergency egress stairway and fire suppression system in the North Hanger and in Claytor Concourse at Washington Union Station.

A full list of the impacted grade crossings is posted on the Federal Railroad Administration website in the September 12 press release announcing the rail safety awards.

Anthony Rudmann



Help ESPA Go Green and Save \$\$

Members providing their e-mail address are entitled to the full-color, electronic version of the *ESPA Express* newsletter at the same time we forward the paper version to the printer. (ESPA will NOT share your information with anyone.)

Receive the newsletter one to two weeks earlier than by mail!

Our postage and printing cost savings will give ESPA more resources to further its passenger rail advocacy mission.

Please send your e-mail address to:
www.rwlens4@gmail.com.

Thank you

Acela: Version 2.0

The Acela, version 2.0 has been ordered. Amtrak announced a \$2.0 billion "Next-Generation of High-Speed Rail" deal with Alstom for 28 new "Avelia Liberty" high speed trainsets to replace current Acela Express fleet. The deal will be financed by a \$2.45 billion loan from the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing program that will be paid off through revenue growth on the Northeast Corridor.

In addition to the new trains, money is also going to infrastructure improvements, including capacity, in order to accommodate the planned increase in Acela service levels. There will also be modifications to rolling stock, maintenance facilities, and improvements to facilities at New York Penn., Baltimore Penn., New Carrollton, and Washington Union Stations.

Once in full service at the end of 2022 Amtrak plans for Acela frequency to be increased to half-hourly trains between New York-Washington and hourly trains between New York-Boston, with even more service during peak traffic times. This should substantially increase ridership, revenue, and market-share. Top speed will be 160-mph, although the trains will be able to run at 186-mph (300-km/h) on new high speed track.

At a press conference, US Vice-President Joseph Biden stated, "This loan is a key step to providing investments needed to help keep high speed trains moving throughout the region, and to help all commuters in the Northeast Corridor. We need these kinds of investments to keep this region — and our whole country — moving, and to create new jobs."

Avelia Liberty is the fourth generation of premier high speed trains on the Northeast Corridor. The original Pennsylvania Railroad (Penn Central) Metroliner electric multiple-unit sets entered service in 1968; Amtrak's AEM7 locomotive-hauled Amfleet sets replaced the Metroliner in the early 1980s; and the current Acela Express train-sets debuted in December 2000.

Twenty-eight new nine-passenger car Avelia Liberty trainsets will replace the existing 20 strong fleet of seven-car Acela sets that were built by a consortium of Bombardier and Alstom. The Acela was inadvertently built 4 inches too wide to take full advantage of their 6.5 degree of tilting capability, limiting it to 4.2 degrees; travel times between New York City and Boston along the curvy New England shoreline had to be lengthened from the initially planned 3-hour schedule.

Beset initially by mechanical problems, including suspension and truck design, which were overcome, the Acela has become popular on the Northeast Corridor and has become a victim of its own success. Acela ridership increased from about 2.5 million in 2002 to just under 3.5 million in 2015; the increase may have been even higher if the train-sets were not limited to six coaches and a café car.

According to statistics on Wikipedia, Amtrak in 2011 captured a 75% share of the New York-Washington air-rail market, up from 37% in 2000, while also capturing 54% share of the New York-Boston air-rail market. The Acelas today account for approximately 25% of all total revenue generated by Amtrak services, another 25% comes from Northeast Regional trains using the same corridor. With the new trainsets in hand, Amtrak hopes to build on over 45 years of successful investment in modern intercity passenger rail in the Boston-Washington corridor with more efficient and expanded operations.



A current Acela Express trainset on the NEC in 2016

"Avelia" is Alstom's new name for its family of high speed trains that includes the "Euroduplex" (TGV Duplex), AGV, and Pendolino. The new Avelia Liberty seems to be a mix of TGV (power cars and articulation) and Pendolino (tilt) technology. Avelia Liberty is a separate unique train-set design of its own but, as part of the "Avelia Family", shares Alstom's proven technology.

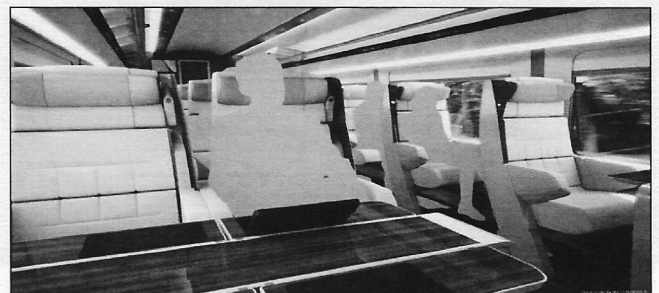
According to an Alstom press release, the new train-sets will have nine articulated passenger cars buffeted by two concentrated compact power cars. Each train-set will seat 389 passengers (with 8 ADA spaces) providing a 35% increase in capacity over the existing Acela train-set. The sets can be upgraded to 12 coaches seating 518 passengers.



The articulated coaches share two-axle trucks

The train-sets will feature optimized interior layouts to provide more space for passengers, with flat and wide interiors and quasi-static gangways between cars. There will be "high-end" comfort, internet connectivity, an improved boarding experience, and more comfortable seating with increased legroom. Included are a Bistro Car, large space for luggage, baby changing area, and eight ADA toilets. The first class area will be equipped with a galley for service crew to prepare meals and beverages for first class passengers.

Benjamin Turon



ABOVE: First Class coach with comfortable 1-2 seating

(Continued on page 6)



New platform construction at Albany-Rensselaer Station, from Herrick Street Bridge looking north towards Amtrak maintenance facility and yard.

Work Continues on Albany-Schenectady Track and Rensselaer Station Projects

A September 8 article by Eric Anderson of the Albany Times Union reported that the second mainline track between Albany and Schenectady has been largely completed, with the project moving into “very slow and intricate work” of installing curves, switches, and signals, scheduled for completion in spring of 2017.

Carol Breen, a spokeswoman for the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), told the newspaper that the two center platform tracks at Albany-Rensselaer Station have been removed north of the Herrick Street Bridge to give workers access to the platforms, causing a temporary capacity restraint at the station. After the platforms are completed and canopies installed, the two center tracks will be back in place, likely before the end of this winter.

Mr. Anderson wrote that overall about \$200 million is being invested in tracks, signals, and other improvements at the station, and new signalling south of Rensselaer. According to NYSDOT's Breen, these rail projects are scheduled to be done by June 30, 2017.



Benjamin Turon

Looking east from Morris Road crossing toward New Karner Road overpass shows new 2nd track to left of existing



Rob Picuch

New Rochester Amtrak Station Work Continues

As seen above in ESPA member Rob Picuch's photo from August 23, work on Rochester's new \$29.5 million intermodal rail and intercity bus station is well underway. The 1977 Amtrak station building has been demolished; passengers are now being temporarily accommodated in trailers. Work is now progressing on both the new island platform with dedicated passenger tracks, and the station building.

Dome Car Returns to the Adirondack

On the Adirondack train, immerse yourself in the changing tree colors and Lake Champlain vistas as you travel from Albany across the Canadian border to Montreal. Enjoy the Great Dome car travelling northbound September 29 - October 31, 2016, on Thursday, Saturday and Monday (Train 69). Or travelling southbound September 30 - November 1, 2016, on Friday, Sunday and Tuesday (Train 68). Dates and availability of the Great Dome Car are subject to change without notice.

From Amtrak.com



Ben Turon



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www.facebook/esparail

Buffalo Exchange Street Station

Over the weekend of Sept 17, the Exchange Street Station (downtown Buffalo) experienced a major ceiling collapse in the waiting area. A couple weeks prior, a ceiling collapse occurred in the employee ticketing area. Effective Monday, Sept 19, the station building was closed and its doors locked, with no ability for ticketing, albeit trains will continue to stop at the station. This station, along with its platform, has been neglected for many years, and is hidden under a highway overpass making it very difficult for passengers to locate it. In 2005, the station was used by 15,132 passengers at a time when downtown Buffalo was not a location where many out of town visitors choose to visit. In 2015, ridership was 41,584 passengers, an increase of 175% over ten years.

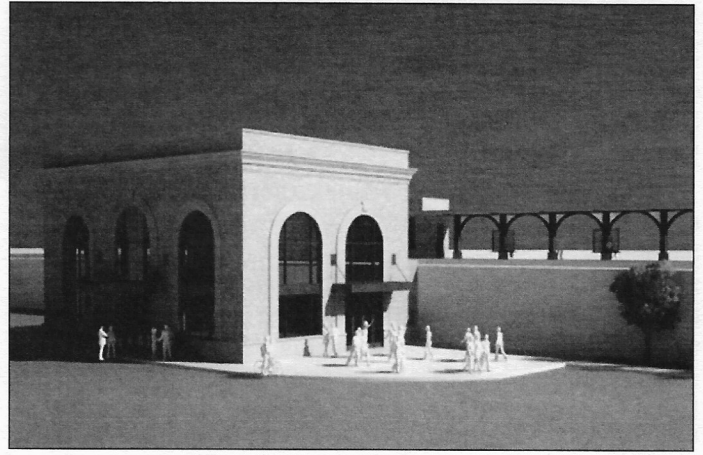
In the past 10 years, many new businesses have opened; there are several hotel options within walking distance of the station and the entire waterfront and Canalside area has developed into a destination. The City of Buffalo, who owns the station building, will be making repairs, hopefully sooner than later, as snow is not far away. Once repairs are made, the station building should also be open on weekends, as over the past ten years the building has been open only on weekdays.

The train station building is old, outdated, and inadequate. A new station building should be constructed downtown. Clearly, downtown Buffalo has changed and having Amtrak there is a huge advantage and provides a great option for people to arrive in downtown Buffalo from the major cities of New York State.

Imagine if Amtrak passengers could get off an Amtrak train, board an escalator, and then enter Metro Rail at the "Erie Canal Harbor" station, or proceed up another escalator and walk directly into two different hotels or the Key Bank Center (formally First Niagara Center) or Harbor Center. The mostly vacant One Seneca Tower (tallest privately owned building in New York State, outside of New York City) is currently under new ownership and could house a new Amtrak station and be integrated with development around that building and the "Seneca" station of Metro Rail.

There are options for a new Amtrak station at several locations, both slightly west and east of the current station. ESPA will be in contact with NYSDOT and the city to promote a new station in downtown Buffalo.

Gary Prophet



Schenectady Station Delayed Again

The nine-year effort to rebuild the deteriorating Schenectady Amtrak Station has suffered another delay. According to State Transportation Department spokesman Gary Holmes: The second attempt to start the rebuild "bids were scheduled to be opened" Friday, September 23. "They were not. We're working on a new letting date."

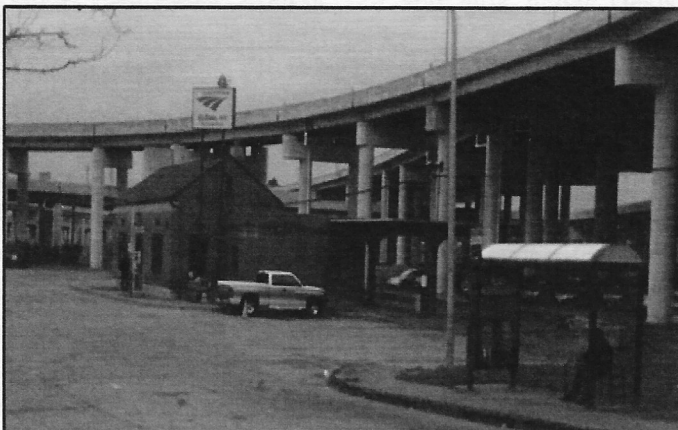
The original reconstruction bid was derailed early this year when only a single bid for just under \$25 million was received on the project estimated at only \$15 million. Subsequently, an architecture and design firm was hired to provide final design and construction support. The firm was to "streamline its scope, make it more efficient and attract a broader array of bidders" to the project according to the State Transportation Department.

In July, the Transportation Department announced the rebuild project would be split into two pieces. After Amtrak built a temporary station, a first contract would seek demolition of the existing Amtrak station and concrete work, including installation of culverts, and an elevator shaft. Bid documents were issued July 13 and due on September 22. A second contract, to build the new station, parking lot, and install the elevator, would be advertised in the autumn of 2017, with most work to be done in 2018.

The effort to build a new Schenectady train station began in 2007 with release of an early design. After several public meetings, the State and its consultants settled on a design which echoed architectural elements of the classic 1908 passenger facility that was razed in 1971; the current Amtrak station was constructed on the site in 1979.

Like many traditional railroad stations, the Schenectady facility is located in the heart of the downtown commercial, business and entertainment district. As the now 37-year-old Amtrak facility deteriorates, the City has revived with creation of a regional theater, a business incubator, new hotels, and a projected 2017 opening of a casino, as well as several new apartment and condominium complexes. The latest State Transportation statement on the Schenectady project did not include a timetable for completion, but previous statements indicated an opening at the end of 2018. The latest delay suggests the new Schenectady passenger facility may not open until 2019.

A possible added concern is that the project financing included funding from the federal 2009 American Recovery & Reinvestment Act. Under that law, funds must be spent by mid-2017 or they will not be available. *Tony Rudmann*



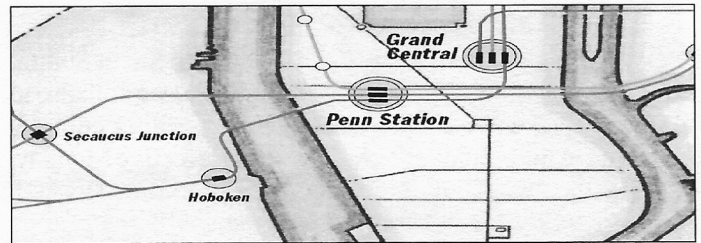
Buffalo's Exchange Street Amtrak Train Station

Rail Advocates Call Investments to Ease the Burden of Mayor de Blasio's Sky's the Limit Upzoning of Manhatattn's East Midtown

At a recent hearing on the Scoping for an EIS of the Mayor's East Midtown re-zoning proposal, rail advocates called for the NYC Planning Commission to halt all efforts associated with its re-zoning plan until it prepared a *comprehensive street use plan* for the Manhattan Central Business District, and a *comprehensive regional rail plan* focusing on Midtown Manhattan.

They argued that adding more than six million square feet of new office space in the heart of the nation's most congested business district, without any significant improvement to its impassible sidewalks and it's already overcrowded transit system, is a recipe for catastrophic failure. They urged the Commission to first develop comprehensive plans for the enhancement and expansion of its transportation facilities and services before proceeding with this re-zoning effort.

Rail advocates have long proposed a river-to-river auto-free light rail boulevard on 42nd Street – vision42 - to improve crosstown surface transit, and greatly increase pedestrian space, particularly in East Midtown. The 42nd Street line could serve as a model for an extensive grid of auto-free light rail streets in



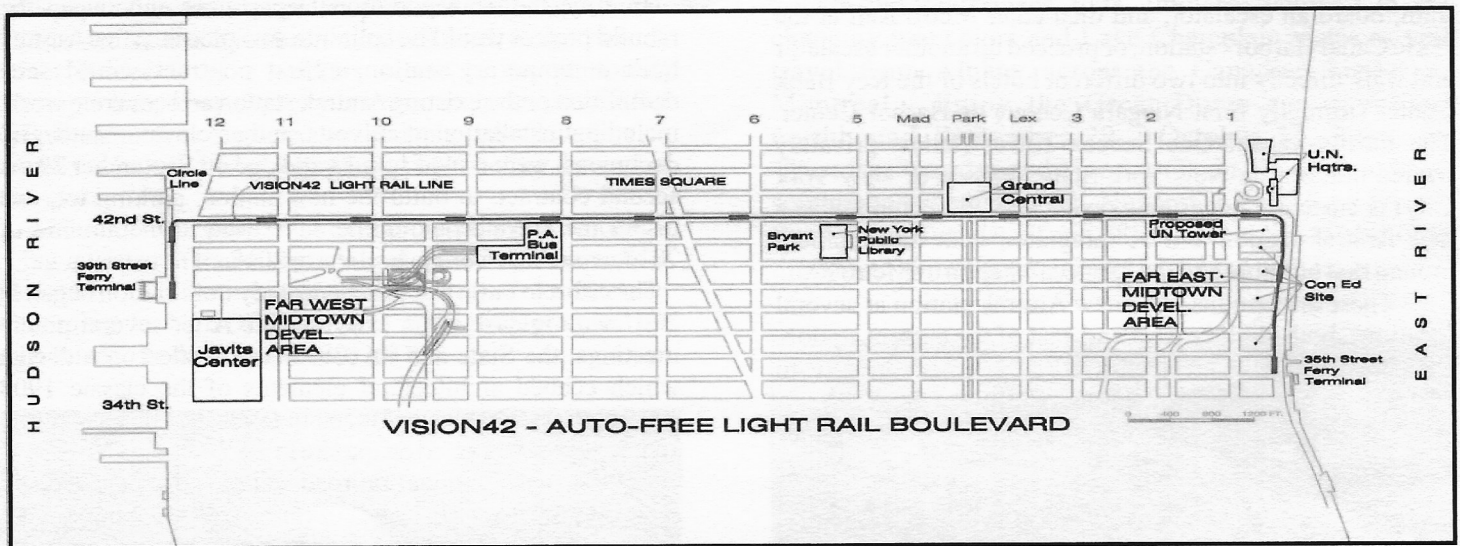
Advocates have also urged Jersey City and Hoboken elected officials to join them in urging Amtrak to consider routing its new Hudson River passenger rail tunnels by way of the Jersey City-Hoboken waterfront business district, the state's largest, in terms of Class A office space. This routing would also offer Northeast Corridor passengers an opportunity to transfer to the Hudson-Bergen light rail line, and would use existing NJ Transit trackage through the Hackensack Meadowlands, avoiding the disruption of wetlands and sparing Amtrak the need to construct a new \$1.6 billion Portal Bridge.

By stitching the region together, the Hoboken-Penn Station-Grand Central regional rail link would be critical to NY-NJ-CT region's success in competing with its global competitors who are making much more ambitious regional rail investments.

For more information about these rail plans please contact geo@irum.org or check out these websites:

www.vision42.org www.rwg.org www.irum.org

George Haikalis, ESPA Manhattan Co-ordinator



the core of Manhattan.

Rail advocates also urged transit agencies to advance plans for remaking the three commuter rail lines that serve the Manhattan CBD into a *co-ordinated regional rail system*, with frequent service, integrated fares, and thru-running first at Penn Station and then connecting to Grand Central. This would ease access for West of Hudson commuters to East Midtown, diverting them from crowded subways. With thru-running and the connection, there would be no need to expand Penn Station to the south, with its disruptive demolition of dozens of buildings that house thousands of workers.

Acela: Version 2.0 (Continued from page 3)

The train-sets will feature optimized interior layouts to provide more space for passengers, with flat and wide interiors, and quasi static gangways between cars. There will be “high-end” comfort, internet connectivity, improved boarding experience, and more comfortable seating with increased legroom. Included will be a Bistro Car, large space for luggage, baby changing area, and eight ADA toilets. The first class area will be equipped with a galley for service crew to prepare meals and beverages for first class passengers.

Benjamin Turon

Overnight Snow Train for North Creek

The Glen Falls *Post-Star* has reported that the Saratoga & North Creek Railway plans to offer a new service on winter weekends starting next year on January 13th in which passengers can take a train from Saratoga Springs on a Friday afternoon and spend two nights in sleeper car quarters at the North Creek rail station. The newspaper reported:

“The North Creek station is being renovated to include a lounge, bar and game room, among other amenities for those who choose to spend a weekend on one of the three Pullman sleeping cars that the railway plans to use for the trips. Shuttle service will be offered to Gore Mountain Ski Center, and visitors will be encouraged to explore other attractions in the area. The three sleeping cars will hold 53 guests, and there will be a bar and dining car as well. Guests will get on the train at 1 pm. Friday in Saratoga Springs and take the train north to North Creek, where it will stop for the weekend before returning to Saratoga Springs on Sunday afternoon to connect with Amtrak. The railway will not serve meals on the cars Saturday or Sunday morning, to encourage visitors to dine at local eateries”.

More information will be available once Iowa Pacific, the parent company of the SNCR, launches a new website for the planned service. Please also visit snccr.com for more on the tourist railroad.

Benjamin Turon



Empire Corridor Travel Tips and Discounts

Take advantage of the 'See NY & Save' discount which offers a 15% reduction off most Empire Corridor train services. The current promotion is being offered through the end of May 2016 and requires a five day advance purchase requirement. Visit Amtrak.com and look under Deals Current Promotions Northeast for more information, discount restrictions and to book a reservation. Note...this discount is NOT valid on the Lake Shore Limited.

AAA and NARP members receive 10% off most regular fares, with a three day advance purchase requirement. Senior citizens, veterans, and many students, can receive a 15% discount off most fares.

Visit www.amtrak.com and select 'DEALS' for the latest discount program information. Select Empire Corridor trains are now being featured as part of Amtrak's 'SmartFares' Specials, offered for sale every Tuesday through Friday.

Visit 'New York by Rail' featuring interesting attractions and destinations throughout New York at www.newyorkbyrail.com

Talgo Trains Go West

The two Talgo Series 8 train-sets that were famously orphaned by incoming Wisconsin "Tea Party" Governor Scott Walker (R) when he in 2010 rejected federal high-speed rail funding provided by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act have found a home in the Golden State.

According to the *Railway Gazette* the two Talgo trainsets (a total of 31 cars) are to be leased for five years to operate between Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo, offering reductions in journey times of 25 minutes. This Talgo lease is part of an \$82.0 million grant to the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency (which now oversees the state supported Pacific Surfliner Amtrak service) which will further the \$350.3 million 'All Aboard: Transforming Southern California Rail Travel' project that includes increasing the frequency of San Diego Coaster and Metrolink commuter services and additional Amtrak Surfliner intercity trains.

Bruce Becker of NARP stated to ESPA that the Talgos "will replace Amfleet I and Horizon train cars which are used for two current trainsets, will provide better ADA boarding, and may cost less than what Amtrak is charging for the lease of the current cars. Also, as the new Nippon Sharyo bi-levels cars are nowhere close to completion, the Talgos will provide additional capacity."

As part of its 2009 deal with State of Wisconsin under a Democratic administration, the Spanish rail builder Talgo built the two modern light-weight, low-slung, passive-tilting train-sets (plus two more bought by Oregon for Amtrak's *Cascades*) in the state. It then was going to set up and operate a permanent maintenance base for them as part of the state supported Chicago-Milwaukee *Hiawatha Service*.

But under Governor Walker, first the extension of rail service to Madison (the state capital) was axed in 2011, and then the newly Republican-controlled state legislature refused to advance \$2.5 million in state funding for a new maintenance base in 2012. The state renegeing on its contract resulted in litigation that was finally settled in 2015, with \$9.7 million being awarded to the rail manufacturer.

In the end, according to the *Wisconsin Journal Sentinel*, the state government paid about \$50 million overall from 2009-2015 to Talgo for, in the end, no new trains. As part the settlement, if the manufacturer is able to sell the trains, it will return 30% of the net proceeds of the sale (up to a limit of \$9.7 million) to Wisconsin. However, right now the trains are being leased, not sold, to California.

Benjamin Turon

New York By Rail

New York By Rail Magazine is the premiere Amtrak travel guide for destinations in New York, Vermont and Canada. Visit us at...

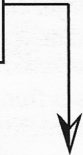
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2016 - 2017 ESPA Working Group Meeting and Lunch Dates

If you would like to become more active in ESPA, our bi-monthly 'Working Group' meetings are the perfect opportunity to learn more about the Association and how YOU can make a difference!

ALL ESPA members (and other interested persons) are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact President Gary Prophet at thegp@aol.com for more information or if you are planning on attending a meeting. Advance registration is required!

All Meetings are 12:00n to 4:00pm

November 12, 2016 Schenectady – Backstage Pub

January 21, 2017 Schenectady – Backstage Pub

Check www.esparail.org, for the most current information on meeting times and venues...ALL dates, locations and times are subject to change...

*** Stay in Touch with ESPA Via Facebook at
www.facebook.com/espa

ESPA MEMBERSHIP NEW OR RENEWAL

The Empire State Passengers Association is a volunteer network of people working to improve intercity rail, mass transit and bus service in New York State.

- Introductory membership (\$10.00 for one year)
- Renewal membership (\$24.00 per year)
- Renewal - Student, Senior, Fixed-Income (\$12.50 per year)
- Family membership (\$30.00)
- Sustaining membership (\$50.00)
- Patron membership (\$75.00)
- Corporate membership (\$100.00)
- Lifetime membership (\$300.00)

Member Number _____

Please make checks/money orders payable to ESPA and mail to ESPA c/o Andrew Cabal, P.O. Box 434, Syracuse, NY 13209.

ESPA/NARP Member

If you are a member of both ESPA and NARP you can save \$5 when renewing your ESPA membership.
(Renew for \$19 instead of the regular \$24).

Send news items and "Letters to the Editor" to: Robert Lenz, Editor, 10531 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031, Tel: 716-759-2315.
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