The Trolleyville Times

October 2019

Welcome to Trolleyville - Keep in the know on modern rail transit activities!

IN THIS ISSUE:

CURRENT EVENTS.....

Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

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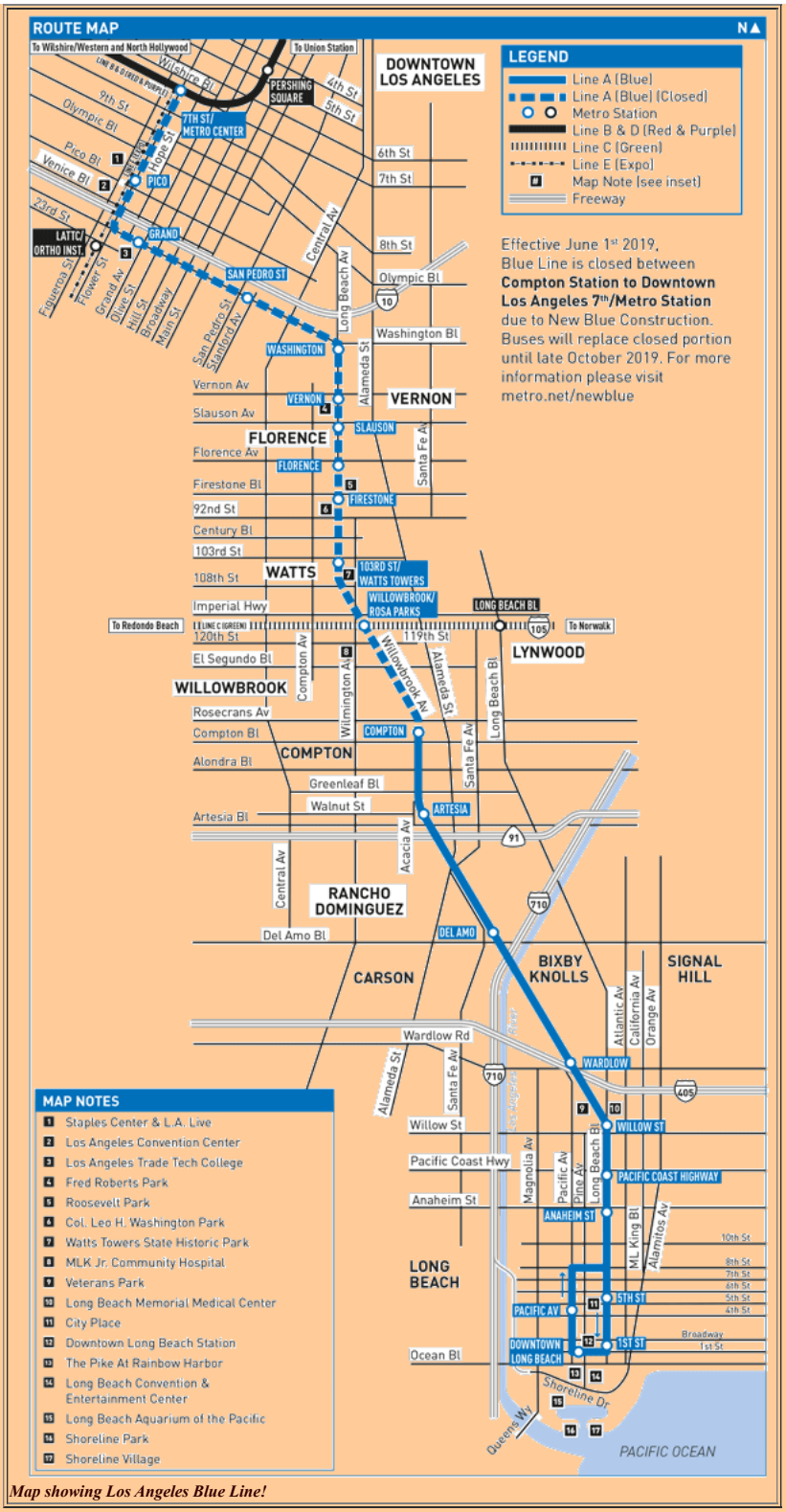
LOS ANGELES, CA - On Wednesday, September 11, 2019, Progressive Railroading reported that the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) announced it will open the Blue Line between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach in late October.

The Blue Line *(Los Angeles to Long Beach)* was Los Angeles first urban rail transit line, opening in 1990, since the last of the streetcars were removed from Los Angeles streets in 1963.

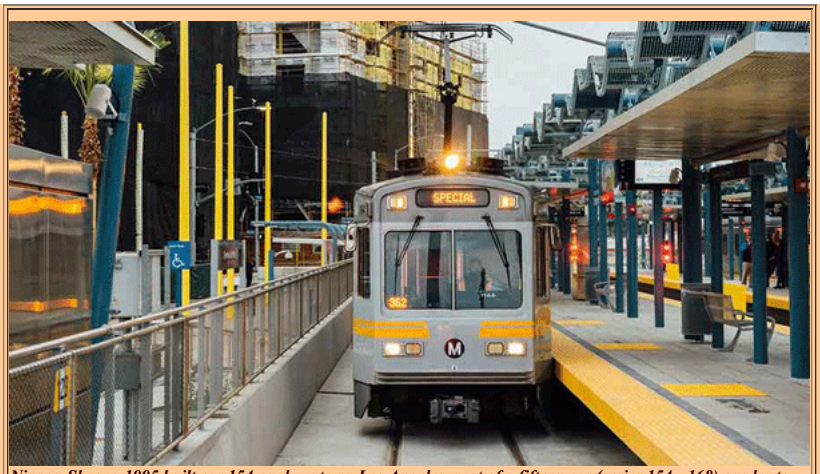


Map showing Los Angeles Blue Line!

The line will open following completion of a $350-million initiative to upgrade and modernize it. The project included track replacement, train control and overhead power system upgrades and installation of four new crossover tracks/switches, which will reduce service interruptions for customers.

In late January 2019, crews began work on the Blue Line's southern section between the downtown Long Beach and the 103rd Street/Watts Towers stations. Improvements are in progress on the line's northern section between the Compton and 7th Street/Metro Center stations, which has required four times more work than the southern section.

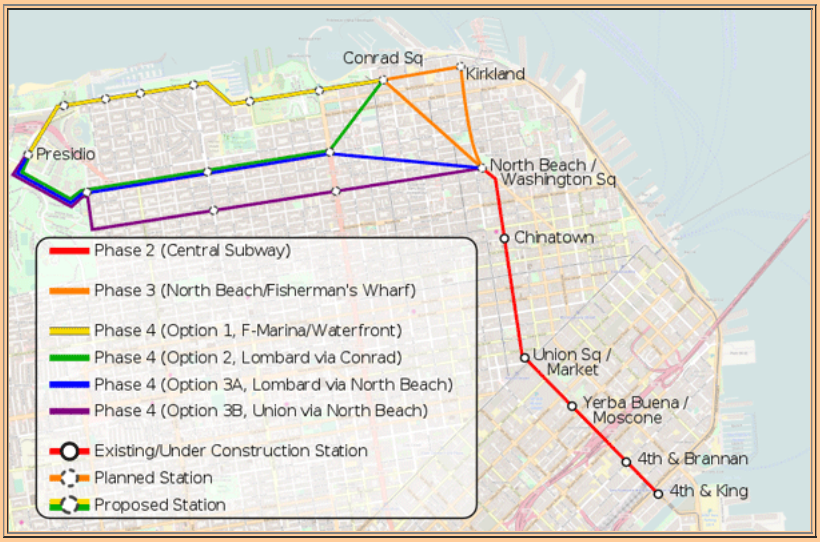
The exact opening date of the line will be announced during this month following train testing. LA Metro will celebrate the line's reopening and thank the public for its patience with free rides and a local community celebration.



Nippon Sharyo-1995 built car 154 on downtown Los Angeles, part of a fifteen car (series 154 - 168) onrder to open the Green Line. These cars were then used to increase Blue Line trains to three cars. They are almost identical to the original 54 cars that opened the Blue Line in 1990.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) earlier this week announced it has extended the completion date for the Central Subway(CS) project to summer 2021. The project, which extends the Municipal Railway mostly underground from South of Market to Chinatown in San Francisco, was originally scheduled to enter revenue service this year.

The CS is an extension of the Muni Metro light rail system under construction in San Francisco, California, from the Caltrain commuter rail depot at 4th and King streets to Chinatown, with stops in South of Market (SoMa) and Union Square. Note the Red line in the next illustration.



The subway is the second phase of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's Third Street Light Rail Project. The first phase opened to the public as the T Third Line in 2007.

In July, SFMTA announced it would review the $1.6 billion project's budget and schedule because delays were expected. After a six-week assessment of both the remaining construction and system integration and testing, substantial construction is now slated to complete in mid-2020, SFMTA officials said in a press release.

Following this, SFMTA will begin testing to ensure track and other systems are fully integrated with the Muni system and ready for service. That process typically takes at least six months to a year in similar systems, agency officials said.

Project director Nadeem Tahir attributed the project delay to difficulty of the construction technique, design modifications and a complete redesign of the Chinatown station.

More Urban Rail Happenings!

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA - The Market Street Railway reported that the September 7-8 Muni Heritage Weekend 2019 lived up to its promise, with the biggest crowds, the most diverse group of vintage vehicles in operation, and much more. They heard the words "Best Heritage Weekend Ever" over and over the entire two days. The biggest crowds (people queued up for an hour or more on Sunday to get a Boat Tram ride), the most kids (a new generation of public transit fans being created), the widest variety of vehicles (debut of Sacramento-Clay cable car 19 and Melbourne tram 916, BOTH boats out on Saturday, BOTH Melbourne trams out on Sunday, plus five vintage buses, the always popular 1896 "Dinky" streetcar, and even the Brussels/Zürich "EuroPCC" in regular service both days to Castro on the F-line.

Cable Car #19 on California Avenue!

Melbourne W2 #496 and SW6 #916 on the Embarcadero!

(All photos and story from the Market Street Railway.)

Thanks were given to everyone who made the weekend a success, led by MSR Board Chair Carmen Clark and Vice Chair Tony Sabella, President Rick Laubscher, and Museum Manager Alison Cant, plus many great volunteers, including our board members Ian Dailey, Chris Arvin, Kat Siegal, Katie Haverkamp, Paul Wells, Paul Lucas, Will Flynn, and Ron Fisher. And at SFMTA/Muni, Katy Guyon, who did a great job organizing the information stations on the plaza, and Jonathan Kibrick, who kept the vintage vehicles moving. Special thanks to MSR members Steve Souza and Jeremy Whiteman for providing pizza and water to the vehicle operators and plaza volunteers all weekend, and of course great thanks to all the operators and maintainers who got the vehicles ready and took them through their paces. The smiles of riders and onlookers lit up the scene everywhere the vehicles went.

1896 built "Dinky" 578 at the Museum!

Zurich PCC on Market Street!

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (SFMTA) Director of Transit Julie Kirschbaum has approved the extension of summer Blackpool Boat Tram service through Fleet Week in mid-October. The boat will continue to operate from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. on the Embarcadero between our San Francisco Railway Museum and Pier 39 every Tuesday and Wednesday through October 9.

This is a welcome development, given the great popularity of the Boat Tram so far this summer. Although during the recent Muni Heritage Weekend celebration, riders queued up for more than an hour to ride the Boat, normally on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, there's generally no waiting to ride. And don't forget, you can ride the Boat Tram along Market Street on its trips in and out of service at the beginning or ending of the day. The boat reaches Market and Church Streets on its way downtown around 10:30 a.m. The trip back up Market at the end of the day varies according to operations during the day, but it's on our map [https://streetcar.live]. This article concludes with photos of the Boat Tram and some of the happy riders!

Suggest that streetcar fans make plans for September 2020!

MODELING HINTS.....

A Different HO scale Traction Coupler!

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When the Southern California Traction Club was first organized in the late 1990s, the models of choice were Pacific Electric cars, such as the Hollywood cars, the 1100 and 1100 series interurbans and the large 67' and 71' long "Blimp"s. All of these used a "traction" coupler. This is a semi-automatic coupler which unlike the railroad Janney or knuckle coupler also makes the required air, signal and electric connections automatically when the cars are coupled.

For a long time the only reasonable coupler to be used was the Bowser (Pennsylvania Scale Models) #1240 Tomlinson coupler that was sold with their Brill Suburban Car. They were initially hard to push together and after a while were easier until something would break and they would not work at all after that.

We then came across the Kato 1-410-C3 coupler sold in Japan with some of their multiple unit trains. The Southern California Traction Club had a member from Japan who was very familiar with the Kato organization and was able to get Custom Traxx a supply of these couplers which they have been selling as SKU SCTC-40 for years. These couplers had a draft gear about the same length as a Kadee #5 so longer ones had to be made for interurban cars and the tight radius turns that they were used to taking. Also, the couplers after a while, tended to break and become useless. But this was the best we had and we continue to use them.

As we began the 3D printing of the HO scale San Diego 4000 series Siemens S70 cars, Volkmar Meier of Interurban Models, came up with his version of a workable traction coupler. It did not look a lot like the real thing but it worked....for a while. West Coast Traction Supply, when they started their 3D printed Los Angeles P865 and P3010 cars, also came up with a traction coupler. It too worked for a while but soon developed issues where they would not couple or once coupled, would not uncouple.

So we thought we would have to live with this situation until recently when.....

West Coast Traction Supply (WCTS) came up with a traction coupler that uses magnetism to couple the cars. We started testing with eight couplers and we continued with an additional nine pairs. Process improvement ahas already been made and the last nine pairs have an adjustable draw bar that allows a draw bar range of four to five scale feet. This will be important because due of the undulations of some modelers track, the heads may have to be outside of the anti climbers to allow sufficient vertical movement.

Test versions of the WCTS coupler mounted on HO scale models of a San Diego S70, a San Diego SD100, an Los Angeles P865 and a Los Angeles P3010. The SD100 is a brass model, while the other three are 3D printed.

Note: Do not get too concerned about coupler height. Every transit system has their own and they sometimes differ within the same system depending on the type of service (light rail, subway elevated, commuter etc). The coupler heights range from the top of the coupler at 34" above the railhead to the bottom of the coupler at about 5 inches above the railhead. Mount your couplers based on your photo of the prototype.

These couplers are designed for coupling powered cars only, and preferably those equipped with 'Keep Alive" type decoders.

The same four cars, all powered, shown coupled. If mounted correctly and somewhat centered, the couplers will actually find each other and line up correctly for coupling.

These couplers will be tested during two appearances of the Southern California Traction Club during this month and more information will become available. We will be looking at several issues:

For instance, in an SDMTS *"three-pack"* train of S70-SD100-S70, where the S70s weigh 7.0 to 7.4 ounces and the SD100, a brass model, weighs 14.5 ounces, will there be issues with unwanted uncouplings even with "Keep Alive" decoders?

Also will tight radius curves cause unwanted uncouplings?

At this time, we have learned a few things about these couplers. First, they should be installed with #2-56 screws. The 2.1mm wide screw in the 2.4 mm diameter hole in the coupler shank should provide sufficient lateral movement to allow for reasonable vertical movement of the coupler head. Second, the head should be installed so that it is outside of the anticlimber to avoid vertical movement restrictions. Third, we may be recommending that washers be used immediately above and below the coupler shank to eliminate any restrictions to horizontal movement.	 The above photograph is a close up of the coupler head with the two oppositely polarized magnets.

The above photograph is a close up of the coupler head with the two oppositely polarized magnets. Look for more information in future issues.

More of Harvey Simon's San Francisco Layout!

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In our issue, we showed you some photos of this fine layout featuring scenes from downtown San Francisco. Here are some more photos, showing great detail to scenery and backgound:

The last photo will be seen again in October 2020 in the Model Railroading Magazine calendar!

Another source of 3D Printed Traction Bodies!

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The Times has been bringing to you some of the many 3D Printed traction items that continue to surface. Since 2015, we have been watching this since Volkmar Meier introduced his S70 at the East Penn Trolley Meet in May of that year. Then West Coast Traction Supply started making several models of Los Angeles past and present urban electric railway vehicles model available. Some of these models have been made for the Bowser Traction Drive and have decals available. We were notified recently of another source of 3D printed models.

Although 3D printing has made its way into the modeling world. The advantage is that with a 3D drawing and a good 3D printer, any model can be made. However, these models must be assembled, powered, prepared for painted and lettered and some of these skills are disappearing fast as most of those skilled in these areas are passing on.

Eric Diehl is making available several Midwest items available in HO scale including the following:

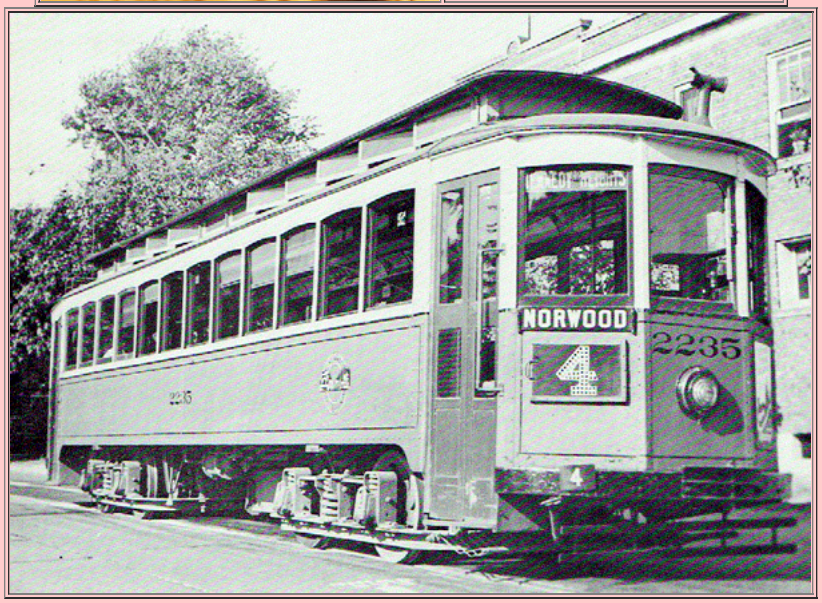
1. Originally built for the Saginaw/Flint Railway which became the Michigan Railway Northeastern Division - Niles/Stephenson Car Co 51' wooden coach numbers 33 to 44, built 1908-1909, rebuilt 1914. These cars used both trolley pole and third-rail for power collection. More data on the prototype is available in CERA Bulletin #103, page III-26. similar to cars uised on NOT&L, Youngstown and Ohio River, Milwaukee Northern.

2. Michigan Railway - St. Louis Car Co 67' 6" steel combine/solarium, observation parlor car, numbers 802, 804, 806 (built 1915), 808, 810, 814, 816 (built 1915-1916). This car used trolley poles, pantograph and third-rail for power collection. More data on the prototype is available in CERA Bulletin #103, pages III-24-26.

3. Michigan Railway - St. Louis Car Co 61' steel combine, numbers 24 to 29, 801 to 819 and 849-855, built 1913-1918. These cars used trolley poles and third-rail for power collection. More data on the prototype is available in CERA Bulletin #103, pages III-18-22.

4. Michigan Railway - J. G. Brill Co 66' 10" steel combine/solarium/observation parlor car, orig numbered 800, renumbered 812, built 1914. This car used trolley poles, pantograph and third-rail for power collection. More data on the prototype is available in CERA Bulletin #103, page III-24.

5. Cincinnati Street Railway - Cincinnati Car Co 50' steel sided streetcar, series 2100 and 2200. In the next views, we have a photo of an almost finished model, a photo of the casting before painting and a photo of one of the prototype cars. More data on the prototype is available in the Wagner & Wright book, "Cincinnati Streetcars, Volume #6".



6. Northern Ohio Traction & Light - Kuhlman Car Co steel parlor Car, numbers 1501 to 1530. Data on this prototype is available in the James Blower book, "The NOT&L Story".

7. The Milwaukee Electric & Light car 1124 built in the TMER&L shops. See CERA Bulletin #112 for more data on this car.

8. Chicago, South Shore and South Bend - Standard Steel Car Company steel coach numbers 30 to 40, built 1929. more information can be found in the William Middleton book " South Shore", pages 170-171.

For more information about these models, including prices, delivery times, and other info contact:

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A 3D Printed Light Rail Vehicle Floor !

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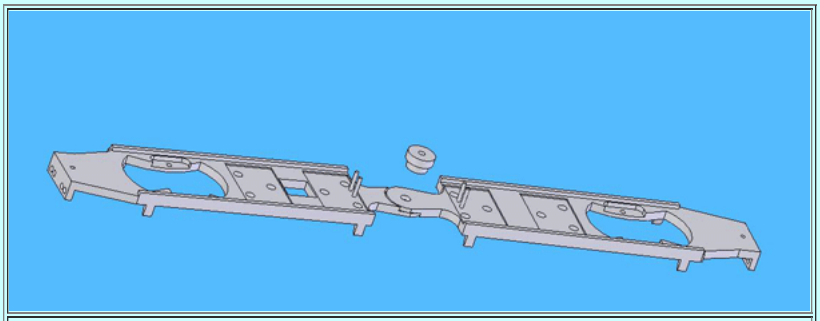
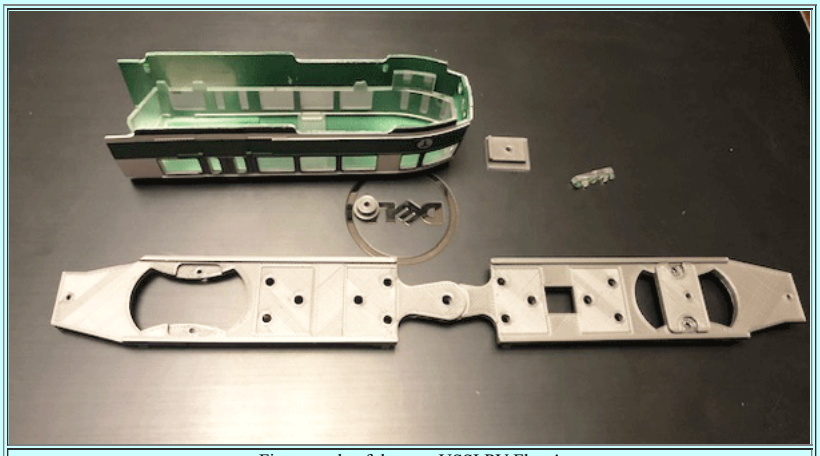
Some time ago, Bowser Manufacturing made some nice replacement chassis/floors for the HO scale AHM/IHC/Mehano Light Rail Vehicle models. It was made first in aluminum and them in pewter. Of course it was made for the Bowser 125100 (26" wheels) or 125105 (28" wheels) drive. When Bowser sold off a portion of their business, the ability to make these floors went with it.



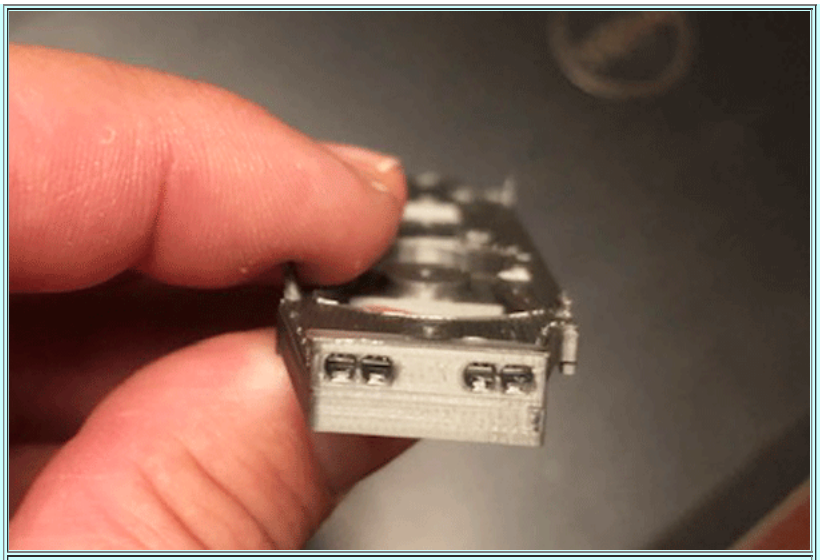
CAD Drawing of the proposed USSLRV Floor!

John Partridge, who previously provided models of the Boston Type 7 and 8 vehicles, has decided to produce a floor for the ill-fated Boeing United States Standard Light Rail Vehicle, which in actuality turned out to be nothing near its title. The floor will be 3D printed and test floors are being evaluated by Custom Traxx as you read this.



First sample of the new USSLRV Floor!

It will be similar to the former Bowser-produced floors except that it will have a place for mounting the front lights. Since the motor and decoder are already on the chassis, this will greatly simplify internal wiring.



Close up of the new front end with provisions for lights!