

RAIL PASSENGERS

FRIDAY HOTLINE

#1436

APRIL 10TH, 2026



Association News

A Tale of Two Cities

by [Jim Mathews / President & CEO](#)

This week, the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority made good on their [threat to charge a boatload of money](#) for World Cup football fans to ride the T to Gillette Stadium in Foxboro -- temporarily renamed Boston Stadium -- but it was even worse than we originally thought: [not \\$75 but \\$80](#).

And the traffic nightmare created by the recent Brazil-France friendly match in Foxboro scared everyone into buying the tickets anyway. MBTA reports that [within mere minutes 17,000 people jumped at the chance to pay \\$80 for what is normally an \\$8 to \\$16 ride](#), though it's pretty clear they had very little choice and no good options. For what it's worth, that beat out the demand for a Taylor Swift concert when MBTA also ran special service.

Meanwhile, also this week but an entire two-and-a-half day train ride away in California, the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency, working together with the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), said they too are preparing to get fans to and from World Cup matches -- they'll add another round-trip frequency beginning May 4th, and [to ease the pain they'll offer a 20 percent fare discount](#). A discount, from regular fares.

Here's what the Surfliner folks say on their booking site: "Taking the train to Los Angeles soccer matches is a simple, stress-free alternative to driving. Ride the Pacific Surfliner to Los Angeles Union Station or other nearby stops, then connect to SoFi Stadium via shuttle, Metro, or rideshare. The train offers comfortable seating, onboard amenities, and scenic coastal views, making your match day experience part of the journey."

Indeed.

The regular fares on this run range between \$25 and \$35 to cover 128 miles between LA and San Diego, or the 103 miles between LA and Santa Barbara. And instead of boosting the fares, they're discounting them to make train travel a reasonable option and to fulfill the publicly funded agency's mandate to deploy its resources to reduce congestion and improve mobility.

There's a right way and a wrong way to respond to the huge travel demands that will be placed on our public infrastructure by six million football fans arriving from around the world to spend a month watching their nation's teams duke it out for a spot in the history books. I said it last week and I'll say it again here: gouging fans who really have no choice might help to pay, in the short run, for getting those extra trains over the road. [MBTA just sold \\$1.4 million worth of tickets, so there's a certain logic to it](#). But that kind of short-termism doesn't do much for what should be our long-term objective of encouraging more rail travel.

Charging four times the typical fare for special express trains is a mistake. We want to encourage people to use trains, for lots of good reasons, like getting people out of cars, like reducing congestion, like improving emissions, or simply moving masses of people much more efficiently at a time when travel of all kinds will be crushed.

Bravo LOSSAN.

Field Notes

Please email [Joe Aiello](mailto:Joe.Aiello@narrowrail.org) if you have any local, state or regional stories/projects (even something you know or experienced happening overseas) that you would like to write about and see highlighted in the Hotline.

Calling All Readers!

Do you have a favorite transit/train photo (or photos) you have taken from your travels around the country, or even around the world? Would you like to see them featured in our Hotline social media post each week (with credit, of course)?

Send them to us @ hotline@narrowrail.org with the subject "HOTLINE PHOTO"

Hotline Links

A curated selection of passenger rail and transportation stories from this week. Check out our social media feeds to read breaking news and join the conversation!

[Trump Wants to Slash Federal Funding for Public Transit, Streetsblog USA](#)

As highlighted in our press release from last Friday, these cuts move the nation "in the wrong direction for affordability, mobility, and safety" right when Americans are facing record-high travel costs.

[Nearly 200 residents attend Sunnyside Yard information session after Mamdani revives plans, QNS](#)

A project first proposed through a partnership between Amtrak and the New York City Economic Development Corporation in 2019 under then-Mayor de Blasio has been revived by current NYC Mayor Zohran Mamdani

[Coloradans have spoken and chosen the name of the Front Range Passenger Rail, CBS Colorado](#)

Front range service between Pueblo and Fort Collins in Colorado officially has a name!

Also, something we learned: "Trainy McTrainface" is actually the name of a train line in Sweden.

[Amtrak's allure grows as gas tops \\$5. Let's do the math for Valley, Bay Area trips, Fresno Bee](#)

The more gas prices rise, the more we will see articles like this pushing for people to take the train.

[Maryland Senate Advancing Two-Person Crew Bill, SMART Union](#)

Thanks to the grassroots advocacy work led by members of the SMART Transportation Division, the Maryland State Senate is poised to send the Two-Person Crew Bill out of committee and to the floor for a full vote.

[Siemens Mobility opens new factory in North Carolina, Trains Pro](#)

Trains Pro coverage of Friday's opening of Siemens Mobility's brand-new \$220M, 200 acre facility in Lexington, NC - the "birthplace" of Amtrak's Airo fleet on the East Coast.

[MBTA Announces Service Updates and mTicket Availability for World Cup 2026 Matches, Mass.gov](#)

With tickets for the first five group stage matches going on sale this week, the MBTA laid out their plans to get fans to and from "Boston Stadium" in Foxboro for the World Cup

[NY Penn Station to close for hours before World Cup matches, North Jersey](#)

The transit plans for those attending World Cup matches this summer around the country have, so far, not been kind to those who are just trying to get around for work, school, appointments, etc.

[A train to Rockingham is met by Kyle Petty and fans hoping to reconnect with NASCAR, The News & Observer](#)

Hundreds of fans traveling on the "Rockingham Special" last weekend to catch the NASCAR races were greeted at the station by North Carolina native and 3rd generation racing legend Kyle Petty.

[Pacific Surfliner adds new daily trips to Central Coast](#), **The Californian**

More information on story we have covered in the past.



**WE ARE WORKING ON A DISCORD SERVER.
STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you aren't following Rail Passengers on social media, you should be! We are covering all the breaking news America's passengers need to stay informed on local, regional, and national issues.

Upcoming Events

Advocacy Workshops + Council Business Meeting



Next Monday and Tuesday, we'll be providing two opportunities for attendees to hear updates on the agenda and pose any last-minute logistical questions.

[Register for our final briefing webinars](#)

Final Brief and Q&A

Dates:

Monday, April 13th (7pm Eastern)

Tuesday, April 14th (7pm Pacific)

Session Description:

Rail Passengers staff will give a final update on the agenda, and field last minute questions from attendees.

Regional Workshop Agendas

Amtrak National and Regional Update on Project Delivery and Operations:

- Joe Barr – Sr. Director, State Partnerships and Development
- Todd Stennis – Director, Government Affairs - South
- Marty Sandoval, Director, Government Affairs - Midwest
- Alex Khalfin - Director, Government Affairs - West

Amtrak regional leaders will provide an overview of the progress they've made on IJJA-funded projects, updates to their equipment procurement efforts, and discuss how they're working with regional and State partners to expand service.

How Rail Labor is Helping Grow the Industry:

- Alex Beckmann, Legislative Director, Teamsters Rail Division
- Lucy Shaw, Legislative Representative, Transportation Trades Department - AFL-CIO

Hear from two of the leading labor organizations in the country about their legislative goals for 2026, what they hope to see in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization, and how they're working with other

stakeholder groups to build a stronger rail industry in the U.S.

The Economic Impact of Supplying US Rail:

- Matt Delaney, Director, Government & Public Affairs, Rail Supply Institute

RSI will discuss their 2026 report calculating the impact of the U.S. rail supply industry to the U.S. economy. We'll look at how RSI calculated these benefits, how it breaks down by state, and how advocates can use this data to secure public investment for rail.

Legislative and Policy Updates:

- **Budget Briefing:** we'll go over our budgetary and policy "ask" for 2026, provide updates on the FY2027 appropriations process, and discuss the latest intel on the Trump Administration's plans for IIJA rail funds.
- **Surface Transportation Reauthorization Overview:** with a little over five months until the expiration of the IIJA, time is running short to introduce and pass the next surface transportation bill. We'll help you understand the process this legislation must navigate to be enacted, and drill down on the short-list of priorities we're advocating for.
- **Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern Merger Proposal:** hear from Rail Passengers staff about how we're engaging with the Surface Transportation Board's review of Union Pacific's proposed merger with Norfolk Southern, including engagement with industry stakeholders and analysis of the impact this merger would have on America's train passengers.
- **Day on the Hill Preparation:** prepare for the next day's Hill meetings by going over meeting materials, practice delivering our best arguments for better passenger rail, prepare for frequently heard criticism of federal rail programs and spending, and field any questions you may have.

[DC ADVOCACY WORKSHOPS REGISTRATION](#)

Registration is \$125.00

Due to the space limitations of our office, each of the sessions is **limited to 20 tickets** and there will be no on-site or virtual registration. Please attend the session for the state you reside in.

Registration ends **TONIGHT (April 10th) at Midnight eastern**

NOTE: THE NORTHEAST/SOUTH AND MIDWEST/MID-ATLANTIC WORKSHOPS ARE NOW FULL.

The in-office workshops will run from 8:00a to 4:00p. Lunch will be provided (*attendees are responsible for their own breakfast*). Attendees will be responsible for securing their own lodging needs.

Stay tuned to www.railpassengers.org/dc2026 for more information.



A Word from the Chair

Dear Council and Board members,

When I joined the Board of Directors of the RPA and attended my first post-pandemic, in-person business meeting, I was impressed by two things. The first was how intensely people cared about the bylaws! That was a time when the Council was in charge of the Association Bylaws, and discussions about proposals and counter-proposals to our governing document could get pretty lively. Then in 2023, we took a good look at the bylaws, and almost everyone agreed that this wasn't the way to do things. At the Fall meeting that year, the council itself voted overwhelmingly to turn responsibility for the bylaws over to the Board of Directors.

The second thing that impressed me was just how seriously our Councilors

take their responsibility to help the Association fulfill its mission, as evidenced by how many of you participate in the business meetings. This means when called upon to give shape to our leadership, ask smart and well-informed questions, and be part of our legislative outreach to Congress, the Council is "all in."

You are truly the backbone of this association, the ones who bring your local knowledge and experience to bear on our national policies. You give the association its unifying structure and purpose, without which we would be just another national nonprofit. Now it's time again to show your support and commitment to the association by taking part in the Council Business meeting on April 22, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. It's easy and free to sign up to attend all or part virtually if you don't plan to be in Washington.

At the meeting, you'll hear from the candidates you'll later be voting for to fill positions for At-large Council members, the Membership Action Review Committee, the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Secretary of the Association, and three positions on the Board of Directors. The balloting will begin at the business meeting and continue online in the following weeks.

You'll also hear from the committees on which our Council and Board volunteers serve, hear Jim Mathews and the Chair report on the State of the Association, and meet your Board of Directors.

And here's a surprise bonus: this year, Amtrak executives are coming at 3:00 p.m. to give updates on the Amtrak fleet (Acela, Airo and Long Distance); what Amtrak's doing to improve the passenger experience; updates on major projects; and what's coming for Amtrak's Long Distance Service Line.

All this with opening remarks by Amtrak Board member Elaine Clegg!

If you haven't yet signed up for the Council Business meeting, **you have until midnight on Monday (April 13th) to do so.** You will find this to be an important part of your experience as a Council member, and it keeps us on our toes and responsive to you, the people who have made a personal commitment to serve the Association as members of the Council.

See you at the meeting,

Meredith Richards, Chair
Rail Passengers Association

[2026 SPRING COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING REGISTRATION](#)

In-person registration is \$99
Virtual registration is free

The 2026 Spring Council Business Meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 22nd from 8:00a to 4:00p. Lunch will be provided (*attendees are responsible for their own breakfast*). **Registration ends on Monday, April 13th at Midnight eastern.** There will be no on-site registration.

Stay tuned to www.railpassengers.org/2026SpringCouncilMeeting for more information.

Local Meetings + Events

[The Ohio Rail Summit](#), Saturday, April 18

[22nd Annual Southwestern Rail Conference](#), May 18-19

[Greater Northwest Rail Summit](#), August 25-27

Please contact Joe Aiello (jaiello@narprail.org) to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the Rail Passengers calendar (print and on-line) of upcoming events!

Staff Updates

Your staff is at the table, in the field, having the conversations that make a difference for passengers across the country. Learn what they're up to each week and how you can support your Association's key missions!

- **Jim Mathews, President & CEO**, met with coalition and industry partners this week on issues ranging from fares and amenities to the pending re-application of Union Pacific to acquire Norfolk Southern. He also did several press interviews, including an appearance on Spectrum News' NY1 newscast to talk about the potential damage from the Trump

Administration's proposed cuts to Amtrak and transit funding.

- **Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Policy**, spoke with reporters about how Amtrak and transit agencies are preparing to handle an influx of passengers around the World Cup, while continuing to work with members and Council Representatives to prepare for this month's RailNation event in Washington, D.C.
- **Jonsie Stone, Chief of Staff**, followed up with contacts from last week's visit to Toledo, Ohio, worked on fundraising messages, processed membership dues and donations sent to the DC office and tended to the administrative and operational needs of the Association.
- **Joe Aiello, Director of Community Engagement & Organizing**, assisted Sean on a [legislative update briefing](#) earlier in the week, responded to calls and emails regarding the DC workshops coming up in a couple of weeks, and kicked off our "meetings about the meeting" for RailNation: Toledo planning.
- **Kimberly Notarianni, Membership Management Consultant**, continues to support constituents with renewals, new memberships, User Center access issues, password resets, and adding eligible sub-memberships. If your membership level includes sub-memberships, please contact Kimberly at knotarianni@narprail.org with the names and unique email addresses for each individual, as every sub-member is assigned their own ID number and must have a distinct email on file.

Apply for Volunteer Staff at Rail Passengers Association

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**



railpassengers.org/volunteer

Rail Passengers Association

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)

Membership How-To

Are you a current member and need help with your account number, username, etc.?

[Click Here For Our Membership "How-To" Page](#)

NOTICE: Looking for your 2025 membership/donation tax documents?

[Click here](#) for instructions.

We Have Merch!

New items available!





 Tell Us Your Story

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 Service Updates & Timetables

 Visit the General Membership Group

 View Webinars

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 Take Action

Rail Passengers Timetables



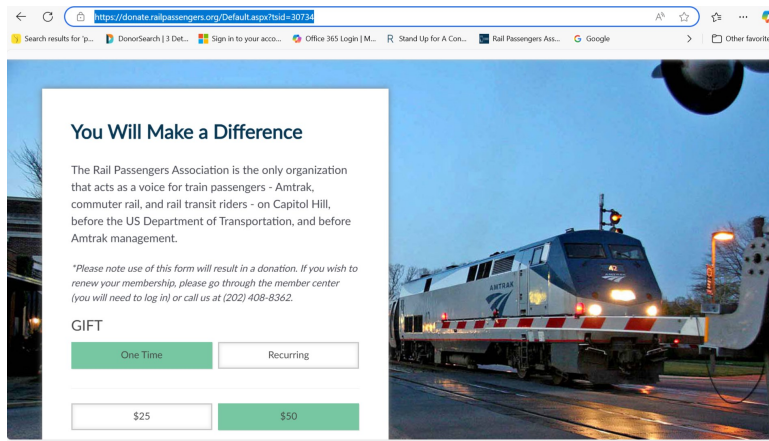
Our Timetables Manager, Chris Jukins, has created a spring update for us. He is still working on a few stragglers, but we should have those up soon.

[CLICK HERE](#)

NOTE: Because we do update the links on our website - please bookmark **the main page** and not the individual schedules

Donate Online with Confidence

You can donate to the Rail Passengers Association online with confidence, knowing your credit card information is secure. Charity Engine uses industry-standard SSL technology to keep your information secure. Don't wait for a paper appeal to donate, support the Association today by donating here. When the web browser shows a lock next to the URL, it means that it's an HTTPS, and it's secure:
<https://donate.railpassengers.org/Default.aspx?tsid=30734>



Do more with your donations. If you have questions about employer match, gifting a membership, or other questions about how to make a bigger impact, let us know! Your staff is here to help with:

- Online Donations
- Donor Advised Funds
- Employer Match
- RPA Signature Visa Card
- Gift of Membership
- and More!

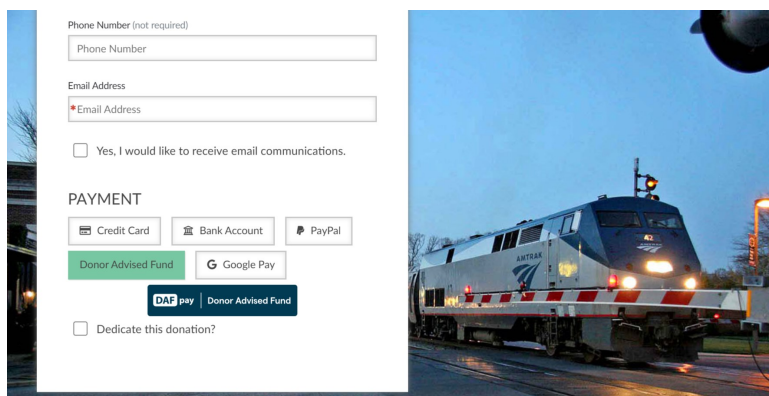
With multiple secure, protected methods of payment, you have more flexibility in the way dues are paid. Skip the hassle and [contact us](#) today for help setting up automatic or online payments.

- Setup ACH or E-Check with your bank of choice
- Use a Debit or Credit Card to pay online, or
- Send a check to 1200 G Street NW Suite 520 Washington, DC 20005

Use Your Donor Advised Fund (DAF) to Donate, Renew or Join Online

You can now donate or join/renew your membership, online, through your donor advised fund using DAFpay. All Rail Passengers forms now include a "Donor Advised Fund" button under Payment.

Donation Form:




Membership Form:

- Rail Passengers' Webinar Series
- Other

Yes, I prefer communication by email rather than by mail.

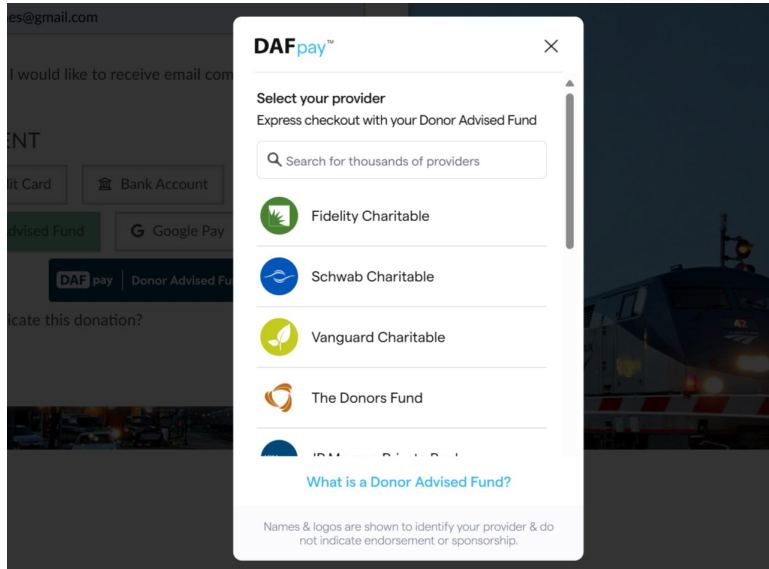
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Donor Advised Fund

After selecting Donor Advised Fund as your payment preference, you will be taken to a DAFpay screen to select your donor advised fund provider, i.e., Fidelity Charitable, Vanguard Charitable, Daffy, etc.



Select your provider, then follow their prompts. If you need to provide information on Rail Passengers Association, please use the below:

National Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc.
 dba Rail Passengers Association
 1200 G Street, NW
 Suite 520
 Washington, DC 20005
 Contact: Jonsie Stone, jstone@narprail.org
 Tax ID: 36-2615221

Member & Donor Notices

- **The Rail Passengers Association is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Our federal tax identification number is 36-2615221**
- **To help facilitate dissemination of electronic thank you receipts,** please make sure your contact information, **specifically your email address,** is up-to-date in your Neon profile.
- **If you need assistance with your membership,** please call the Office at 202-408-8362.
- **While our staff continues to work remotely, we are unable to provide permanent membership cards.** You can print a temporary membership card by creating an account at www.railpassengers.org (select "My Account" on the homepage).
- **Complete all information!** -- Before sealing your envelope, PLEASE double-check the credit card information on the buck slip!
 - Print credit card information clearly.
 - **Include an expiration date, month and year, as well as the CVV number.**
 - Without **COMPLETE** information, your membership renewal or donation can't be processed.
- **If you have your financial institution send a check on your behalf,** without a buckslip, PLEASE instruct them to add:
 - a notation in the memo field if the payment is for membership dues or a donation, AND,
 - your Rail Passengers Association member ID. If we have multiple members with the same name, i.e., John Smith, it can be hard to identify the correct member to attribute the payment, without the member ID.



Rail Passengers Association members have access to a full service, nationwide federal credit union with extensive product and service offerings. Signature FCU is the exclusive provider of the [Rail Passengers Association-branded Visa credit card](#) with our logo, which supports our work by giving back to our organization, and gives you 1 point for every \$1 you spend to redeem for travel and merchandise. The card has no annual fee, no balance transfer fees, no foreign transaction fees, and has a very low interest rate.

Charity Navigator



✦ FOUR-STAR ✦

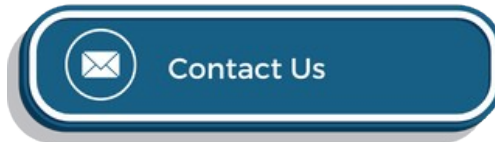
Rail Passengers Association Earns Coveted 4-Star Rating from Charity Navigator

Rail Passengers Association's strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. Our Charity Navigator profile can be found by clicking [here](#).

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:



If you have questions, feedback, or submissions for next week's hotline, send us your thoughts! Help us spread the word about your local, regional, and national passenger rail wins.



RAIL PASSENGERS

EST. 1967

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