

NARP & RAIL Magazine: Working Together to Bring World-Class Passenger Rail to America

This column marks the first in a regular series of contributions from the staff at the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), sharing with RAIL Magazine readers their latest efforts to improve access to passenger rail service for all Americans. RAIL Magazine and NARP will also be collaborating on future events, such as co-promotion of events, social media and feature articles. We look forward to an exciting and mutually-beneficial partnership.

By Ross Capon and Malcom Kenton

Thank you to *RAIL Magazine* for giving us the opportunity to contribute to this outstanding publication. By painting a complete picture of positive developments in passenger train development across the United States, *RAIL* plays a central role in advancing our shared cause: a modern network of passenger trains—within and between cities, high-speed and conventional—that enables mobility, sustains good jobs, fosters economic development, and enhances the quality of our lives and our environment. The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) is proud to work in partnership with *RAIL Magazine*

and the Community Transportation Association of America – which publishes *RAIL* – in advancing this increasingly vital mode of travel.


NARP is the nation's oldest and largest advocacy organization representing current and potential users of passenger trains and rail transit. Founded in 1967, NARP played a central part in securing the passage of the legislation that created Amtrak in 1970, and we have ever since been on the forefront of educating decision-makers and the public about the benefits of, and the need for, a world-class passenger train network in the US.

NARP pursues our goal through relentlessly pushing the facts and encouraging public involvement in transportation decision-making. We are a trusted source of accurate information and analysis for members of the media and those in public service. We inform and educate by means of our weekly Hotline News (www.narprail.org/hotline), frequently-updated blog (www.narprail.org/blog), newsletter for members and public officials, growing presences on Facebook and Twitter, appearances at transportation-related events, and our kiosk in Washington, DC's Union Station. We publish fact sheets, position papers, and

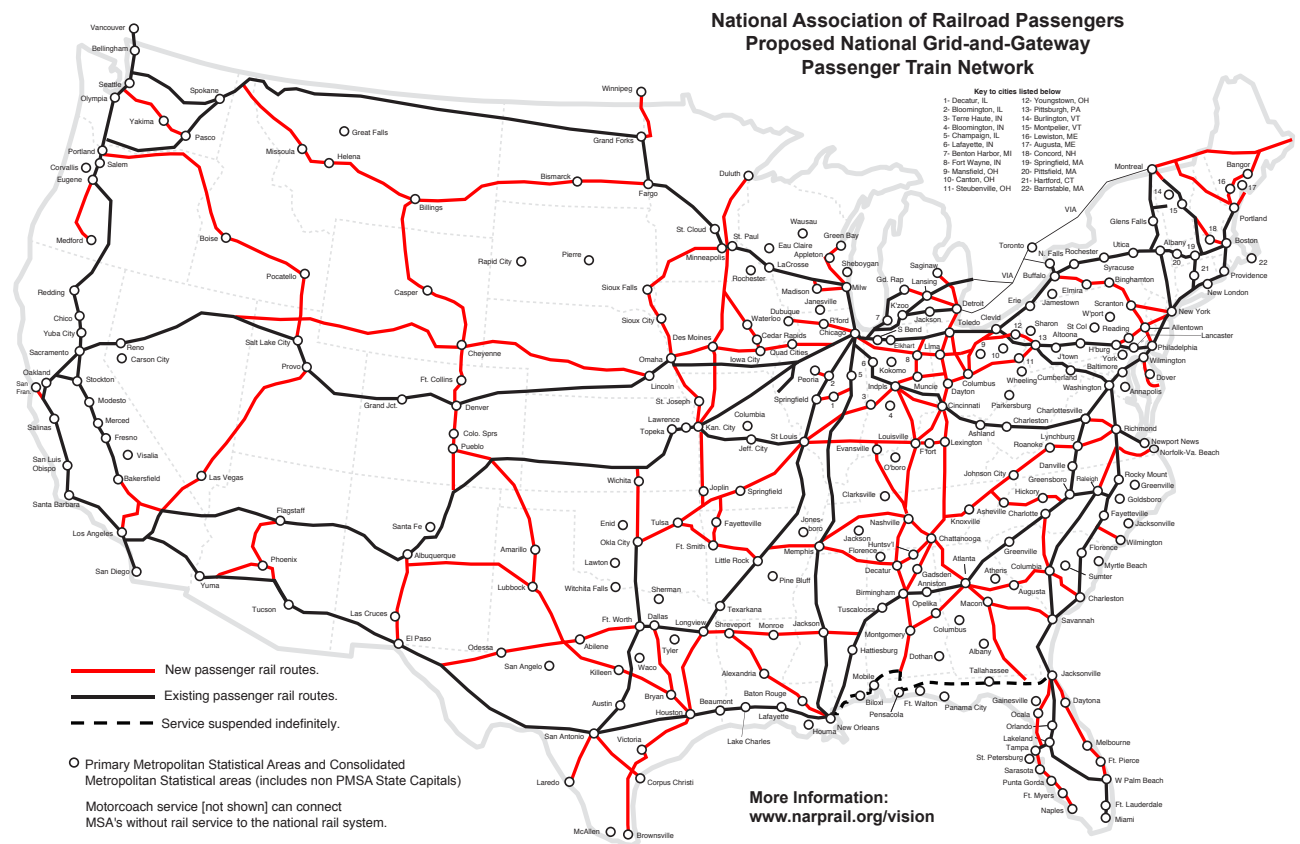
other information geared towards policymakers and the public. We serve as a resource for travelers seeking to get around by train and connecting public transportation. We work collaboratively with Amtrak and other carriers to promote high-quality service to passengers before, during and after train trips.

We face huge challenges. Well-heeled think tanks and interest groups that seek to perpetuate our inadequate fly-drive transportation policy are taking advantage of a wave of anti-Washington sentiment to discourage elected leaders from making the bold investments in modern transportation solutions that the country needs. Meanwhile, highway and air congestion worsens, air pollution and climate change continue unchecked, and a host of job-creation and economic development opportunities remain unrealized. Our challenge as informed advocates is to convince people that modernizing and expanding passenger rail is a prudent investment, even during lean times. Trains can help the private sector function more efficiently while providing good jobs at a time of high unemployment. Low interest rates are a good time to expand public investment in rail and other vital infrastructure.

We are working to make sure that Amtrak continues to improve and expand. This includes pressing for ongoing capital funding to purchase badly-needed new cars and locomotives. On the high speed rail front, we are supporting Governor Jerry Brown's work to advance California's high-speed rail project. We are pressing the case that this project represents the most efficient way to accommodate the state's growing population; and that reliance on expanding highway and airport capacity is wrong.

We look forward to having your support for our tireless advocacy in the months and years ahead. You can keep in touch by going to www.narprail.org and signing up for our email list free of charge, and by following our Hotline News and blog (RSS feeds are available). We encourage you to take your support a step further by becoming a NARP member. Your dues of as little as \$35.00 for one year entitles you to a subscription to our newsletter plus a 10% discount on most Amtrak rail fares. Visit www.narprail.org/join to learn more about membership. 

Ross Capon, President and CEO, has headed NARP since 1975. He is widely recognized as an expert on the policy and politics of passenger rail in the US. A native of Newton, Massachusetts, and graduate of the University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana; major in history; minors in economics and music), he and his family live in Bethesda, MD.



Malcolm Kenton, Director of Outreach and Engagement, came to NARP from his great personal interest in the social and environmental sustainability aspects of transportation. A native of Greensboro, NC, where he earned his BA in Political Science and Environmental Studies from Guilford College, he now lives in near northwest Washington, DC.

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