



Welcome to Trolleyville!!!! - After almost five months, major model train shows are returning to Southern

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Notice to Trolleyville Fans:

*Since early morning, January 5, 2017 and continuing through Friday evening, January 13, 2017, the Trolleyville web site has been plagued with technical issues caused by either technical errors, incompetence or a plain cyber attack. Both our **technical** and **legal** experts are working the issues. Thank you for your patience!!!*

CURRENT EVENTS.....

NTSB: Fatigued Crew Cause of Deadly Union Pacific Train Crash!

Progressive Railroading reported that the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) determined on December 6, 2016 that an August 2014 collision between two Union Pacific Railroad trains in Hoxie, Ark., resulted from a fatigued engineer and conductor who were both likely asleep on one of the trains.

The crash occurred in the early morning hours of August 17, 2014, when a southbound UP train failed to stop at a signal and collided with a northbound UP train that was traversing a turnout to an adjacent track. The conductor and engineer on the southbound train were killed; the conductor and engineer on the other train were seriously injured.

The southbound train did not slow or stop in response to three restrictive signals, which resulted in the collision. The northbound train crew operated their train in accordance with traffic control signals, had no indication of the impending collision with the southbound train and did not have time to apply emergency air brakes prior to the collision, according to the NTSB's abstract report.



NTSB Chairman Christopher Hart

"The southbound train conductor was likely asleep at the time of the accident due to the variability of his shift start times, which caused fatigue and the circadian desynchronization he experienced due to his operating the train in the early morning hours when he was predisposed to sleep," the report stated.

Had provisions specified in the hours of service requirements for commuter and passenger trains been applied to freight train operations, the southbound conductor would not have been allowed to work on that schedule, the NTSB determined.

Also, the southbound train's engineer was fatigued and likely asleep because of an "inadequately treated moderate sleep apnea" and operating the train so early in the morning, the report continued.

"The continued occurrence of railroad accidents attributed to fatigue caused by sleep apnea are due in part to the failure of the Federal Railroad Administration [FRA] since 2002 to respond to the hazards posed by undiagnosed or inadequately treated sleep apnea," stated the abstract report.

Also, UP's medical rules did not require the southbound train's engineer to report his condition for moderate sleep apnea or ensure that he followed his doctor's treatment recommendations.

"The lack of minimum standards for medical rules among Class I, intercity and commuter railroads poses an unnecessary risk for employees in safety-sensitive positions who are diagnosed with sleep disorders," the report added.

The NTSB also noted that the territory where the accident occurred was not equipped with positive train control (PTC). "Had the territory been equipped with a properly functioning positive train control system, the collision would have been prevented," the report stated.

In his closing statement, NTSB Chairman Christopher Hart called for stronger federal safety requirements for railroads.

"An engineer or conductor working for a freight railroad is just as subject to fatigue as one who works for a passenger or commuter railroad. The FRA's safety rules, and those of the railroads themselves, should reflect this fact," Hart said.

"Similarly, employees of railroads should be subject to fitness for duty regulations. Airplane pilots, mariners, and commercial truckers can only be certified to operate their vehicles if they demonstrate that their relevant medical conditions, including sleep disorders, do not pose safety risks. It is time to apply similar rules to our railroads," he added.

Hart concluded by calling for the railroad industry to complete implementation of PTC. "Human operators can be fatigued, impaired, distracted, or medically unfit, and they can make errors even on their best day, when they are not fatigued, impaired, distracted, or unfit. Since human error is inevitable, this technological safety net is indispensable," said Hart. "Until PTC is implemented nationwide, we risk yet more preventable derailments, collisions, serious injuries, and deaths – as illustrated by the collision we discussed today."

The handwriting is on the wall for anyone operating any commercial transportation vehicle!

Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

by Edward Havens

The Phoenix Trolley Museum, evicted by the city from its Central Avenue home just north of downtown to make room for a skateboard park, has found a new home along Grand Avenue west of downtown, the "downtown devil dot com" site reported on December 10th. Grand Avenue was the site of an original Phoenix Street Railway car line to the state fairgrounds and now has galleries and specialty shops. The museum board will need to raise half a million dollars to buy a property with an old house and parking lot already on it and build a covered car barn. Operating track either on Grand or through an alley to city streets behind the car barn site are possibilities in future years. The museum has American Car Co. of St. Louis-built double truck Birneys obtained in 1929 for the municipal street railway which was abandoned and replaced with busses in 1948 after a disastrous car barn fire.



Phoenix Streetcar #116 in its former repository.

The "business report dot com" site reported on December 5th that the city parish of Baton Rouge, Louisiana's state capital, may delay a request to the federal government for streetcar funding. August flooding delayed selection of a consulting team for preliminary design and engineering. HNTB is recommended for the \$10 million contract. The firm is not worried about getting funding for the project from the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump. The parish would seek \$67.5 million from the Federal Transit Administration for the 3.4-mile, \$170 million project to link downtown with Louisiana State University. Some traces of the first generation Baton Rouge street railway still remain in city streets. Below right is a general map of the proposed streetcar route.

The Detroit Free Press reported on December 8th that QLINE (M-1 Rail) released a rendering of the proposed stations along the modern streetcar line that the nonprofit is building along Woodward Avenue in Michigan's largest city. Later that week, M-1 Rail unveiled the design for 20 stations along the 3.3 mile QLINE route.

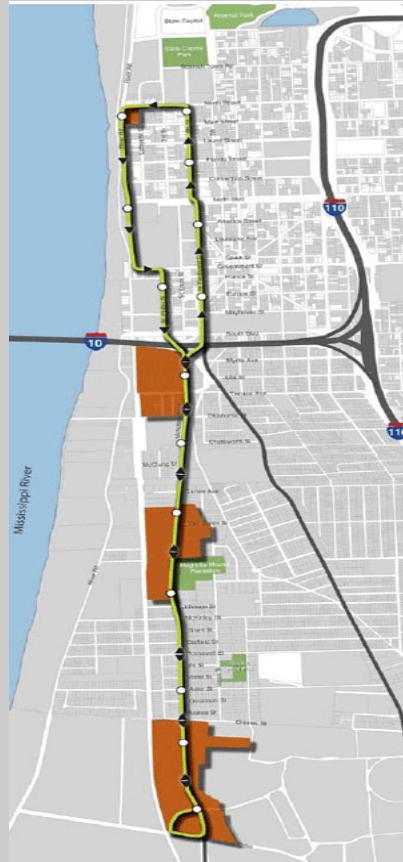


Artist's Concept of Detroit Streetcar Station!

"The 98-foot by 12-foot concrete and glass stations from downtown's Congress Street to West Grand Boulevard at the edge of Detroit's North End will be heated and have security cameras, Wi-Fi, emergency phones and next vehicle alert screens," the newspaper reported.

Rosetti, a Detroit-based architecture firm, developed the concept and design for the QLINE stops. Each station will recognize each sponsor with an individual custom tile, along with a plaque commemorating contributions to the project. To be a sponsor required a \$3 million pledge.

Meanwhile, The Detroit News reported that streetcar track construction on Woodward Avenue wrapped up on December 1st. The car line is to start operation in spring 2017. According to reports, M-1 Rail began streetcar vehicle testing along Woodward Avenue on December 13th.



Baton Rouge Proposed Streetcar Route!

The "news & observer" newspaper site reported in stories on December 6th that the county commissions of both Orange and Durham counties in North Carolina's "Triangle" metro area (which also includes Raleigh, the state capital) are backing extra funding needed to build the \$1.87 billion light rail line that would link Chapel Hill and Durham, t The proposed 17-mile LRT route is short \$254 million in state funding. The commitments are non-binding and apply to funding that would have to be appropriated later on.



Artist's Concept of Durham-Orange Light Rail!

The FTA in late December approved adding a train station at North Carolina Central University as part of the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit project.

Fort Lauderdale, a tourist-oriented Atlantic Ocean seacoast resort city on Florida's east coast, will begin construction of its modern streetcar line in 18 months, according to a report issued by the "real deal" real-estate development site on December 8th. The publication also said that building of the car house (streetcar storage and maintenance facility) will begin within six months. The city has not yet selected a manufacturer for its urban rail rolling stock. The Portland, Ore. streetcar system has been cited as a model for the Florida city.



Artist's concept of Seattle-type Streetcar in Fort Lauderdale.

Four of the five C.A.F.-built modern streetcars broke down on the Cincinnati Bell Connector line on December 15th. WCPO-TV and The Enquirer reported on December 16th that manufacturing defects were blamed. A failed motor truck axle bearing and failed compressors were among the issues although frigid winter temperatures contributed to the problems. On Friday, December 16, two of the cars still were out of service. City Manager Harry Black said the final payment to C.A.F. would not be made until the problems were fixed. Another issue to be settled is the payment of liquidated damages for late delivery of the "Urbos 3" cars.



CAF-Built Cincinnati Connectors Streetcars shown earlier this year!

Kansas City Streetcar Authority picked Burns & McDonnell to head a consulting team that will conduct a study costing up to \$225,000 on the feasibility of extending the city's 2.2-mile streetcar line by one-half to three-quarters of a mile on December 16th. The study could last six months. New mixed use and residential development is planned in the vicinity of the park. The same newspaper reported on December 1st that the Streetcar Authority, citing high ridership on its starter line, wants to buy two more cars which would raise the total fleet to six.

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency plans to begin a pedestrian safety program along the L-Taraval MUNI Metro line, according to the "hoodline" blog on December 16th. Changes are to include painted safety zones at sidewalk corners, painted boarding zones and transit-only lanes. Passengers have been forced to step into the street to board the LRVs. Some auto parking spaces will be removed to make room for passenger boarding islands.

The City Centre Mirror reports that Montreal-based Bombardier Transportation promised in a letter to Toronto Mayor John Tory December 16 to complete deliveries of all 204 Flexity articulated streetcars ordered by Toronto Transit Commission by the end of 2019. Deliveries have been far behind schedule, forcing the broad-gauge "legacy" street railway network to rehabilitate aging streetcars to maintain service. Because of a rolling stock shortage, buses have been filling in. The Flexity order is worth \$577.3 million in U.S. dollars.

The City Commission of Miami Beach voted unanimously December 14 to delay any action on a proposed South Beach modern streetcar line that France-based Alstom wants to build using A.P.S. centered third rail, wire-free proprietary technology with the route operated by Citadis LRVs, which also will be used at Ottawa, Canada -- their first use in North America. Miami Beach will wait until Miami-Dade County agrees to a plan for urban rail to cross Biscayne Bay into Miami and provide a funding plan for it, the Miami Herald reported. The first generation streetcar line that linked Miami and Miami Beach across Mac Arthur Causeway was bused in 1939.

Minnesota Streetcar Museum at Minneapolis has two geographically separated operations -- one at Lake Harriet and another at Excelsior and the latter has a new rolling stock addition: a single truck streetcar that operated in Winona, Minnesota, until 1938, as reported by the "Trains" magazine on November 30. Single truck car No. 10, shown below, was part of an order of four cars built by St. Louis Car Co. in 1914. The car only carried passengers for 24 years and then spent 61 years as a children's play area, a cabin and storage site. The car body was sold to the museum in 1999 and restoration work began in 2003. It was re-trucked and re-motored and was operated for the first time by museum volunteers in late 2016.



There still is no reopening date for the heritage streetcar network at Memphis, Tennessee as the "local memphis dot com" site reported on December 21st. The system was shut down after two "W" Class ex-Melbourne trams caught fire and were destroyed within a six-month period.



Car 452 on fire.

That resulted in experts being brought in from the American Public Transportation Association's streetcar committee to make recommendations for safety and maintenance. A fleet overhaul was recommended. Of the three routes, the first to open will be the Main Street line but six cars will be required. The news story speculated a June or July 2017 re-opening but that is uncertain.



Artist's concept of OCTA Streetcar!

On December 19th, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) at Santa Ana in Southern California released requests for proposals (RFP) from streetcar manufacturers to supply eight modern streetcars for the 4.1-mile, \$298 million car line that will link the Santa Ana train depot,

downtown and Garden Grove and intersect 18 of OCTA's busiest bus routes. It will partly use former Pacific Electric "Red Car" right of way. The deadline for proposals is April 28, 2017. Interested manufacturers can attend a pre-bidding conference on January 10. The line is to begin operations in 2020 according to a report by the "Orange County Breeze" on December 20th.

Not all officials are getting the modern streetcar bug. The "Voice of Orange County" site reported on December 21st that the new political majority on the Anaheim City Council voted to kill the controversial modern streetcar line plan that would have served Disney resorts and the city Convention Center. (See map below.) Councilwoman Denise Barnes introduced a resolution telling Orange County Transportation Authority to stop any planning work on what she described as a "\$300 million boondoggle." The vote was 5-2. The measure instructs the authority to kill the project altogether, reversing the previous council's decision to keep it alive for study only, particularly if hotel developers wanted it.



The proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project at Minneapolis got an early Christmas gift from the Federal Transit Administration. Minnesota Public Radio reported on December 22nd that the agency authorized St. Paul-based Met Council to proceed with engineering design for the 14.5-mile, \$1.8 billion LRT route. Project staff can now begin finalizing designs in preparation for the start of construction in 2017. The regional planning agency and local governments agreed earlier to fill a \$135 million funding gap after the Minnesota Legislature refused to appropriate the needed funds. Met Council Chairman Adam Duinick does not expect the incoming Donald Trump administration to impede the rail transit project.



Minneapolis (METRO) Wrapped Siemens S70 Low Floor LRV!

More Urban Rail Happenings!

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA: You know that it is a real trend when Los Angeles does it! On November 29, 2017, the city approved the route of their new downtown streetcar. Not to be outdone by Cincinnati, Kansas City, Seattle, and Tucson among others, the Los Angeles City Council approved by a vote of 13-0 to approve a 13.8 mile route that loops between the Civic Center, including Grand Park and the Convention Center and Fashion District in the South Park area. Remember this is the same city that abruptly abandoned five profitable streetcar lines in 1963 with some of the vehicles less than 15 years old and in immaculate condition.



Artist's Concept of LA Streetcar Vehicle

As shown on the map below, the line begins at Hill Street, east along 1st Street to Broadway, south to 11th Street and then west along 11th to Figueroa, then north on Figueroa to either 9th or 7th Streets where it will go east until it reaches Hill St. The line proceeds north along Hill street to 1st Street. There is considerable discussion on a spur from 1st and Hill along 1st to Grand Avenue and stop at a mid-block station north of 2nd Street and across from the Walt Disney Concert Hall and then back north and then east to 1st and Hill.



Construction is expected to begin in 2018 and be completed in 2020! This project plus the completion of the Regional Connector will dramatically change travel patterns into and around downtown Los Angeles.

On Monday December 5th the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) said it had received an anonymous tip about a plan to attack the Red Line's Universal Station in Studio City, California. The agency boosted security across its system and began working with local law enforcement and the FBI to evaluate the threat.



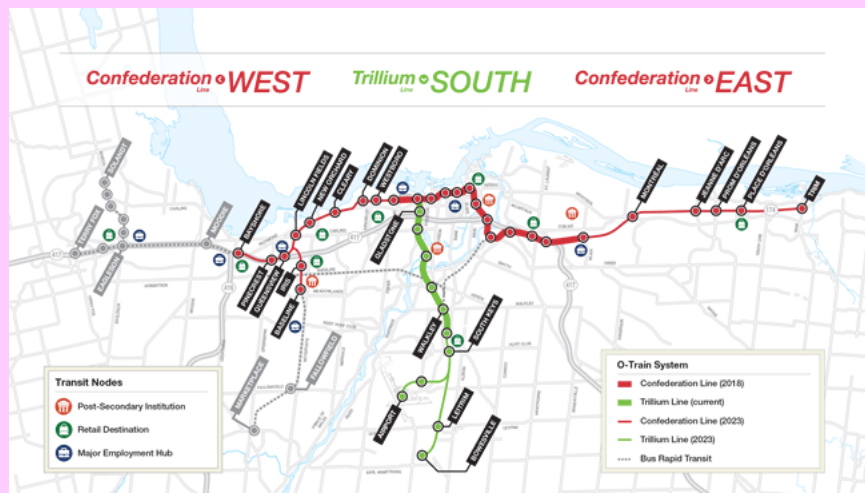
. The FBI didn't find evidence to corroborate the threat, according to the Los Angeles Times and later determined that the bomb threat against a Los Angeles-area subway station earlier this week wasn't credible. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti was on the Red Line on that very day attempting to calm riders. Still, Metro encouraged riders to continue reporting any suspicious behavior they may see on the system.

SANTA CLARA, CA: A threat of a suicide bombing was received by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (SCVTA) on December 14th, resulting in the stopping and searching of all SCVTA's vehicles. The individual who made the threat was later arrested and normal service eventually did resume.

OTTAWA, CANADA: Meanwhile the Light Rail revolution continues. Transport Canada officials announced early last month that Light Rail Vehicle testing had begun on a segment of Ottawa's O-Train Confederation Line. The Confederation line will be part of the O-Train Network operated by OC Transpo along with the existing diesel powered Trillium Line. The first unit assembled in the city began testing on track between the Blair and Cyrville stations according to a press release. One initial test involves affixing foam pads to the vehicle as it operates along the alignment to ensure adequate clearance is maintained from overhead wires, poles and tree branches.



Testing between Blair Station to Tunney's Pasture will continue until the Confederation Line launches in 2018. The line, which will cost 2.1 billion Canadian dollars, is funded being funded by the government of Canada, the province of Ontario and the city of Ottawa. Alstom is providing 34 Citadis "Spirit" light-rail vehicles for the route, 33 of which are being assembled in Ottawa. This is Alstom's first major order on the North American continent. These vehicles are 160 ft long and 8 ft 8 3/8 inches wide. They are being built in Hornell, New York but final assembly will be in Ottawa. The Rideau Transit Group is the private-sector partner responsible for the designing, financing and building the line. The 7.8-mile line includes 13 stations and a 1.6-mile tunnel aimed at reducing congestion in the downtown core. There are already plans to extend the Confederation line to both the East and the West as shown on the map below:



And some of us really thought the interurban was dead!

PERRIS, CALIFORNIA: Not all the news is good. Progressive Railroading reported on June 7th Metrolink began offering discounted tickets on its 91/Perris Valley Line in an effort to boost ridership on the railroad's newest extension. The ticket cost will be reduced 25 percent for the next six months. Metrolink officials said in a press release. The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) is funding the initiative, which applies to all tickets that list the four stations on the Perris Valley extension as their origin or destination.



Metrolink Train shown at the Riverside/Hunter Park Station, one of four stations on the Perris Valley Extension!

"Since the Perris Valley Line extension opened in June, we've seen ridership grow. We look forward to seeing this trend continue," said Metrolink Board Member Karen Spiegel. Riders can purchase the reduced-price tickets on the Metrolink app, at station ticket vending machines or at ticket windows at Los Angeles Union Station through June 7, 2017.



Boston Breda-built Green Line Trains!

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS: Some more bad news as local news media reported in early December that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) won't open the Green Line Extension until 2021. This date is four years later than the agency's most recent timeline, according to radio station WBUR Boston. The announcement comes after the MBTA last year put the project on hold to find ways to cut costs. In May 2016, the MBTA approved a scaled-down version of the project and brought the costs down from \$3 to \$2 billion. Under the MBTA's latest timeline, service to the Union Square station in Boston would begin in June 2021, while service to the College Avenue station in Medford, Mass., would start in September 2021. The 4.5-mile extension will feature six new stations and another one relocated.

On December 12th the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) fiscal control board voted to order 120 additional Red Line cars from CRRC MA Corp according to Progressive Railroading. See Trolleyville Times July 2016 issue. CRRC MA is a local subsidiary of China Railway Rolling Stock Corp. (CRRC).



MBTA concept of Red Line Subway Car!

Those cars will replace the oldest units on the Red Line by 2022. However, there were 84 cars requiring "extensive overhauls and upgrades" remaining in the Red Line fleet, MBTA officials said in a press release. Instead of repairing those cars, the fiscal control board approved the MBTA's suggestion to replace them with new cars, increasing the existing order by 120 with an option to purchase an additional 14. The agency estimates that replacing the entire Red Line fleet and making minor speed code changes will boost capacity by 50 percent. The feeling now is one standardized fleet would increase the number of customers transported per hour by 30,000 and would make for more efficient maintenance. (*It appears that someone is finally listening to Southwest Airlines!*). Under a 2014 contract, CRRC is building a new plant for the final assembly of these cars and recently broke ground on that facility in Springfield, MA, which is expected to be completed in September 2017. Manufacturing will start in 2018, according to the MBTA.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA: The progressive folks at San Francisco Municipal Railway are upgrading the 1050-1063 series of PCC cars they obtained from SEPTA in the 1990s. All of these fourteen cars, (except for 1054, which was in a wreck and will probably be scrapped once every useable part is cannibalized from it) are taking their turns going to Brookville Equipment Company for a mid-life rebuild.

Car 1056, representing Kansas City Public Service), was the first of the cars to go to Brookville and returned last summer but has experienced some reliability issues with the low voltage converter unit.



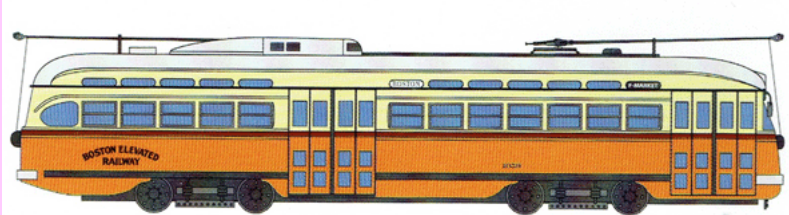
Car 1056, ex Philadelphia 2113, undergoing testing in San Francisco during September 2016!

Car 1051, representing San Francisco in the 1960's) also is back but so far has not exhibited the same issues as 1056. It may be back in service by the time you read this. Meanwhile four of the cars, 1050, 1059, 1062 and 1063 will return from Brookville when their turn comes looking differently from when they left. According to the Inside Track, the official Newsletter of the Market Street Railway, 1050, currently representing San Francisco, will return dressed in Saint Louis colors, including the Civil Defense logos that they carried for some time. Car 1062, now representing Louisville, will return in Pittsburgh colors. Car 1063 will still represent Baltimore but will be dressed in the original colors of PCC cars in that city. See below:

New Colors Coming



Another car, 1059, which represents Boston, will have its colors updated to represent the original "tangerine" color used on the PCC cars in that city instead of reddish orange that was used initially.



San Diego to Expand Fleet and Mid-Coastal LRV System!

by A. J. Staley

Last month we reported that the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (SDMTS) recently announced that they will be adding an additional 45 low-floor Siemens S70 LRVs to its fleet. The first new S70 LRV for San Diego MTS are expected to arrive in late 2018. Thirty-six of the new cars are planned for use on the new Blue Line expansion known as the Mid-Coast Trolley Corridor. The construction of the 11 miles from Downtown San Diego to Old Town and the University City area began in the fall of 2016. It is expected to be operational in 2021. The remaining nine cars will be used to increase the frequency of service on the Orange Line. [Click here to see map of entire San Diego Trolley System!](#)



SDMTS 4012 and mate, two of the 65 Siemens S70 Ultrashort 70% Low Floor LRVs currently on the San Diego "Trolley" System!

The order will add to the San Diego's 128 existing Siemens LRV's making San Diego the supplier's largest US light rail vehicle customer. When this order is delivered, Siemens will have supplied a total of 244 LRVs since the system opening in 1981. They have also been the only supplier of LRVs to San Diego to date. What is of special interest is that MTS recently sold or retired all 71 of the older Siemens DueWag U2 trolleys. At this time, at least five, 1003, 1008, 1017, 1018 and 1019, are now located or scheduled to be sent to museums. In October 2016, two other cars, 1021 and 1022, were sent to San Antonio, Texas to be used by the Transportation Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program (NEDCTP).

Overview of Mid-Coast Trolley (Blue Line):

Like many cities, the freeways and arteries of San Diego in the Mid-Coast Trolley area are congested, and the region is growing, and it will only become worse as each year passes. It is expected the population will increase by 19% and employment in the area to increase by 12% by the year 2030. The University City area has developed as a major employment and high density residential area. The Trolley extension route begins just north of the Old Town Transit Center and travels on an existing railroad right-of-way and alongside of Interstate 5 to Gilman Drive. It will cross over to the west side of the I-5 just South of Nobel Drive and continue to the University of California San Diego (UCSD) west campus. The line will cross back to the east side of I-5 near Voigt Drive to serve the East UCSD campus and Scripps Memorial Hospital. It will then transition into the median of Genesee Avenue, and continues down Genesee to the Westfield UTC Transit center. See the map below:



There will be a total of nine new stations to services the extension. SANDAG has worked closely with each of the communities to refine the design for each of the stations.

Memories of the past:

I believe it was about 1986 when we went on a rail fan sponsored trip on the San Diego Trolley. We had looked forward to the trip because in those days the San Diego Trolley was the only trolley system in the Southern California area. The purpose of the trip was to have an excursion on the new El Cajon Orange line from Santa Fe Depot to El Cajon. It was a nice trip out to El Cajon. On the return trip from El Cajon we were half way back to the Depot, enjoying the scenery, when the car suddenly stopped on an embankment in the middle of nowhere. The one basic weakness of the San Diego Trolley at the time was now exposed. The weakness in the system was a general power failure in the San Diego area. We were stuck. We had a prolonged wait. The hope was that the electrical power would return soon, but alas, after a long wait no power. After sometime, buses were sent to our area where we had to climb over the embankment to get to them and they took us back to the station parking lot. The balance of our planned tour which was to include a ride on the blue line was cancelled. We sadly got in our car and made the long drive back to Los Angeles. So much for memories.....

EDITORIALS

Where Do We Go From Here?

Trolleyville Editorial

Since the very day that Trolleyville was created up until our last issue, we have mentioned all the things that we, meaning the model railroad hobby in general, should not be doing, shouldn't have done and should not do in the future. We have also decided that the people who have the most to gain from the hobby are those

businesses who profit from it along with those modelers/hobbyists that would like to see model railroading survive into the next generation.

About two years ago, several of us started to look for the groups that seem to have younger members and seem to have a great deal of fun at their appearances and have a decent sized turnout when they are displaying their layouts. A few of the members of the Los Angeles-based Southern California Traction Club (SCTC) became involved with the Southern California Chapter of the European Train Enthusiasts (ETE). This was a fit since due to the current lack of leadership in the current group of U.S. model railway manufacturers, the only models of contemporary trams and light rail vehicles available RTR are European Prototypes, largely made by Leopold Halling in Austria. The ETE has sixteen chapters in the United States including the Southern California Chapter that mainly operates south of Los Angeles and north of San Diego. The following photo was taken from their web site. The club obtained a couple of Leopold Halling models of [Innsbruck](#) and [Gmunden](#) Bombardier Flexity trams and off they went.

The first thing that we found was that this group is very family oriented. Their significant others and children are often at the meeting which are held at members homes on a Saturday, starting at noon and they play a significant part in the meetings. There is always great food and a total absence of social misfits and strange acting people. They all really seem to like to be with each other and enjoy each others company in addition to the trains. In fact the model trains are only part of the meeting. Each member has some sort of operating layout in either the garage or somewhere else in the house. Sometimes the layout is in a second floor bedroom or large closet. Some members even use public transit such as Metrolink (commuter train) to get to the meetings and are picked up at the station by other members. The following photo was taken from the club chapter web site. It says it all:



Those of you in or near the exciting new venues of urban rail transit (*i.e. Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Kansas City, Seattle, Tacoma, Tucson, etc.*), can use this to your advantage and that of the local transit company. You can plan a social outing on one of these lines with a definite destination in mind like a restaurant, a sports event or a major shopping mall. By checking the web sites of these transit agencies, you can find great safe places to park your car(s) adjacent to the transit line you wish to ride. If you or your friends have concerns about safety (*most of which are unwarranted*), always ride in the first car with the operator.

On Saturday, December 10, 2016, the SCTC planned an outing using the local transit lines. Since their clubhouse is within walking distance of the Expo Line. Four of their members met at the clubhouse and boarded the Expo Line. They would ride that line, the Red Line Subway and the Gold Line Light Rail all the way to Azusa, CA. They would be joined by members on the way who lived along the travel route and by the time they got to their destination, there were ten of them. They all had a great lunch at a fine Azusa BBQ restaurant and a "...good time was had by all..". Meanwhile several members learned how to ride public transit and use the new way of paying fares, using a type of "debit card". In Los Angeles it is called "TAP" and for students and seniors it is a bargain!

Finally, there are some final things that those of us in the shrinking hobby should do. Please try to remember that this is model trains and not national defense. We all need to talk to one another and share information. Some of us feel that it is only a matter of time before the same technology that has brought 3-D printing onto our hobby will produce finished models. The other item has been made very obvious to some of us after the recent Presidential Campaign. Since this a hobby endeavor, we should all leave our personal religious and political agendas at the door. In a multicultural world, emphasis should be on tolerance and focus on that which draws us together, our hobby interest in modeling urban electric railways. It should not ever be used as a forum for other private values.

State of the Model Traction Hobby in 2017! *(Will there be a future? A semi-hopeful essay!)*

by Richard L. Allman, MD and Bob Dietrich

The authors of this essay, both inveterate HO traction (electric railway) modelers and builders and also past Presidents of the East Penn Traction Club (EPTC), ask where are we going as a hobby community.

They have noted that building railroad models has dropped off in recent years, especially true of trolley models.

Also, small manufacturers of trolley models have followed this trend and are reducing their production. At the same time there are few if any new manufacturers in the business. People who have the time and enjoy building models from scratch or kits are aging and dying at a fast rate. This is aggravated by the disappearance of hobby shops, and those that remain stock fewer scratch building supplies and increasingly focus on ready-to-run models.

Younger generations have grown up with cell phones and now 'smart' phones in their hands and have become used to instant gratification, something that is not a reward of scratch building.

Although some remnants of original trolley operation exist in major US and Canada cities, for the most part, trolleys disappeared when the cell/smart-phone generation were young or even before, so they didn't see or ride them in the streets.

On the other hand, Light Rail Vehicles (LRV) have expanded into many US cities and many younger people recognize them. Some younger folks show interest in LRV models but have little or no skills or inclination to build modules or layouts to operate the models. They prefer to quickly set up a configuration on a table, operate for a while then return it all back into a box. Refer back to the cell phone paradox above. N scale lends itself to this type of operation much better than O or HO scales that are the most popular scales for trolley modeling.

In N Scale:

- There is sectional rail and street track available that snaps together quickly to form small to medium size table-top layouts.
- Beautiful ready-to-run LRV models are available that operate on these setups flawlessly.
- A complete operation can be carried in a box or even a backpack, setup and taken down quickly.
- The tasks of building, detailing, repairing so integral to HO model building, along with acquisition and use of unfamiliar and seemingly archaic tools are absent.

EPTC, as a steward of the traction hobby, has an interest in promoting the hobby to assure its survival. To this end we should be promoting the N scale concept as much as possible. Disseminating information about available ready-to-run N scale traction models should become part of our mission to help our hobby survive, flourish and expand.

One platform for that promotion is the EPTC National Meet where modelers can setup their table operation and possibly present clinics. This will show casual observers at the Meet a concept that they can get into without a lot of time, construction acumen and financial expenditure. It can also show vendors that there may be an opportunity to distribute the N scale traction models.

If a spark is ignited in these casual observers they can learn where and how to acquire their own models, learn about models available to detail and power, including 3-D printed models. Also, we should mentor the more ambitious who want to attempt to model overhead wire. We should encourage N scale traction modelers to write about their experience with available products, layout design and operation and anything else they might wish to share.

We would also be remiss if, as longtime HO modelers, we did not ask for a lifeline to our admittedly diminishing numbers. We are heartened by the steady appearance of new models in 3-D printing format. Our enthusiasm is tempered by the need for more collaboration among those offering those model shells and those who can facilitate their successful completion and operation. This implies the need to assure that such shells have necessary poles, power drives and lettering sets. The hobby is ill served if shells are offered by suppliers without the availability of the necessities for completion. That is a great way to populate the shelves of would-be modelers with idle acquisitions. What is needed entails cooperation and collaboration between all who must contribute to enabling modelers to finish the products they have purchased.

Other ways to stimulate interest in traction in general include presenting club programs about current and new prototype operations and club-sponsored visits to prototype and heritage operations. The annual East Penn slide contest is a venue to showcase excellent photography of current and historic operations. And as a hobby, we should broaden our interest and become aware of the hundreds of active and interesting light rail operations not only in North American but around the world.

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