

Walk-Bike-Bus-Rail

COAST provides advocacy, education and outreach to improve transportation options in the Santa Barbara and Ventura regions, promoting rail, bus, bike, and pedestrian access.

How to reach us

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E-mail discussion list

Participate in discussions of local and regional transportation issues; receive notices of meetings and events. Subscribing is free and easy. Just visit:

<http://groups.google.com/group/coastsb>

COAST General Meeting

Our General Meetings discuss transportation issues affecting the Santa Barbara region. Meetings are open to the public. Location: 15 E. Carrillo Street, Santa Barbara. They are held the second Wednesday of each month, 12 noon to 1:15 pm. Please check our website for updates.

Walking Wednesdays

COAST organizes monthly walking tours on the fourth Wednesday of each month that are free and open to the public. We are now pausing for the winter and will resume in March, 2016. Check our website for schedule.

Support COAST

COAST depends on you to create better transportation options in Santa Barbara and beyond. Support COAST by making a donation. Just use the enclosed envelope. Thank you!

THE TRAIN ISSUE

What's new with Commuter Rail?

By Dennis Story

As you may have heard, efforts are underway to retime existing Surfliner trains. A morning train would arrive in our area early enough for local workers, and an afternoon southbound train to return workers home. This commuter friendly rail service is expected to start this fall, and serve our area until the Measure A Commuter Rail service with multiple trains north and south is up and running. Additional trains on the Union Pacific-owned rail corridor will require new sidings to be built (planning underway), and other improvements, which will take a number of years to accomplish.



The Surfliner at the Goleta Amtrak Station

Meanwhile, the 9th Annual National Train Day event at the Santa Barbara Train Station will again be sponsored by RailPAC (Rail Passenger Association of CA) and be on May 14th from 9am – noon. For a small donation you'll have the opportunity to ride the Surfliner to Carpinteria and back in under an hour. Afterward there'll be a press conference with elected officials discussing regional transportation issues. To help plan this event, please contact Dennis Story, dstory@cox.net.

A Train Station Befitting a City

By Greg Janee

Imagine it. Commuting workers come into the city each morning by train. Some walk or bike from the train station to their workplaces (bikes being taken on the train or stored in bike lockers at the station), while others take a short bus ride to an outlying business park. But first, they pop into any of a number of coffee shops and bakeries in the downtown area for a pick-me-up. At the end of the day the flow is reversed, with commuting workers gathering at a downtown bar before heading home. But the city's train station serves more than commuters. Incoming visitors find hotels, restaurants, and other amenities within walking distance. Residents use

the station to travel to the nearby metropolis for day or overnight trips; arriving back home late at night, taxis, already servicing the downtown area, are readily available.

Could this vision describe Goleta? Well, not currently. As we all know, Goleta's train "station" (more a rail siding) is an eerily lonely place, located nowhere near any point of interest to the pedestrian, commuter, worker, or visitor.

The City of Goleta is reportedly considering purchasing adjacent property to turn the siding into an actual station of sorts. And there is the rumor of adding

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Caltrain Adventures

By Eva Inbar

When my daughter, Miriam, moved to San Francisco but found work in the Silicon Valley, she rode the Caltrain to work. Caltrain runs between San Francisco and San Jose right through the heart of the Silicon Valley. It makes 29 regular stops, including Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Mountain View. There is even an express train called the Baby Bullet.

Caltrain is a commuter train full of young techies, hardly anyone over thirty. In the mornings, they are all on their laptops and smartphones, but after work, the beer and wine comes out and the mood gets merry. Many high tech workers live in San Francisco because they prefer the urban environment, but they work in the Silicon Valley. The main freeway connecting the City with the Valley, Hwy 101, is hopelessly congested. The solution is commuter rail.

Originally, the tracks – yes, double tracks! - belonged to Southern Pacific. When SP lost interest in passenger rail, Caltrans took over the operation 1985. In 1987, the Peninsular Corridor Joint Powers Board was formed and bought the right of way from SP in 1991. In 1997, the official name became Caltrain and the distinctive logo that adorns the trains was adopted.

Caltrain runs 92 weekday trains, and its ridership continues to rise. In February, 2015, weekday ridership averaged 58,245, up 10% from the year before and up 71% from 2010. Caltrain accepts the electronic Clipper Card, allowing for seamless transfers to BART and Muni. By most measures, Caltrain is a success.



Caltrain Station in Palo Alto

But in the sprawling Silicon Valley, how do you get people from the station to their place of work? There are several ways. The cities have shuttles and other public transportation connecting with the train. Employers run their own shuttles in addition. And then there are bicycles, lots of them. People ride to the station, take them on the train and ride to their workplace on the other end. Caltrain is the bikiest train I have ever seen anywhere. Each train has two bike cars and they are full. At each station, many young people can be seen loading and unloading bikes. Usually, this goes remarkably fast.

This is how Caltrain is helping solve the Silicon Valley's commute problem. Can there be lessons here for Santa Barbara?

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an additional train stop near the Los Carneros/Storke office park area. But these improvements miss the point, for the principal problem with the current stop is not so much the amenities (lacking as they are) as the location. Improving the stop's amenities will not improve its connectivity to other Goleta destinations, and adding a stop in an office park area would benefit those workers without benefiting any other commuters or community uses.

If we're going to do anything train-related, let's start by emulating successful models. For example, let's look to the UK, whose rail system is the oldest and one of the most heavily used in the world. The UK's Station Design Principles for Network Rail (<http://bit.ly/1Pri5DE>) states:

"Any new station construction must take into account the aspirations of the people using it or being affected by it. Typically being the first impression of arriving in a locality, the station and its urban integration with the surrounding environment are of prime importance and often act as catalysts for future development."

The current Goleta train stop clearly fails the UK's principle

for it lacks any integration with the surrounding area. Further, train travel inevitably involves other modes of transportation:

"The station design has to take into account that passengers do not start and end their journey in a station. Their travel experience is very much determined by their approach and departure from the station."

The current location of Goleta's train stop, being located at the end of a dead-end road in a heavy industrial area, lacks connectivity with every other mode of transportation: no bus service; no sidewalk; no bike lane; and limited taxi service due to lack of other, nearby passenger destinations. As a result, there are no "network" effects to be had (e.g., improved train service spurs bus ridership and vice versa) and no economies of scale to be gained. By contrast, placing the train station in a more urbanized area could correct all those deficiencies.

The answer is clear. Goleta's train station should be located in Old Town.

Roving on Rails

By Rohit Chakraborty



My name is Rohit Chakraborty, a blogger and a hardware engineer who loves traveling by train. Growing up in India, trains were our primary means of intercity transport. I used to count months, days, hours, minutes and even seconds for my summer vacation to start. It was the train journey that filled me with excitement. I just could not wait to hop onto the train and sit by my favorite window.

The windows and doors can be opened on Indian trains. The pleasure of standing by the door, while the train made its way through thick jungles, big rivers, steep mountains and open desert, is just priceless. And the food served in trains is so tasty. Train trips, in India, are like a giant picnic with strangers.

After I moved to the US, I continued exploring train travel. However, whenever I suggest a train trip to my friends, I inevitably get asked "How much time would it take?", "The train is slow" "Why don't we just fly". Don't get me wrong. I do feel like my friends would love to take the train.



But in a fast paced world that we live in, where everything is about getting things done fast, taking the train is like breaking a rule.

Train trips are as much about the journey as the destination. It is about the time spent with family and friends, looking

out at the changing landscapes, the beautiful towns and the country sides, the invigorating sunrises and the pen-sive sunsets. I truly believe that whenever life gets out of control or rushed, one must take a train. The train slows you down, makes you live in the present and enjoy the little things in life.

I have started a blog that details my travels on trains around the world - rovingonrails.com. The purpose of this blog is to share my train travels and experiences, critique train routes and services and provide tips and ways to save on travel. I hope to encourage travelers to take the train more often. I also love to plan trips. I would like to share and help fellow travelers plan their trip. As I have traveled extensively in India, I will start with helping travelers plan train trips in India. So if you are planning to go to India, I can help you plan your itinerary. I am going to Vietnam soon and will publish my experiences from Vietnam. I will publish my future planned trips and hope to discover little known train routes and services.

Join me in my journey!

Interview with Scott Spaulding

By Deborah Schwartz

Interviews always give us that special opportunity to get up close and personal with someone. On this occasion I spent one-one-one time with Scott Spaulding - one of our busiest, most respected regional transportation planners. After graduating from UCSB and earning an MA from UC Irvine, Scott found his way back to Santa Barbara in 2001 by accepting a position at the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) to manage the Clean Air Express and co-manage the Coastal Express commuter bus services. Scott began working on rail planning in 2009, and is currently focused on modifying the Pacific Surfliner schedule to operate during commute hours between Ventura and the South Coast.

It boggles the mind to hear all the various owners and users of the rail corridor between Santa Barbara and San Diego, including Metrolink (LA Metro, others), COASTER (North County Transit District, Metropolitan Transit System), Amtrak, and Union Pacific and Burlington Northern (freight). The bottom line complication is that demand for service exceeds infrastructure capacity, which can lead to delays, especially in areas where there is only one track. How expensive is it to build new tracks? For a current siding project between Santa Barbara and Ventura, about \$10 million per mile.

Another project Scott is working on is the reintroduction of

the COAST Daylight Service between LA and San Jose, although this is at least 3-5 years away and will require a number of agreements before implementation. Measure A includes \$25 million for rail improvements, and is a critically important funding source to initiate peak hour service between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. At the Legislative level, the Select Committee on Passenger Rail, chaired by Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, began meeting last year. Scott reports that Senator Jackson has been instrumental in the effort to establish peak hour Surfliner service in our region.

In conclusion, if you want to know anything about rail service including the complex politics of the business, Scott is your go-to professional!





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**National Train Day 2016 celebration is May 14th,
9am to 12pm at the Santa Barbara Amtrak Station.
Come join the fun!**

Walking Wednesdays 2016 kicks off

Our popular Walking Wednesday program is entering its sixth season. The program runs during the spring and summer months on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 5:30 to 7pm. Under the guidance of a wonderful and knowledgeable docent, we discover a new slice of Santa Barbara each time. This year, we have a great lineup of docents and places



The Mill is at the corner of Haley and Laguna Streets

to visit. Here are some of our offerings: In March, builder **Dennis Allen** will lead a tour of Haley Street. Other docents include **Dave Davis** with a tour of lower State Street, landscape architect **Robert Adams** who will lead us through some of the rich landscapes that make Santa Barbara so unique, **Karen Feeney**, who will show us some of the hidden pathways of the Riviera, **Jeff Shelton** who will return for another engagement showing us his colorful buildings and **Alex Pujo** with a tour of upper De la Vina Street. For a detailed schedule, please visit our website and watch your e-mail for our monthly e-newsletter.

Green builder **Dennis Allen** will kick off the season with a walk titled "Change and Diversity on Haley Street." It will be on **Wednesday, March 23rd at 5:30pm**. We will look at The Mill remodeled building, Bici Centro, the Contractors' Association and Ellen Biltstein's offices and Jeff Shelton's colorful building on Santa Barbara Street just around the corner from Haley. This is a walk not to be missed! Meeting place TBD; please check our website.

Our thanks go to our season sponsors, **Allen Construction, Harrison Design Associates** and **Deckers Outdoor Corp.** who make this program possible.