

# Intercity Rail Passenger Systems Update



No. 19

Fall 2012

## Current Research and Development in Intercity Rail Passenger Systems

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*Intercity Rail Passenger Systems Update* is published exclusively on the Internet. The table of contents offers links directly to each article, or you can scroll down to read the entire newsletter. Please keep your bookmark at [www.trb.org/Publications/PubsStandingCommitteeNewsletters.aspx](http://www.trb.org/Publications/PubsStandingCommitteeNewsletters.aspx) for upcoming editions.

The Transportation Research Board's Committee on Intercity Passenger Rail (AR010) is concerned with research that will lead to better planning and implementation of intercity rail passenger systems, with particular emphasis on the full range of high-speed systems including new technology. This research will include demand analysis, financial considerations, economic impacts (including consideration of user and social benefits), and institutional arrangements including public-private partnerships. The research should also address impacts on other rail operations, coordination with other modes, rail-highway interfaces, corridor versus system concerns, technology assessment, environmental impacts, and implementation strategies.

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## FROM THE CHAIR

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### Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The calendar seems to be flying by even faster than usual this year. This issue recaps the excellent events of the 2012 TRB Annual Meeting, and my heartfelt thanks go out to all those who organized and participated in our sessions and workshops. The workshop on rail security demonstrated the crossmodal nature of the science and application of effective security strategies. Our session on private-sector engagement in passenger rail highlighted overseas progress in this area and some of the institutional challenges to creating a fertile environment for new sources of capital in the United States. We are continually called to look outside the box.

Research that will enhance public understanding of the role of intercity passenger rail service is, as most of you know, a personal priority for me in leading the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (AR010). This newsletter is but one vehicle for achieving this goal. Another is website improvement—Eric Tyrer has been working on enhancements that will make our website even more user-friendly and relevant. He could use a hand in both new content development and in helping to manage updates on a timelier basis—any volunteers?

You will recall that Genaro Mejia is our new Research Coordinator, and I would encourage any of you with specific ideas for topics to be solicited to quickly send them to [genaro.mejia@arup.com](mailto:genaro.mejia@arup.com), with a copy to Randy Wade, Chair of the Research Subcommittee, at [rwade@hntb.com](mailto:rwade@hntb.com).

Thanks again to all of you for your interest in intercity passenger rail!

—David Simpson, Chair  
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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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Though it has been many months since TRB's 91st Annual Meeting—and preparations for the 92nd Annual Meeting have begun—we felt it was important to devote this newsletter issue to a review of the programs that the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee sponsored at the meeting. For those who had the opportunity to attend and for those who did not, we hope that this recap demonstrates the wide range of issues involved in the provision of a successful intercity rail system. As we begin planning for the next Annual Meeting, we will take into account the direction set by TRB's Technical Activities Council—as noted by former AR010 Chair Anthony Perl—to “embrace ‘a back to basics’ research agenda that emphasizes deploying research that supports strategies for doing things better, faster, and smarter.”

Articles in this issue review the presentations and discussions that took place at committee and subcommittee meetings; workshops on rail security and on the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); and a session on the role of private finance in intercity passenger rail.

The committee also sponsored various paper presentations—nine at a poster session and four at a session on “Intercity Passenger Rail: Tailored Solutions and Market Penetration.” Many of these are posted on the TRB Annual Meeting Online website (<http://amonline.trb.org>) and are available, free of charge, to attendees and employees of TRB sponsors.

—Penny Eickemeyer  
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## INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL COMMITTEE: WHICH WAY FORWARD?

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**Eric Peterson**  
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*Peterson is a transportation policy consultant and a member of the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee.*

As David Simpson, Chair of the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee, convened the committee's Annual Meeting session, it quickly became clear that interest in America's intercity passenger rail system has not waned, despite the twists and turns the issue of high-speed rail has taken in Congress.

Committee business matters were kept to a minimum to provide sufficient time for two presenters: Paul Nissenbaum, Associate Administrator for Railroad Policy and Development, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), who discussed current FRA programs, and Ulrich Leister and Eric Cosandey, of the Swiss engineering firm SMA+, who offered an innovative approach to rail system planning for high-speed rail in Switzerland.

The following endeavors of the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee were highlighted:

- A new information resource center portal has been established to provide access to research in intercity passenger rail, and efforts are under way to ensure that its content will be easily searchable. This portal can be accessed through the committee's website at [www.trb.org/CommitteeandPanels/OnlineDirectory.aspx#DetailsType=Committee&ID=1173](http://www.trb.org/CommitteeandPanels/OnlineDirectory.aspx#DetailsType=Committee&ID=1173) or directly at [www.trb.org/AR010/AR010.aspx](http://www.trb.org/AR010/AR010.aspx).
- The status of the newly organized National Cooperative Rail Research Program (NCRRP) was discussed by Chris Jenks, Director of Cooperative Research Programs at TRB. The new program, sponsored by FRA, will become the sixth national cooperative research program administered by TRB. Under Randy Wade's leadership, the Research Subcommittee has been active in the development of problem statements for submission to NCRRP. An oversight board appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation is now in place to review all problem statements and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has authorized \$5 million for the program. It is hoped that NCRRP will become an important resource for informing policy makers and the public on developments in intercity passenger rail.

It was discussed that the committee has been paying special attention to increasing the involvement of younger, new professionals in the field, as well as encouraging more international participation.

During his presentations, Nissenbaum noted that—despite the funding situation for FY 2011 and FY 2012—FRA remains extremely busy, administering nearly \$10 billion in economic stimulus funding and overseeing the many substantial construction and development projects that the funding supports. The administration has three rounds of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants, Railroad

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Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program loan requests, and many Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act of 2008 (PRIIA) initiatives under way. Additionally, the Northeast Corridor Advisory Committee is moving ahead with an environmental impact study in advance of improved passenger rail service in that corridor. The Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee, authorized under PRIIA, has just finished standards development on bilevel rolling stock and on higher-speed locomotives.

During their presentation, Leister and Cosandey offered an exciting and innovative approach to passenger rail system planning—emphasizing system scheduling as a significant factor in the planning process that, when applied, can optimize investments in infrastructure and equipment. Leister noted that this approach proved successful in the Swiss “Rail 2000” planning process.

“Putting the timetable at the heart of the process brings substantial benefits, including optimization of investments in infrastructure, rolling stock, equipment, and information technology,” Cosandey commented. “Other benefits include a reduction of operating costs through the optimization of rolling stock rotation; increased passenger demand by means of attractive and reliable services; and higher revenues, lower costs, and a higher return on investment.”

Cosandey described a research effort by the firm, in light of the controversy that has evolved over the projections and estimates for the California high-speed rail project, to assess the application of the Swiss planning model to the California project and to compare estimates for construction and operations, with the approval of the California High-Speed Rail Authority (HSRA). The results of this exercise show that an attractive statewide network is possible, with the phased system implementation that allows for valuable interim service and spreading required funding over a longer period of time, among other considerations.

Committee members expressed great interest in this approach. Many stated their hope that this model will shape California HSRA’s next business plan in a way that will engender broad support for its high-speed rail initiative.

*The PowerPoint presentation can be found on the TRB Annual Meeting Online website at <http://amonline.trb.org/21gt3i/5>. The paper resulting from this research is titled “Could California Benefit from the Swiss Approach to High Speed Rail?” and is posted on the SMA website.*



**An innovative approach to system planning for high-speed rail, successfully implemented in Switzerland, was presented at the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee meeting in January.**

(Photo: Rail Europe)



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## ANNUAL MEETING SESSION EXPLORES THE ROLE OF PRIVATE FINANCE IN INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL

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**Curtis Morgan and Ben Sperry**

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*Morgan is Program Manager and Sperry is Assistant Research Scientist in Freight and Passenger Rail at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.*

One important issue in the debate over the future of high-speed intercity passenger rail in the United States revolves around how to pay for new investments in infrastructure and equipment. Recognizing that private-sector financing may be critical to the future of intercity passenger rail, the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee sponsored “Role of Private Finance in Intercity Passenger Rail,” a 2012 TRB Annual Meeting panel session, to provide insight on these issues. Curtis Morgan, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, moderated the five-member panel:

- Sasha Page, Infrastructure Management Group, Inc.;
- Andrew Wood, National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak);
- Robert Eckels, Lone Star High-Speed Rail, LLC;
- Ed Ellis, Iowa Pacific Holdings, LLC; and
- Phil Pacey, Virgin Rail Group.

Page opened the session with an overview of public–private partnership (PPP) financing in intercity passenger rail, tracing the roots of PPP involvement in rail projects from the construction of the original transcontinental railroad in the mid-19th century to recent experiences on the French TGV high-speed rail system. Page noted several examples of proposed PPPs for United States rail projects that involve innovative funding sources—availability payments, pension funds, or value capture.

Wood outlined Amtrak’s view of private finance in intercity passenger rail in the context of its next-generation high-speed rail plan for the Northeast Corridor. He provided examples of how Amtrak engages the private sector to provide services to its customers and emphasized that private-sector financing will be critical to implementing the \$52 billion plan.

Eckels described the partnership between Lone Star High-Speed Rail, LLC, and the Central Japan Railway Company (now the Texas Central Railway Company) to implement high-speed rail in the Dallas–Houston corridor as a “strong international partnership” with a focus on a “total system approach” for implementation. Since the project was driven wholly by private-sector funding, political influence on decision making or project costs will be limited, he noted.

Ellis outlined the business model of Iowa Pacific Holdings, LLC, which he described as the only private intercity passenger rail business in the United States. The company focuses on the ownership and daily operation of local, feeder intercity passenger rail services, making these services operationally profitable through an integrated management approach—engaging community partners through marketing efforts and attractive rolling stock. Ellis cited the experience of the Saratoga and North Creek Railway, an Iowa Pacific subsidiary, and how this approach could be a model for private finance of passenger trains.

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**An audience of more than 100 attended the Annual Meeting session,  
“Role of Private Finance in Intercity Passenger Rail.”**

(Photo: Risdon Photography)

Pacey represented Virgin Rail Group, the operator (in January 2012) of the United Kingdom's West Coast Main Line with aspirations to be the launch operator for new high-speed rail in the Americas. Pacey assessed the “lay of the land” for high-speed rail in the United States and noted that fluctuating political appetites will make implementation difficult. The federal government should take the lead in defining measures to mitigate risk associated with passenger rail projects, he added.

The panelists shared their unique perspectives with more than 100 attendees, and the discussion that followed the panelist presentations proved that private finance is of great interest among the rail policy and planning community and that some level of financial involvement from the private sector may be needed to implement a high-speed rail network in the United States.

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## WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON SECURITY ISSUES

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*Eickemeyer developed this article with the assistance of workshop participants.*

Presenting the insights of a diverse panel, the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee sponsored a workshop, “Rail Security: Critical Insights and Applications,” at the 2012 TRB Annual Meeting. Presider Brian Michael Jenkins, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, presented findings from a paper he wrote with Joseph Trella, “Fourteen Terrorist Plots Against Public Transportation: Preliminary Observations.”

Panelists discussed changing technology, challenges, and new threat areas for rail operations. The panel included keynote speaker Nuria Fernandez, Chief Operating Officer, New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA); Robert Pryor, Director, Intermodal Division, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Tom Farmer, Association of American Railroads (AAR); and a representative from the United Kingdom’s Center for the Protection of the National Infrastructure (CPNI).

In her presentation, “MTA: Moving Eight Million People a Day, Securely,” Fernandez noted that crime is the lowest it has been on the MTA system in two decades. She warned, however, that we should not have a false sense of security—that is, an expectation of 100 percent security. She described the security measures that have been implemented—many since September 11, 2001—on the New York City subway network, which serves 8 million riders per day. She pointed out that the MTA must address two realities: that New York is one of the top terrorist targets and that the city strives to have the safest transit system. Fernandez explained that security initiatives on surface transit differ from those on aviation systems because transit is a public operation in an open network. Some measures MTA has taken include the following:

- Physical technology and infrastructure
  - Security cameras with direct access to New York Police Department
  - Improved lighting
  - Capital investment in research and technology
- Policing
  - Presence in trains and stations
  - Canine teams
  - Joint initiatives on a monthly basis with local and state enforcement agencies
  - Heavy weapons training for use at Grand Central Terminal and Penn Station
- Customer awareness
  - “If you see something, say something” campaign

Pryor discussed the efforts of the TSA Surface Transportation Protection Program to counter terrorist threats directed at surface transportation systems and facilities. TSA collaborates with and provides a core program of services for mass transit systems;



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**Brian Michael Jenkins, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, presided over a session on rail security at the Annual Meeting.**

(Photo: Risdon Photography)

freight rail operators; and the pipeline, ferry, and trucking industries. This program helps fill the gap between industry needs and the existing technologies that can further the effort in counterterrorism. TSA has conducted 21 major pilots, including lab and field testing, from 2004 to 2010. In the end, data and product lists—particularly useful to first responders—are provided openly to all appropriate surface transit providers through Internet-based information.

Farmer represented AAR, an organization composed of major freight railroads—including short lines and Amtrak—in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. He recommended the security strategy of “know your opponent,” which can be achieved through the integrated efforts of intelligence gathering and knowledge of security information. Farmer also described FACTS, a technique based on the military strategy of using force multiplication—that is, a given force is made more effective by working in combination with other factors. In FACTS, the force multipliers would be actions and assessment undertaken in collaboration with local law enforcement, training of first responders, and implementation of sustainable security measures.

The CPNI representative supplied an international perspective, discussing CPNI’s role providing protective security advice to businesses and organizations in the United Kingdom. He explained that characteristics of the transit network that make the system vulnerable include an open mass transit network; heavy reliance on an electronic information system; a diverse, transient staff; and demonstrated precedence for attack. CPNI’s approach is holistic, focusing on physical protection, personnel, and information security. Physical protection has involved use of closed circuit television, which is a human factors approach and a deterrent but is not sufficient by itself. In summary, CPNI suggests four key requirements to implementing a good mass transit security program:

- Ensure staff on the ground and operator awareness.
- Develop communications to deter hostile reconnaissance.
- Increase public awareness.
- Leave a message for the terrorist: that “cameras are looking at them.”

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## RIDING THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT RAILROAD

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**Camille Tsao**  
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*Tsao is Principal Transportation Planner and Associate Vice President, HNTB Corporation, Oakland, California. She is Secretary of the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee. This article was developed with input from workshop participants, including Melissa Elefante DuMond and David Valenstein, FRA; J. Lee Hutchins, Jr., AECOM; Carol Braegelmann, Daniel W. Johnson, and Shari M. Schaftlein, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); and Scott Steinwert, CirclePoint.*

**R**epresentatives from the Environmental Analysis in Transportation Committee (ADC10), the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee, and Passenger Rail Equipment and Systems Integration Committee (AR020) cosponsored a 3-hour workshop at the 2102 TRB Annual Meeting, "Riding the National Environmental Policy Act Railroad." Taking into account increased funding for rail projects and the need to explore how NEPA can efficiently support and inform decision making on multimodal projects, this workshop identified issues in planning and decision-making processes and analysis, highlighted good practices on transportation corridor projects involving rail, and sought input on research needs. The workshop consisted of two panel discussions, along with a broader discussion of research needs to advance environmental review processes. The panels included the following:

- A discussion of the NEPA process and a side-by-side comparison of NEPA and corridor planning processes, and
- Case studies of these processes in action for the National Gateway, Desert Express, and California high-speed train projects.

Registered conference attendees and employees of TRB sponsors can view presentations free of charge at the TRB Annual Meeting Online website (<http://amonline.trb.org>) or on sponsoring committee websites [www.itre.ncsu.edu/ADC10/](http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/ADC10/) and <http://ar010.york.cuny.edu/>.

### **Panel 1: NEPA and Corridor Planning Processes**

Shari Schaftlein, Team Lead Policy and Program Development, FHWA, member of the Environmental Analysis in Transportation Committee, moderated the first panel. Carol Braegelmann, Environmental Protection Specialist, FHWA, and David Valenstein, Environmental Manager, FRA, provided a side-by-side comparison of NEPA and corridor planning processes. They reviewed NEPA triggers, sources of federal funding and eligibilities; and roles and responsibilities in environmental evaluations, including relationships with FTA and the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

Guidance and regulations were explained for planning, noise, and vibration analysis and activities, applicable to highway and rail projects, in compliance with NEPA

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and the Clean Air Act. Panelists reviewed the differences between FHWA and FRA in documentation and processes for classes of actions, environmental impact statements, categorical exclusions, and environmental assessments. The involvement of other agencies such as state DOTs and STB also was considered, along with variances in time frames, levels of public involvement, and documentation scale.

Speakers compared flow charts for project development (photo, below) and reviewed guidance that links planning and NEPA.<sup>1</sup> Panelists also noted that U.S. DOT initiatives are geared toward multimodal project development and pointed out that Executive Order 13563,<sup>2</sup> Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review, has created a working group to perform a retrospective review and analysis of existing rules, livability planning grants focusing on modal connections, and TIGER capital construction grants that include multimodal criteria.

Melissa DuMond, Environmental Protection Specialist, FRA, and Chad Edison, Transportation Industry Analyst, FRA, expanded on the agency's new directions in planning and environment, such as multistate and station-area planning. They also explained streamlining options to facilitate compliance with the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) and the Clean Water Act of 1972 during the NEPA process, as well as FRA's efforts to respond to the Obama Administration's increased emphasis on environmental justice.



**Panel 2: Case Studies Reflect on NEPA Process, Future Research Needs Contemplated**

Three case studies were presented during the second panel of the workshop, which was moderated by Camille Tsao, HNTB Corporation, representing the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee. The case studies included Phase 1 of National Gateway, presented by Dan Johnson, FHWA; Desert Express, presented by Scott Steinwert, CirclePoint; and

<sup>1</sup> For additional information, see *Guidance on Using Corridor and Subarea Planning to Inform NEPA* Federal Highway Administration ([www.fhwa.dot.gov/everydaycounts/projects/toolkit/pel/corridor\\_nepa\\_guidance.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/everydaycounts/projects/toolkit/pel/corridor_nepa_guidance.cfm)) and *FRA Guidance on Assessing Noise and Vibration Impacts* ([www.fra.dot.gov/Pages/253.shtml](http://www.fra.dot.gov/Pages/253.shtml)).

<sup>2</sup> [www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/18/improving-regulation-and-regulatory-review-executive-order](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/18/improving-regulation-and-regulatory-review-executive-order).

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California High-Speed Train, presented by DuMond. Panelists shared the approaches developed for each case and lessons learned. In particular, they were asked to discuss three questions about their projects' risks, sponsorship issues, and any successful processes.

*National Gateway*

Johnson discussed the National Gateway Phase 1 project, the purpose of which is to remove all vertical obstructions to double-stacked containerized freight on CSX tracks between the intermodal yards in North Baltimore, Ohio, and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The State of Ohio, in cooperation with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the States of West Virginia and Maryland, applied for the TIGER grant; FHWA and FRA were joint lead agencies for NEPA analysis. According to Johnson, coordinating reviews with four states and two lead agencies was the project's biggest risk, but in this case, multistate and agency coordination—as well as early, continuous, and cooperative communication—enabled a NEPA determination of finding of no significance within 9 months. FHWA needed to obtain clearance of Section 106 of NHPA for federal review on the effects of any federal undertaking on historic properties. Despite inconsistent perspectives on the eligibility of highway bridge structures and rail elements, the established working relationships between the state historic preservation officers and their corresponding state DOT cultural resource specialists were highly valuable in hammering out a timely four-state memorandum of agreement in accordance with Section 106—ultimately resulting in clearance [Section(f)] for the program. This exemplified the streamlined effects of close cooperation between multiple states and federal agencies.

A PPP between the State of Ohio, representatives of the three other states, FRA and FHWA, and CSX Transportation—which served as an external partner to the TIGER grant, since these grants only go to government recipients—the project aimed to double containerized freight capacity of existing tracks by removing highway bridges and other vertical obstructions between the two intermodal yards. The individual states provided some of their own funds, assisted by bridge replacements funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA); CSX primarily contributed to the removal or modification of its existing tunnels; and FRA and FHWA lent expertise in rail projects and construction management and facilitated NEPA processing for the multistate environmental assessment.

Coordination efforts were successful. Johnson commented that biweekly coordination meetings among the state sponsors, CSX, and the federal joint leads assured timely communication among all parties and added that opportunities for future research would include assessment of the economic displacement associated with increasing the amount of through freight delivered by train. Increasing use of trains may reduce some demand for long-haul trucking and increase demand for short-haul trucks from freight generator to intermodal facilities and from intermodal facilities to destinations, he noted. Research to shed light on the air quality and energy use implications of intermodal yard operations relative to those of long-haul rail delivery and through-truck hauling also would be helpful.

*Desert Express*

Steinwert addressed questions on the Desert Express Project, a privately sponsored high-speed train project from southern California to Las Vegas, Nevada, with its own dedicated right-of-way and a fast-paced schedule. Having a private sponsor as well as the unique authority of the STB, which exempted the project from state and local environmental review and regulations, created an aggressive, streamlined NEPA pro-



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cess, he observed. As a private applicant-sponsored project, the purpose and need were extremely focused, limiting the requirement to evaluate a range of alternatives that typically occurs when a federal agency sponsors a project. The private applicant sponsor aggressively marketed and built support with key stakeholders, and opposition was limited to several smaller groups and individuals and the sponsors of a Maglev project that is competing to serve the same market.

According to Steinwert, FHWA processes and procedures are very well-developed, defined, and prescribed in written guidance documents, providing an excellent roadmap—but they can lack adaptability and creativity in the application of specific projects. Although FRA procedures are less well-developed, he noted that this lack of specificity can create challenges but also allows adaptability and creativity when addressing project-specific issues.

### *California High-Speed Train*

DuMond discussed the California high-speed train project, a statewide megaproject sponsored by California HSRA that followed a two-tiered NEPA process and also must comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulation.<sup>3</sup>

The project encountered risks in meeting deadlines, DuMond noted, because of its size and because it had to meet the funding deadline for ARRA. Other risks to the schedule included second-guessing decisions at Tier 1, preparing joint NEPA and CEQA documentation, the difference in the application of the two laws, and a fast-paced permitting process. Any project-level changes that would open up a Tier 1 decision need to be carefully and thoughtfully contemplated and coordinated with the affected agencies, she added.

### Opportunities for Research

The third part of the workshop on research needs was moderated by J. Lee Hutchins, AECOM, a member of TRB's Passenger Rail Equipment and Systems Integration Committee. The discussion consolidated many of the ideas expressed in panel presentations and Q&A sessions. Of particular note was the observation that agencies with shared corridors often share a similar interest in joint outcomes and, therefore, may pool funding for multimodal research and can align the scope of work to serve both perspectives. For example, research results related to freight rail improvements to the highway network often are translated into increased safety at crossings, improved air quality, and mobility benefits for both modes.

Suggestions for further research included the following:

- How agencies with shared corridors with a desire for common outcomes can pool funding for multimodal research;
- Freight rail improvements to the highway network—crossing safety, air quality, and mobility;
- Guidelines—or a guidebook—for megaprojects that address how to meet the requirements of agencies with different regulations;
- Zero-emissions technology for freight rail—major projects to move trucks off of the roads;

<sup>3</sup> This joint review requirement is due to California state legislation that was enacted as a counterpart to NEPA. It is possible that some impacts can be determined significant under CEQA review and not under NEPA review.



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- How lead agencies are determined and case studies;
- The relationship of high-speed rail to other modes;
- A report on TIGER grant-funded programs focused on maximizing the outcome of federal dollars, along with lessons learned in management and staffing, expertise, how issues are resolved, and how different modes went through the process; and
- A multimodal planning process for transportation assets and to assist DOTs in coordinating different modes and different components of process—which vary for private and public sponsors—rather than having a single mode determine process.

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## SUBCOMMITTEE NEWS

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### Subcommittee on Intermodal Interfaces

Jack Tone, [Tone@pbworld.com](mailto:Tone@pbworld.com)

*Tone is a Senior Professional Associate and Senior Project Manager with Parsons Brinckerhoff in Denver, Colorado, where he is Engineering Manager of the program management team for the Illinois DOT High-Speed Rail Project. He chaired the Intercity Passenger Rail Committee for 6 years and now is Chair of the Subcommittee on Intermodal Interfaces.*

The Subcommittee on Intermodal Interfaces [AR010(1)] provided the following two presentations during their meeting at the 2012 TRB Annual Meeting:

- Role of Rail in Intermodal Systems Performance by Matt Coogan, Director, New England Transportation Institute, and
- Station Area Planning by Susan Herre, FRA.

In addition, the meeting featured a lively discussion on current intercity passenger rail interfaces around the United States, noting the advantages and disadvantages of projects such as T.F. Green Airport service by Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority service to Philadelphia, and the Seattle light rail transit connection to Seattle–Tacoma International Airport in Washington State. Topics for sessions and potential papers for the 2013 TRB Annual Meeting also were discussed.

*For more information, see [www.fra.dot.gov/downloads/FRA\\_Station\\_Area\\_Planning\\_June\\_2011\\_c.pdf](http://www.fra.dot.gov/downloads/FRA_Station_Area_Planning_June_2011_c.pdf).*

### Socioeconomic and Financial Aspects of Intercity Passenger Rail Subcommittee

Rohit T. Aggarwala, [rohittaggarwala@gmail.com](mailto:rohittaggarwala@gmail.com)

*Aggarwala is Chair of the Socioeconomic and Financial Aspects of Intercity Passenger Rail Subcommittee.*

At its 2012 meeting, the Socioeconomic and Financial Aspects of Intercity Passenger Rail Subcommittee [AR010(2)] conducted a wide-ranging discussion of what specific topics within its scope were of greatest interest and were most relevant to the state of the passenger rail industry. The discussion raised several topics of interest:

- The future of the federal high-speed rail funding program;
- Public–private investment in passenger rail;
- The impact of the upcoming PRIIA Section 209 on the cost allocation, funding, and service provision of state-supported Amtrak routes;
- Making the case for the economic and social impacts of passenger rail; and
- The lack of available data for outside-in research on passenger rail economics.

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These topics will guide the subcommittee's priorities over the next year or two in terms of papers sought, panels proposed for the Annual Meeting, and discussions within the subcommittee.

**Research Subcommittee**

Randy Wade, [rwade@HNTB.com](mailto:rwade@HNTB.com)

*Wade is the Director of High-Speed Rail Services, Great Lakes, HNTB Corporation, and is Chair of the Research Subcommittee.*

The meeting of the Research Subcommittee [AR010(3)] on January 23 at the Annual Meeting focused on reviewing and prioritizing 50 potential research topics, identified at the 2011 Annual Meeting, for submittal as problem statements to NCRRP. After a participatory process on high-priority topics that resulted in concurrence, the following individuals volunteered to develop research problem statements for submittal to NCRRP:

- **DingQing Li:** Intercity passenger rail equipment overview, including enhanced conventional vs. very high-speed equipment technologies;
- **Ross Capon:** Assessment of the operational and safety benefits of positive train control;
- **Eric Peterson:** PPPs and other innovative funding approaches for intercity passenger rail projects;
- **John Rhodes:** Shared-use corridor issues associated with the use of existing freight rail rights-of-way for intercity passenger rail service; and
- **George Haikalis:** Development of formal NCRRP problem statements for three existing statements on the AR010 website.

After refinement by each author, seven research problem statements were submitted to Chris Jenks, Director of Cooperative Research Programs at TRB, for consideration by the NCRRP Oversight Committee at its first meeting in May 2012. These problem statements are now available for review on the Research Subcommittee website, <http://ar010.york.cuny.edu/sub/research>.

Other AR010 Research Subcommittee activities at the Annual Meeting included

- An NCRRP update from Jenks, and
- A presentation on possible policy research topics for development with TRB from Ann Purdue, Senior Program Officer, Rail and Freight, TRB.

**Newsletter Comments**

We look forward to your feedback on the format and the content of this publication. Comments on this newsletter, and most especially, continued contributions by committee members, friends of the committee, and others can be sent to the editor:

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