



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 23, No. 1  January, 1989

John R. Martin, Pres.; Eugene Skoropowski, V. Pres.; Robert Glover, Sec.; Joseph Horning, Jr., Treas.; Ross Capon, Exec. Dir.; Barry Williams, Asst. Dir.; Jane Colgrove, Membership Dir.; Harriet Parcels, Transp. Assoc.

National Association of Railroad Passengers News (ISSN 0739-3490), is published monthly except November by NARP, 236 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Suite 603, Washington, DC 20002. 202/546-1550. Membership dues are \$15/year (\$7.50 under 21 or over 65) of which \$4 is for a subscription to NARP News. Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC.

Postmaster: send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers, 236 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Suite 603, Washington, DC 20002.

(This has news through January 6. Vol. 22, No. 11 was mailed December 12.)

RETURN REQUESTED

A Sound 'Blueprint'

NARP STAFF SPREADS THE WORD



One of NARP's more important functions is to explain our transportation views to other organizations. In recent months, NARP staffers have spoken to a variety of groups. On Oct. 4, Executive Director Ross Capon addressed the Rail Committee of the Chicago Assn. of Commerce & Industry, in Chicago. Above, he is introduced by committee chairman Jeffrey Mercer (left), Corporate Counsel of IC Industries. Capon also spoke in Washington at the National Press Club's "Transportation Table" on Oct. 14, and at the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) on Nov. 16. Transportation Associate Harriet Parcels addressed the National Conference of State Railway Officials, below, in Nashville on Aug. 10. In Washington, Parcels spoke at the American Planning Assn.'s Mid-Atlantic Conference on Oct. 27, and at the High Speed Rail Assn. on Nov. 10. Copies of the speeches, and Capon's chapter in the IPS book (*July News*, p. 2), are available for \$1 each from the NARP office.



Environmentalists Support Transit, Amtrak

"Mass transit and passenger railroads are more energy- and cost-efficient and deserve greater support."

—32-page summary of *Blueprint for the Environment, Advice to the President-Elect from America's Environmental Community*

"Automobiles contribute a third of all CO₂ production in the U.S. . . . When we start taking the greenhouse crisis seriously and move away from gasoline powered autos and buses, we will have to face the question of how people are going to get to work—and make a huge investment in rail and other urban mass transit."

—Cornell University Prof. Carl Sagan and wife Ann Druyan, in letter to President-elect Bush published as the lead story in Nov. 27 *Parade* magazine

"We must recycle more, . . . turn off lights, use mass transit, do a thousand things differently in our everyday lives. We owe this not only to ourselves and our children but also to the unborn generations who will one day inherit the Earth. . . . By far the most efficient and effective way to spur conservation is to raise the cost of fossil fuels."

—Jan. 2 *Time* magazine cover feature, "Planet of the Year, Endangered Earth," pp. 30, 38

Blueprint for the Environment, Advice to the President-Elect from America's Environmental Community consists of over 700 detailed policy, budget and legislative recommendations developed by more than 30 U.S. environmental organizations. These recommendations to revitalize the federal commitment to environmental protection involve all federal agencies and commissions whose actions significantly influence the U.S. and/or global environment.

Integral to *The Blueprint* are 27 transportation recommendations which call for a shift in federal funding priorities towards greater emphasis on energy-efficient, clean alternatives to the single-occupant auto.

At a Nov. 30 breakfast meeting with President-elect Bush, environmental leaders presented and discussed *The Blueprint*. National Wildlife Federation President Jay Hair, borrowing from a Bush campaign slogan, told Bush: "Read my

(continued on page 3)

Skinner Next DOT Secretary

President-elect Bush's choice for secretary of transportation is Samuel K. Skinner, since 1984 chairman of the Regional Transportation Authority of Northeastern Illinois (RTA). By law, RTA establishes the farebox-recovery requirements for 3 service boards: Metra (commuter rail), Chicago Transit Authority, and PACE (suburban buses).

At Skinner's initiative, RTA also has developed a 10-year strategic transportation plan with capital requirements identified.

Skinner, a senior partner in a Chicago law firm (RTA work

is part-time), "is highly regarded by those who have worked with him as a federal prosecutor, private attorney and [at the RTA]" (*Washington Post*, Dec. 23). For more than a decade, Skinner has commuted by train between Lake Forest and Chicago.

Skinner, 50, will be the first U.S. transportation secretary with major previous experience in a mass transit agency. He also holds a private pilot certificate with an instrument rating.

Bush said Skinner will be "an effective and visionary leader who will get all the legs of our transportation system—air, land, and sea—working together." Bush warned there would be constraints, saying "he did not plan to drain the large annual surpluses in air and highway trust funds to improve infrastructure systems since those surpluses help cut the overall budget deficit."

Skinner "listed among his priorities upgrading the Federal Aviation Administration to address the explosive growth in air travel, revitalizing the nation's infrastructure and working to continue the process of deregulating the various transportation modes" (*Journal of Commerce*, Dec. 23).

NARP hopes Skinner will remember his good work on identifying transit capital needs, take a serious look at opportunities for passenger trains to alleviate airport congestion, and include railroads in his definition of infrastructure! ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

EFFECTIVE WITH AMTRAK'S JAN. 15 TIMETABLE:

- New York-Montreal "Adirondack" will convert from Amfleet I to RTG Turboliner equipment (bigger windows!);

- New York-Miami/Tampa "Silver Star" will operate :30 later each way; New York-Jacksonville "Palmetto" will operate 1:00 earlier south, 1:10 later north;

- New York-Chicago "Cardinal" will operate :30 earlier west;

- Seattle-Salt Lake "Pioneer" will operate :30 earlier east; Los Angeles-Salt Lake "Desert Wind" will operate :45 earlier east; "California Zephyr" will dep. Oakland :30 earlier, with Denver-Chicago schedule unchanged. (Goal: to improve trains' reliability by increasing station times at Salt Lake, Denver. NARP objected to this, especially "Pioneer's" 6:00 AM Seattle departure.)

ON DEC. 1, AMTRAK:

- eliminated *Family Fare*, regarding it as an uncontrollable discount heavily used during peak travel periods (since this impacts mainly on one-way trips, lower one-way fares are being considered);

- increased regular fares 3% on average;

Amtrak has raised penalty for purchasing tickets on-board trains, from \$3 to \$5. Penalty applies only at stations where ticket agent is on duty at train time.

Rhinecliff, NY, Amtrak station was rededicated Apr. 14, following completion of \$700,000 renovation, funded equally by Amtrak and State of New York.

Gastonia, NC, has a new \$100,000 Amtrak station, located at Hancock and Airline Av., 2 miles east of former station downtown. Depot, paid for by Southern Ry., opened June 15.

Windsor, CT, Amtrak station was rededicated Oct. 29, following \$920,000 restoration and conversion into multimodal rail-bus station. Funding came from federal UMTA, State of Connecticut, Town of Windsor, Amtrak.

Utica, NY, Amtrak station improvements, funded by State of New York, Amtrak, and Conrail, were dedicated Nov. 2. \$500,000 upgrading included construction of new glass-enclosed walkway between platforms and station.

Kissimmee, FL, Amtrak station was rededicated Nov. 4, following \$125,000 restoration. Project was largely volunteer—with cash, materials, labor contributed by local individuals and businesses, Disney World, Amtrak, City of Kissimmee.

'Wheels of Progress'

Major rail passenger improvements planned to enter service in 1989-90 (if exact date is not shown, this is only an estimate).

1989

- Jan. 9—Tri-Rail opens 68-mile Miami-West Palm Beach commuter rail line (3 of 15 stations won't be ready yet—see May 1); free fares until May 1.

- Jan. 16—SEPTA resumes 26-mile Philadelphia-Wilmington commuter rail service after 6-year absence (27 one-way trips per weekday, primarily service in each direction during morning and afternoon rush hours).

- March—Amtrak's Washington-New York-Vermont-Montreal "Montrealer" resumes after 2-year suspension.

- May 1—Tri-Rail opens last 3 commuter stations, including Miami-NW 79th St. Station permitting direct access to Metrorail (others: Boynton Beach, Ft. Lauderdale-Cypress Creek Rd.).

- May—Amtrak opens 68-mile Philadelphia-Atlantic City route (4 daily round-trips including 1 to/from Washington; plus 1 to/from New York, Trenton).

- July—Amtrak's new Pittsburgh station opens.

- August—San Diego opens 11.1-mile East Line light-rail transit segment: Euclid Av.-El Cajon.

- September—NJ Transit begins Lindenwold (NJ)-Atlantic City commuter service over same tracks Amtrak uses.

1990

- September—Fredericksburg/Manassas (VA)-Washington commuter rail lines open.

- September—Washington opens 3.3-mile Red Line heavy-rail transit segment: Silver Spring-Wheaton.

- Late 1990—Washington opens 1.5-mile Green Line heavy-rail segment: Gallery Place-"U" St.

- Late 1990—21.5-mile Los Angeles-Long Beach light-rail line opens.

- Late 1990—West Side Connection opens in Manhattan; Amtrak consolidates all trains at New York Penn Station, vacates Grand Central Terminal. ■

AMTRAK'S FLAGSHIP STATION



—Photo by Amtrak

The exquisitely restored Main Hall at Washington Union Station. WUS reopened Sep. 29, following a 2-year, \$160 million rehabilitation and redevelopment project. The Beaux Arts station, designed by Daniel H. Burnham and built between 1903 and 1908 at a cost of \$4 million (!), had been closed to the public since early 1981 due to decay. The "new" WUS boasts a modern Amtrak station with a waiting room twice as big as the previous one—and with 4 times as many seats. The new ticket counter has 50% more tellers, baggage arrives on airport-style carousels, and electronic arrival & departure displays are located throughout the building. A 5-story, 1400-space garage provides the first parking at WUS (other than limited street parking) since 1974. Within 2 years, station tracks will be extended to the waiting room. Amtrak will move its corporate headquarters into WUS's office floors this winter. The station also features 9 movie theatres, 120 shops and restaurants, and a WMATA rail-transit station (Red Line). Amtrak provided \$70 million, the District of Columbia \$40 million, and private developers \$50 million.

BLUEPRINT (continued from page 1)

lips: protect the environment." Bush responded, "I will."

The document is the culmination of a year's work by environmental organizations with advice and input from over 300 knowledgeable individuals who participated in 31 task forces. Thomas B. Stoel Jr. of the Natural Resources Defense Council chaired *Blueprint's* 20-member steering committee. NARP's Harriet Parcells worked on Amtrak and transit issues for *The Blueprint's* transportation task force, which was chaired by David Burwell of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

The summary highlights major themes underlying the document's recommendations: "environmental threats of unprecedented proportions" facing the world and our nation, including: global warming, depletion of the ozone layer of the atmosphere, wasteful and environmentally-harmful use of energy and air pollution. *The Blueprint* calls upon our new president and his new administration to be leaders in addressing these critical issues. "Our recommendations are directed to our new President. . . . Obviously all of us need to act if environmental problems are to be solved. But in many areas the missing ingredient is Presidential leadership."

Changes in transportation are fundamental to solving our critical environmental problems. In the U.S., transportation is second only to electric utilities in contributing to emissions of carbon dioxide, the leading global greenhouse gas. Our heavy reliance on autos and trucks drives our thirst for foreign oil and is the leading cause of non-attainment of federal clean air standards in U.S. urban areas.

The transportation recommendations are based upon the following key principles:

- **Integration:** "The federal government has a strong

U.S. OKAYS ST. LOUIS LIGHT RAIL

After trying for years to thwart St. Louis' proposed light-rail transit system, the U.S. Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) relented and committed itself to the project Oct. 25 when Administrator Alfred DelliBovi signed a full-funding contract. Construction is to begin in 1989, with completion expected in 1993.

The \$288 million project is quite innovative, as the 18-mile trolley line will use 14 miles of existing rail right-of-way, including a downtown tunnel and Mississippi River bridge deck.

UMTA's change of heart was due largely to intensive lobbying by project backer Sen. John Danforth (R-MO).

interest in promoting clean air, providing a secure energy future for the nation and protecting the essential aesthetic, cultural and historic attributes of American life. None of these federal interests drive transportation policy, yet transportation policy, or lack thereof, often cripples the promotion of these other objectives."

- **Least Cost Mobility:** "Federal transportation policy must acknowledge the public interest in influencing trip selection so that mobility is provided at the lowest possible public cost . . . Subsidies are appropriate to influence consumer selection of transport mode when the public benefits of the selection exceed the public costs of the subsidy."

- **Energy Independence:** "The transportation sector now consumes over 62% of all petroleum consumed in the U.S. In 1987, total transportation oil consumption exceeded total domestic production for the first time in history. We recommend that the Dept. of Transportation adopt the specific goal of keeping transportation oil consumption within the limit of total domestic oil production."

The recommendations that follow from these principles call for a significant shift in federal funding priorities. A key recommendation is a 30-to-50-cents-a-gallon increase in the federal gasoline tax (phased-in at the rate of 10-cents-a-gallon per year), with some of the revenues earmarked for investment in energy-efficient transport modes (e.g., mass transit, intercity passenger rail, bicycle and pedestrian facilities) and for purchase of key rail corridors being abandoned nationwide. The gas tax proposal includes a rebate program for low-income individuals to offset any adverse impacts.

The Blueprint's recommended \$2 billion-a-year increase in federal transit spending would revitalize the federal commitment to mass transit and bring spending to \$5.1 billion in 1990, the level recommended by the Carter Administration for FY 1981! The 9 billion passenger trips taken on transit in 1987 helped minimize air pollution, dependence on foreign oil, urban congestion that threatens the economic vitality of our cities, and such global threats as acid rain and global warming.

The Blueprint calls for elimination of the U.S. tax code's incentive to drive to work alone, recommending the taxing of employer-provided free parking above \$50-75/month, raising tax-free transit benefits to the same level, and eliminating taxing of carpool/vanpool benefits. (See *Dec. News*, p. 3, re the similarly-motivated D'Amato amendment, which the Senate narrowly defeated on Oct. 7.)

The Blueprint calls for eliminating the subsidy that favors freight transport by heavy trucks versus rail by recommending enactment of a weight-distance tax on heavy trucks. This would replace existing heavy-truck taxes, with a tax

based on a heavy truck's weight and annual mileage traveled, yielding about \$2-3 billion/year in new revenues. The weight-distance tax would eliminate the current tax inequity under which heavy trucks pay only about 65%—and the largest, most rail-competitive trucks about 55%—of their highway cost responsibility.

The *Blueprint* supports the current right of states to designate and limit access by heavy trucks to the highways capable of handling heavy truck traffic and urges DOT to oppose congressional efforts to increase truck sizes and weights.

The *Blueprint* supports preservation of the Staggers Act, the important 1980 legislation that freed the nation's ailing rail freight industry from outdated regulations that undermined the industry's ability to compete with other modes in the marketplace. Staggers has yielded a revitalized freight railroad industry with benefits to shippers and the environment.

In support of a more integrated approach to transportation planning and development, *The Blueprint* recommends that:

- the Secretary of Transportation establish a new office of Asst. Secretary for Environmental & Energy Policy to coordinate national transport policy with national environmental and energy policy objectives;
- the Federal Aviation Administration consider alternatives to new airport construction, including expansion of passenger rail service in key corridors;
- the different funding eligibility requirements for bicycle, pedestrian facility and HOV programs be eliminated, with all such programs made eligible for all categories of federal-aid highway programs; and
- the Secretary of Transportation assure that all DOT projects, programs and plans in air-quality non-attainment areas conform with the adopted State Implementation Plan for the area.

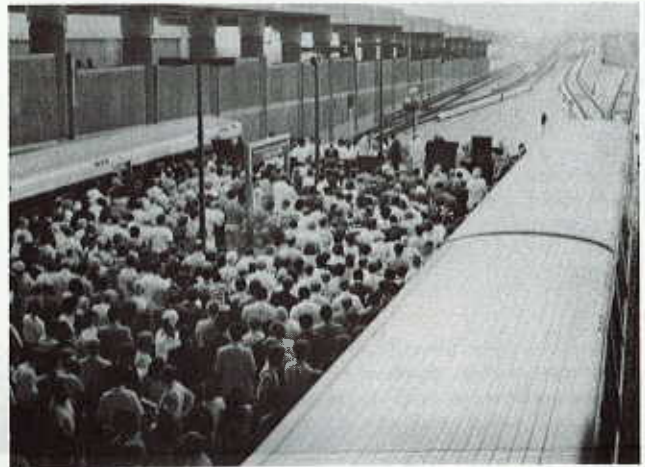
The *Blueprint* recommends other important actions to further protect irreplaceable natural and cultural features of our environment from the impacts of transportation actions and to encourage development of non-motorized transport in developing nations. Such actions include reconsideration of DOT's current programmatic 4(f) evaluations of allegedly "minor" transportation projects that impact on parks, wetlands, historic sites and recreational areas; enactment of a National Scenic and Historic Roadways Protection Act to wisely manage and protect scenic and historic roadways; and directions to the multi-lateral development banks (i.e., World Bank) to give greater emphasis to non-motorized modes in transport lending and to conduct environmental impact analyses to determine impacts of major transport lending projects.

The *Blueprint* recommendations have been delivered to the respective transition team contacts for each executive agency and meetings are taking place with these individuals to discuss the importance of the recommendations.

A 300-page *Blueprint* covering approximately 300 recommendations will be available in paperback in late January for \$13.95 from bookstores, many of the participating organizations (not NARP), and the publisher: Howe Brothers, P.O. Box 6394, Salt Lake City, UT 84106 (orders also accepted at 800-426-5387). Price includes shipping and handling on prepaid orders. The report is available on computer disk in various formats (prices start at \$99.95) from Hughes Productions, P.O. Box 31, Silver City, NV 89428 (or call 702-847-9124). You may request a copy of the

32-page *Blueprint* summary through *Blueprint for the Environment*, 1400 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036 (limit one per person). ■

TRAINS TO ATLANTA AIRPORT



—Photo by Barry Williams

An opening day crowd gathers at East Point Sta., College Park, GA, as Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) dedicates its new 2.6-mile heavy-rail transit line to Hartsfield International Airport June 18. In the Aug. News, we reported that Atlanta's is the 4th U.S. airport to have rail transit service. We should have added that another airport is served by commuter rail service: Philadelphia International (1985). Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) commuter trains serve the airport every 30 minutes, 18 hours a day. A heavy-rail line is now under construction to Chicago Midway Airport, and a light-rail line to St. Louis Lambert Airport has been approved. A number of other U.S. cities are showing interest in establishing transit or commuter rail to their airports.

NARP REGIONAL MEETINGS

Region 2 (NY): Sat., Feb. 25, Albany, 11:30 AM-4 PM, Empire State Plaza Conference Center (part of state capitol complex). Speaker: NARP's Harriet Parcels. Tour of Amtrak's Rensselaer Shop (tentative). Details: Don MacLean, 518/377-4390.

Region 4 (DC, MD, VA, WV): Sat., Mar. 11, Washington, 8:30 AM-1 PM, Univ. of D.C., Room 44A03 (at WMATA's Van Ness Sta.). Speaker: Najeeb Halaby, Dulles Area Rapid Transit Rail. Details: Jim Churchill, 6301 Stevenson Av., #715, Alexandria, VA 22304; 703/751-8427.

Region 5 (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN): Sat., Mar. 18, Atlanta, 9 AM, Radisson Hotel, Courtland & International Blvd. (2 blocks from MARTA's Peachtree Sta.). Dinner speaker: Dennis Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer, Amtrak. Ride on New Georgia RR (optional). Details: Terry Hall, 3918 Harts Mill Ln., Atlanta, GA 30319; 404/455-3157.

Region 6 (IN, MI, OH): Sat., Mar. 18, Indianapolis, 8:30 AM-3:30 PM, Ramada Inn South, 4574 S. Emerson Av. (Beech Grove). Speaker: NARP's Barry Williams. Tour of Amtrak's Beech Grove Shops. Details: Phil McGeath, 2718 Todda Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46229; 317/898-1256.

Region 9 (AR, KS, MO, OK, TX except El Paso): Sat.-Sun., Mar. 18-19, Marshall (TX), 9 AM, Ginnocchio Hotel (adjacent to Amtrak sta.). Details: Griff Hubbard, 1270 Brandywine, Towne Lake, Longview, TX 75601; 214/758-0955.