

The ESPA EXPRESS

NEWS FROM THE EXPIRE STATE PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION

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WORKING FOR A MORE BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Vol. 28, No. 3

May/June 2004

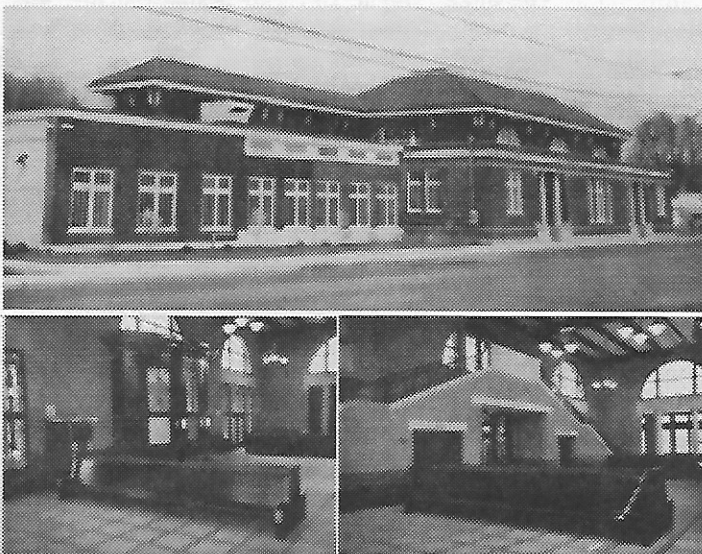
Syracuse Bridge Project "On Track" for Completion

The long delayed Park Street Bridge project in Syracuse is moving forward with a new joint Onondaga County IDA/ New York Susquehanna and Western (NYS&W) Railway agreement. Readers may recall that the \$2.5 million project designed to extend Susquehanna "On Track" service to the Amtrak station on the CSX Mainline was abruptly halted during the construction phase several years ago. The County IDA at that time agreed to halt the project as then owner Conrail noted that the bridge pile driving process was causing their parallel Mainline bridge to shift.

The current plan calls for NYS&W to act as a general contractor with the extensive railway building experience necessary to oversee and direct the project to its completion. The new pricetag for the project is set at about \$1.9 million according to Assistant Secretary for Onondaga County Economic Development Donald Western. Mr. Western points out that "linking the P&C Stadium, Amtrak and existing "On Track" stations at Carousel Center, Armory Square and Syracuse University are important additions to the Syracuse transportation system". Low ridership on "On Track" is a significant problem for the County, the 2 additional stops will add new possibilities for special services and promotion. The P&C Stadium plays host to "Salty Dog" Soccer and "Chiefs" Minor League Baseball.

On the contracting end NYS&W Vice-president Nathan Fenno tells ESPA that the major insurance liability issues surrounding the project (the track extension and bridge traverse both IDA and CSX property) have been resolved. *(Cont'd on page 4)*

Rome Station Picture



The newly refurbished Rome station will also house the headquarters of the Rome VIP bus company.

Quinn to Retire

In a stunning unexpected development, Buffalo's Jack Quinn announced on April 26th that he will not run for Congress this Fall. Quinn, who comes from a railroading family, currently chairs the Railroad Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee which develops rail legislation. As one of Amtrales strongest supporters in Congress, he received the National Association of Railroad Passengers' Golden Spike Award for his efforts two years ago. This year and last he initiated a letter to the heads of the Appropriations Committee urging full funding for Amtrak at \$1.8 billion. Last year's letter was co-signed by 219 Representatives, a majority of the House. He has also played a key role in drafting legislation to develop long term Amtrak funding.

Quinn said the rigors of travel and being away from friends and family were major factors in his decision. Douglas Turner, writing in the Buffalo News (4/27) suggested that constant pressure from House Republican leaders to conform to hard line positions also played a role. Quinn, a moderate Republican, represents a strongly Democratic district and would likely have lost his seat if he had consistently taken right wing stands. Instead he has pushed against his party's leaders on Amtrak, labor and other issues and led an effort within the party to increase Head Start funding.

Turner reported that Quinn was rebuffed when he requested Speaker Melvin Hastert's help in response to a recent threat from Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee Chairman Ernest Istook. This past February Istook wrote all Republicans who signed Quinn's letter supporting Amtrales \$1.9 billion request last year, threatening to cut transportation funds for their district if they signed such a letter again. As of press time, Paul Tokasz, Majority Leader of the New York State Assembly and a strong Amtrak supporter, was considering a run. But far more important to Amtrak in the short term will be Quinn's replacement on the Railroad Subcommittee.

Frank Barry

Boehlert Gets NARP Award

Congressman Sherwood Boehlert (R, Utica), received the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) 2004 Falcon Golden Spike Award. NARP President Alan Yorker praised Boehlert for his consistent support for rail passenger service over many years. Boehlert said he and his family regularly take the train, even using the *Lake Shore Limited* for travel to the Midwest. He has been instrumental in obtaining funds for the beautifully restored Utica Union Station that now bears his name as the Boehlert Intermodal Center, serving buses as well as Amtrak and the Adirondack Railroad. The Adirondack RR has also benefited from his ability to secure federal funds.

Boehlert serves on the Rail Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. He was one of the first to co-sign Jack Quinn's latest request for \$1.8 million for Amtrak.

Frank Barry

McCain - Put all Amtrak Routes up for Bid

On April 8th Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee Chair John McCain submitted his bill (S-2306) to reform Amtrak and reauthorize funding from 2005 to 2010. It would divide Amtrak into two entities, one to restructure the route system, the other to operate trains, but only under competitive bidding procedures. The bill would provide grants for existing corridor operation to states or interstate compacts which could either contract with the new American Passenger Railway Corporation (APRC, Amtrak's operating successor) or another operator. This would include the Northeast Corridor.

It would also authorize \$3.25 billion over five years for development of new corridors up to 300 miles or four hours in length/running time. However none of this money could be used for operating costs and the federal government would pay no more than 50% of the capital costs (vs. 80% for highways and transit.)

S2306 would set up a commission to recommend restructuring long distance routes as "links" between corridors. The linking trains would operate between 6AM-11PM only, requiring overnight hotel stays between links for long trips, thus ending a major advantage of long distance trains over auto travel. Profitable long distance routes that provide a unique service would be preserved (but no long distance route currently makes a profit). Other long distance routes would be discontinued unless states pay at least half the cost and the operator is selected on a competitive basis. Exceptions could be made for routes that serve areas without alternative public transportation.

Federal support for corridor operating costs would decline from 70% to 30% over the five year period, reinstating the declining support policies that led to the disastrous deferral of maintenance from which Amtrak now suffers. Federal support for long distance trains would be reduced by 50% during this period.

Current employees would get preference in hiring by any new operator taking over an Amtrak route, but contracts would have to be renegotiated within 30 days or become subject to arbitration.

The bill has only one co-sponsor, John Sununu, (R., N.H.) It has yet to be considered by McCain's committee, which is responsible for Amtrak legislation. *Frank Barry*

Security Bill Might Help Border Crossings

A bill to improve railroad security would require a detailed report on what is required to pre-clear rail passengers entering the U.S. from Canada. The bill, S-2273, would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to identify obstacles and draft language for any legal changes required to provide pre-screened lists of rail passengers before they arrive in the U.S. The present system of pre-clearing passengers before they board planes would be studied. This could conceivably help shorten or even eliminate delays at the border caused by inspection of passengers on the *Maple Leaf* and *Adirondack* trains.

S-2273 would also require a vulnerability assessment of rail freight and passenger transportation and testing of random screening methods for Amtrak passengers at five stations. It would authorize \$667 million over 5 years for upgrading and safety improvements for Northeast Corridor tunnels. It would also authorize \$62.5 million for Amtrak to prepare and implement a national security plan and up to \$65 million for additional Amtrak security projects.

The bill was drawn up by Senator McCain, (R., Ariz.) and approved by the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee which he chairs, on April 28th. Its 17 cosponsors include New York Senators Schumer and Clinton and 12 other Democrats. Despite McCain's leadership, the only Republican co-sponsors are Kay Bailey Hutchison (Tex.), Peter Fitzgerald (Ill.) and Olympia Snowe (Me.) *Frank Barry*

Amtrak Support Letters

House Rail Subcommittee leaders Jack Quinn (R., Buffalo) and Corrine Brown (D., Fla.) along with James Oberstar, (D., Minn.) have circulated separate letters supporting Amtrak's \$1.8 billion request for 2005, despite a threat from Rail Subcommittee Chair Ernest Istook (R., Okla.) to punish co-signers of such a letter. But Istook's February 12th letter threatening to reduce transportation funds for the district of any Congressman who requests more support for Amtrak seems to have had some effect, as only 20 Republicans signed Quinn's letter this year vs. 33 last year.

The only New York Republican co-signers this year are John McHugh (Watertown), Amory Houghton (Corning) and Sherwood Boehlert (Utica). Sue Kelly (Katonah), and Peter King (Seaford, LI) signed last year but not this year. James Walsh (Syracuse) and John Sweeney (Clifton Park) say they don't sign such letters because they serve on the Appropriations Committee to which the letters are addressed. Tom Reynolds (East Amherst) and Vito Fossella (Staten Island) have not co-signed any key letters or co-sponsored major Amtrak legislation in recent years.

The Oberstar-Brown letter has drawn 82 Democratic co-signers plus one Independent, vs. 184 + 1 last year, but Democratic signatures are still being collected. At press time, New York Democratic co-signers were: Timothy Bishop (Southampton), Carolyn McCarthy (Mineola), Gregory Meeks (Far Rockaway), Jerry Nadler (Manhattan), Anthony Weiner (Brooklyn), Edolphus Towns (Brooklyn), Major Owens (Brooklyn), Charles Rangel (Harlem), Eliot Engel, (Bronx), Maurice Hinchey (Saugerties), Louise Slaughter (Fairport). If you are represented by a Democrat not on this list, please ask him/her to sign the Oberstar-Brown letter. Frank Mulvey of the Railroad Subcommittee Staff is the contact person for this letter. Last year all New York's Democratic Representatives signed except Appropriations Committee members Nita Lowey (Harrison) and Jose Serrano (Bronx).

NARP Board Elects New Leaders

Directors of the National Association of Railroad Passengers elected George Chilson of San Diego to replace Alan Yorker (Atlanta) as President of the Association during their Annual meeting in Washington last month. The April 23rd election also installed Al Papp of New Jersey as Secretary, and Robert Glover of California as Treasurer. Wayne Davis of Maine remains Vice President for the Northeast but two new Vice Presidents were voted in elsewhere.

Chilson promises to lead NARP in developing "a vision that supports improvement and expansion of a national passenger rail system together with a credible plan for making that vision a reality," and to "create a nationwide grass roots organization to advocate for increased funding of passenger rail in all regions of the country."

Frank Barry

Teens Beautify Schenectady Station

Teenagers in a Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class are beautifying the Schenectady station with their paintings, on display during May. The work was coordinated by the Hamilton Hill Arts Center where the students have donated their time. "Most of the murals are (of) sites around Schenectady—(about) things we do when we have fun," Rachel Conn, who directed the effort, told Capital News (4/15). Local businesses and individuals have contributed over \$5000 to the project—a powerful demonstration of community pride and an impressive contribution from young people. *Frank Barry*

House Highway Bill Would Fund Some Rail Projects

On April 2nd the House of Representatives approved its TEA-LU bill HR-3550, which would fund highways and mass transit through 2009, replacing TEA-21. Highway spending would rise from \$33.6 billion in 2004 to \$38.9 billion in 2009 while transit funds would increase from \$7.3 to \$10 billion. HR-3550 retains the 80-20-federal/state match for transit projects despite Bush administration pressure to limit federal funding to 50% for transit while retaining 80/20 for highway projects.

Although HR-3550 lacks a rail title (unlike the Senate bill), it does include a few rail projects inserted by rail supporting members to help their districts. Sherwood Boehlert (R., Utica), secured funding for track improvements and new platform canopies at the Utica station (\$850,000); upgrading Adirondack Scenic Railroad right of way and improving crossings in Oneida and Herkimer Counties (\$1 mil.); new handicap lifts at Utica and Thendara, (\$100,000); and moving the local bus system into the refurbished Rome rail station (\$250,000).

Senator Charles Schumer and Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (D., Roch.) have obtained \$5.5 million to begin preliminary work on relocating the Niagara Falls station to the Old Customs House next to the Niagara River Gorge, a project expected to cost \$20 million. Jack Quinn obtained funds for a new intermodal facility and parking garage to replace the current Bufffalo Exchange Street station with an intermodal facility and parking garage on the site of the Donovan office building. The latter is to be demolished.

Preliminary funding of \$3 million is authorized for "Penn Station/East Side Access, upgrading Metro-North stations in the Bronx and a new station at Yankee Stadium." More parking will be funded at Mt. Vernon and at the LIRR Albertson station along with a new intermodal facility in Wyandanch.

HR-3550 authorizes final design and construction for the East Side Access project to bring Long Island trains into Grand Central and for the Second Avenue Subway in New York City. Stewart Airport rail access is authorized for study, including a possible light rail project serving Newburgh. Seven million is earmarked for the Nassau Hub study designed to "build up and fill in land uses in Central Nassau County and develop a much more intensive mass transit system to serve them" (Tri-State Campaign Mobilizing the Region 4/12 newsletter).

Finally, the bill moves high speed rail funding from "planning" to "development" and authorizes \$100 million for 2005-2012 for locomotives, rolling stock, track and signals. Unfortunately these funds are authorized, rather than appropriated, which means they are not guaranteed. Another \$95 million is authorized for Maglev.

Interestingly the bill adds the Boston and Albany route to the Northern New England High Speed Corridor designation. This makes it eligible for certain limited funding at present, and it could become eligible for serious improvement if significant funding ever materializes for high speed rail in the U.S.

HR-3550 must be reconciled with the Senate Bill (S1072) passed in February and it may have to be reduced in scope since President Bush has threatened a veto if the total exceeds his figure of \$256 billion. (However both chambers approved their versions with veto proof majorities.) The House version would cost \$275 billion, a 13% increase over TEA-21 levels (adjusted for inflation), compared to 5% proposed by Bush; the Senate bill would cost \$318 billion, a whopping 31% increase (Mobilizing the Region, 4/6).

Frank Barry

FRA Seeks Amtrak Competition

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has invited states to make recommendations for a "fair bid procedure" to allow competitive bidding by others for state-supported Amtrak routes. The notice in the April 13 Federal Register also asks states to indicate their interest in such a procedure for trains they presently support or intend to support.

This notice stems from a provision in the 2004 Amtrak Appropriation which allocates \$2.5 million to test competitive bidding. FRA wants to know which states are interested and which could implement a fair bid test most quickly. FRA wants comments by May 28 and hopes to award grants to states by September 30--a very fast schedule.

This effort is a beginning step toward testing privatization of Amtrak, a high Bush Administration priority. Amtrak, various freight railroads and the National Railroad Passengers Association say it won't work because freight railroads don't want multiple users of their track. Last year Herzog Contracting Corp., which operates commuter services in Florida, Texas and California, attempted to submit a proposal to operate the Missouri Mules between St. Louis and Kansas City. However they failed to reach agreement with Amtrak on the cost of using its reservation service. The 2004 appropriation language specifies that if Amtrak and a competitor cannot agree, the Secretary of Transportation will order facilities and equipment to be made available "under reasonable terms and compensation."

Herzog has not bid for the Missouri service this year. A major problem on this route has been congestion caused by heavy freight traffic and poor track conditions. This is one of the few routes where ridership declined during the past year.

Under pressure from Congress and the Administration, Amtrak has pressed all the states that support trains to pay the full cost of running them. This has caused severe strains and trains have faced discontinuance in Missouri, Michigan and Oregon. Missouri trains were saved by eliminating station agents and raising fares, which, along with delays, discouraged ridership. The Bush Administration wants to allow states to find an operator that can provide better service for less.

New York does not pay operating costs for its Empire Service trains but does provide financial assistance for the *Adirondack* between Schenectady and Montreal. Amtrak is asking more to run this train and both Amtrak and the State are looking for ways to reduce its costs.

Frank Barry

Depot Theatre's 26th Season

The Depot Theatre, located in the historic renovated Westport New York station, begins the 2004 season with 'Proposals' a romantic comedy by Neil Simon, June 25-28 & July 1-4. Other shows include 'Beehive' a musical review, 'Picasso at the Lapin Agile - a comedy, 'Kiss Me Kate' and 'Collected Stories' - a comedy drama by Donald Marguiles. The Westport station/theater is served by Amtrak's daily Adirondack train. For details call 518-962-4449 or www.dogtheatre.org. The Westport Hotel (a B&B) is located next door to the Depot Theatre.

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Lake Shore Moved Later

Amtrak's April 26th schedule switches the first eastbound Corridor train with the eastbound *Lake Shore Limited*. As a result, the first train in from Western N. Y. is now the relatively reliable No. 284 rather than the *Lake Shore*. The *Lake Shore*'s through sleepers and coaches to Boston were restored May 10, and three Ohio stops (Bryan, Sandusky and Elyria) have been restored after being dropped last Spring.

Twenty to thirty minutes have been added to most schedules west of Albany for trackwork. Trackwork is also responsible for temporarily dropping Amsterdam from the schedule of No. 286, the midday eastbound train in order to avoid having to cross it over to the westbound track. Amsterdam is the only station west of Albany located on the north side of the tracks, which requires eastbound trains to cross over. Weekend midday trains in both directions (282 and 287) will also skip Amsterdam.

The weekend northbound *Adirondack* now runs earlier than on weekdays, permitting arrival in Montreal before 6PM.

Amtrak has replaced two weekday *Metroliners* with *Acelas* to Washington and added one Sunday *Acela* to Boston. But as a result of viewliner shortages the overnight *Federal* between Boston and New York has lost both its sleeper and its name, becoming just another Regional train, albeit with reserved seats.

Major CSX trackwork on its Washington-Florida route has resulted in combining the *Silver Meteor* and *Silver Star* into one long train running via Raleigh and Columbia through June 22nd. The "Super Train" leaves New York at 9:45AM southbound, and Miami at 8:35AM northbound.

Frank Barry

Klein Fixing Cars

Jonathan Klein, Amtrak's Chief Mechanical Officer, showed National Association of Railroad Passenger Directors a like-new rehabilitated Amfleet lounge car at their meeting in Washington last month. Klein said maintenance has become extremely difficult because not only the companies that built the cars, but the subcontractors for all sorts of parts including the seats themselves, have gone out of business due to a scarcity of orders. As a result, standardization has become essential because it is too difficult to find parts for many different types of equipment when almost everything has to be made from scratch.

"We inherited 16 different kinds of food service cars—we're cutting that down to three Amfleet configurations—food counter with tables on both ends, counter with seats on one end, tables on the other, and counter with seats on both ends."

Klein has reorganized maintenance procedures to do inspections and minor maintenance at terminals between runs instead of waiting until cars get to the big shops at Beech Grove, Ind. and Bear, Del. The main shops now focus on overhauls and rebuilds rather than routine maintenance. "The only way to do it is to get a run of cars into a production line; once you get a run going you can't interrupt it no matter who tells you to do something else first." All this utilizes resources more efficiently, allowing more work to be done with fewer people.

Klein said that when funding was scarce pipe and door heaters with electrical problems were simply disconnected rather than fixed. Malfunctioning valves designed to drain pipes when temperatures fell below freezing were plugged or disabled rather than repaired. This resulted in non-operating toilets and burst pipes, which took many viewliners out of service last winter.

"We're cutting into the backlog," Klein concluded, "but it will take a couple of more years to see the results."

Frank Barry

Canadian Pacific Canadian Mainline Update

The 173-mile Canadian Pacific (CP) mainline between Schenectady and Rouses Point will continue to see infrastructure improvements during the remainder of 2004. The joint CP/NYS DOT project is part of the economic development / passenger rail enhancement program for the I-87 rail corridor. CP has completed their contractual obligation for the line upgrade during the past year.

New power turnouts installed at the new Saratoga Springs Station will be powered up during the 3rd quarter of 2004. This will allow for remote control operation of the switches by the CP dispatch center in Minneapolis, MN eliminating the hand throw operation of the controlled siding into the station.

During the 4th quarter the real centerpiece of the capital program should become operational. The fiber optic signal system which eliminates all lineside and roadside signal wiring is due to be cut into service. Signal problems have always been a significant problem for the Amtrak *Adirondack* and *Ethan Allen* trains which operate on the line.

Also scheduled and ongoing for the 2004 construction season is a joint Federal/ State/CP tunnel clearance project unrelated to I-87 initiative. Steve Fisk- senior manager of business development for CP points out that these improvements are for double stack container service to and from the U.S. and Canada.

One tunnel is located at Willsboro and the other at Fort Ticonderoga. Canadian Pacific and Norfolk Southern have been working closely together on marketing efforts to build traffic volume on the Canadian Mainline and thus the need for the freight improvements Mr. Fisk did not indicate that Amtrak service would be delayed as a result of this construction.

Ben Gottfried

Metro-North Orders 120 M-7's

Metro-North has exercised options for 120 new M-7 electric MU commuter cars under an existing contract with Bombardier. These are in addition to 180 previously ordered. Long Island has ordered 678 similar cars; the total cost to MTA will be \$1.9 billion. The new cars will feature dynamic braking, which slows the train by turning the motor into a generator and producing electricity instead of consuming it. They will also have on board monitoring and diagnostic systems.

The cars will be built in Quebec and assembled in Plattsburgh, using trucks produced in Auburn. They will be made of stainless steel and will replace 40-year-old MU's on Metro North. (From TRAINS newswire, 4/23).

Syracuse Bridge (Cont'd from page 1)

The engineering is also complete and the contract for construction will be put out to bid shortly according to Fenno. Interestingly, the joint IDA/NYS&W project is channeled to the Syracuse Binghamton and New York (SB&NY) Railway. This was the original charter name of these former Lackawanna Railroad lines when they were built, the Road was completed in 1854.

This effort in Syracuse is yet another example of IDA development of railroad property (Onondaga County also owns regional shortline- Finger Lakes Railway track) for the advancement of economic development, "smart growth" and passenger and freight transportation. These efforts in Syracuse complement station developments and continued NYSDOT and IDA investment on the entire SB&NY route to Binghamton. Syracuse rail passengers and ESPA look forward to the resolution of the Park Street bridge problem in 2004, the 150th anniversary of the SB&NY.

Ben Gottfried

Regional Rail Planning Keep it Simple and Save (KISS)

The New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Region enjoys a rich legacy of standard gauge commuter rail lines. Virtually all of the key pieces were put into place by 1910, with the opening of Penn Station and three years later in 1913, with the completion of the monumental Grand Central Terminal.

Transform Commuter rail to "Regional Rail"

These rail lines are an enormous "sleeping giant" of regional mobility. While the region's three commuter rail agencies do a fine job of bringing suburban workers to Manhattan job sites, other important travel markets are less well served, forcing many transit riders to use the area's congested highways instead. Visitors to the core face long waits for trains off-peak and weekends. Travelers going beyond a short walk of the Manhattan's two central train stations must transfer to city subways and buses. This inconvenience is made more painful by the need to pay a second fare. In the Bronx and Queens, travel to Manhattan on the commuter rail lines is discouraged due to high fares and infrequent service, forcing outer borough residents to take long bus rides to overcrowded subways. For suburb-to-suburb travel, any significant use of the commuter rail lines requires a bus-rail transfer. Again, infrequent rail service and high bus-rail fares discourage use. The key to more productive use of these rail lines is to operate them more like a regional rapid transit system, with very frequent off-peak and weekend service and fully integrated fares. This is the state of the art for many successful European rail systems and could radically transform the NY area railroads. Serving many travel markets enables the rail lines to play a larger role in reducing the region's growing and intractable highway congestion problem.

Use through-running to boost capacity. Making commuter rail lines more attractive will require significant increases in peak hour capacity. In the near term this capacity gain can be quickly achieved by operating Penn Station as a through terminal, with trains from New Jersey flowing through to Long Island or across the Hell Gate Bridge to the Bronx, Westchester and Connecticut. Some rail experts have argued that this would mean a 25% to 50% gain in capacity. This same concept can apply to new tunnel capacity. A new Trans-Hudson rail tunnel could use the six southern-most tracks in Penn Station already in place. East of the station, a new tunnel under 31st Street and then under Park Avenue would connect to the eight central tracks in the Lower Level of Grand Central. With this one-mile double-track tunnel connection, the region's rail system is quickly enhanced. Through running of trains between West of Hudson rail lines and rail lines to the north produces an extraordinary rail system at a fraction of the cost of current plans.

Streamline LIRR Access to Grand Central. As part of this through-running initiative it is important to advance a more sensible plan for bringing the LIRR to Manhattan's East Side. Instead of building a costly new double-deck station 150 feet below the existing 46-platform track terminal, MTA should take a second look at the "streamlined" alternative proposed by the Committee for Better Transit in 1996. This plan would tie the long completed, but unused 1.6-mile lower deck of the 63rd Street tunnel to the upper level loop tracks at Grand Central. LIRR trains would bring passengers to these five, little used platform tracks conveniently located just below the surface. In this worrisome era of terrorism, a deep tunnel station presents enormous challenges.

Use existing LIRR trackage for access to new West Side development. The through-running, regional rail plan permits enhanced access to development sites on Manhattan's West Side at a fraction of the cost of the \$2.0 billion #7 Flushing subway extension being advanced by NYC officials. By replacing two of the 30 rail tracks at the LIRR West Side Yard with a broad station platform, high capacity rail access for a new stadium/expanded convention center can be put into place almost instantly. Completing the through-running regional rail plan would be a new two-track connection to Amtrak's West Side line, replacing the existing single-track tunnel under the rail yard. A double track connection would greatly enhance capacity at this point, permitting through running on the northern five tracks at Penn Station now used only by the LIRR. Expanded Metro-North Hudson Line service could serve growing suburban travel markets and connect with many new development sites on Manhattan's West Side. By thinking "regionally" and resourcefully packaging the many separate and costly initiatives into a comprehensive rail plan, the region can enjoy the benefits of a vastly improved regional rail system sooner at far lower cost.

Why not become part of this effort? Attend the monthly meetings of the Regional Rail Working Group, a consortium of rail advocacy organizations in the NY metropolitan area. The meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6-8pm at 104 Washington Street in Lower Manhattan. The next two meetings are: May 19, 2004 and June 16, 2004 for more information contact: George Haikalis President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc. One Washington Square Village, Suite 5D, New York, NY 10012 phone: 212-475-3394 fax: 212-475-5051 geohaikalis@juno.com www.auto-free.org www.vision42.org

George Haikalis ESPA's Manhattan Coordinator

Second Avenue Subway Work to Begin

Construction on New York's new Second Avenue subway should begin this year on the section between 96th and 63rd Streets. Initially trains from 96th St. will turn west on the F line at 63rd Street, then enter a currently unused connection under Central Park to the BMT Broadway Line to continue downtown. By 2020 the line should be completed from 125th St. to the southern tip of Manhattan, following Second Avenue. This will be the first major subway expansion in New York in many years, and will open up the East Side, including the United Nations area. (from NY1 News, 4/12)

New York City Car Ownership Drops

The number of automobiles owned by New York City residents has fallen by 100,000 since 2000, a 5% drop (from 2 million), despite steady growth in population. Nearly half the drop occurred in Brooklyn, where car ownership fell 12% due in part to excessively high insurance rates. An N.Y.S. Assembly investigation blamed this on widespread insurance fraud in that boro, according to the New York Post (4/4).

Whatever the reasons, New Yorker disenchantment with cars makes good local transit more necessary than ever. And outside the city it makes tourist attractions near rail stations more attractive than those accessible only by car. However taking advantage of this requires coordinated planning. Tourist brochures must indicate that attractions can be reached by train and transportation must be available for those arriving by train—either by pick ups at the station or easily available rental cars. All this must be advertised and promoted. Doing so can help reduce both the congestion and air pollution which afflict New York, and reduce oil consumption as well.

Frank Barry

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Additional New York NARP Directors: John Ross 4 Maplewood Court Greenwich, NY 12834 Stephen Salatti 92 Fish Road, Mexico, NY 13114.....Lewis Hoppe 1900 Quentin Road E16 Brooklyn, NY 11229	

2004-2005 ESPA Meeting Dates

Saturday, June 19, 2004 The Parker Inn, Schenectady
 Saturday, August 7, 2004 Union Station, Utica
 Saturday, October 2, 2004 The Parker Inn, Schenectady
 Saturday, November 20, 2005 Amtrak Station, Rensselaer
 Saturday, January 8, 2005 The Parker Inn, Schenectady
 Saturday, March 5, 2005 Annual Meeting – Schenectady

If you are interested in becoming more involved in ESPA, these meetings are the perfect opportunity to learn more about ESPA and how you can make a difference. ALL ESPA members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact President Bruce Becker, 518-383-5985 or bbecker@westwoodcc.cc if you need more information or are planning on attending a meeting.

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 (\$20.00 per year)
- Renewal - Student or Senior Citizen (\$12.50 per year)
- Family membership (\$25.00)
- Sustaining membership (\$50.00)
- Patron membership (\$75.00)
- Corporate membership (\$100.00)
- Lifetime membership (\$300.00)

Individuals that join or renew at the sustaining membership or higher will receive the new ESPA lapel pin as a gift.

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

Send news items and "Letters to the Editor" to: Robert Lenz, Editor, 10531 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031, Tel: 716-759-2315. e-mail: RWLenz@aol.com. Deadline for material for July/Aug issue is June 25, 2004. Material may be reproduced if credit is given ESPA and to the writer

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