

## **MeltWater News Report – October 2012**

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### **Progressive Railroading's Passenger Rail at a Glance 2012**

By Angela Cotey, Associate Editor

Funding issues persist, but projects will go on In second-quarter 2012, nearly 2.7 billion trips were taken on U.S. public transportation systems, a 1.6 percent rise compared with second-quarter 2011 and the sixth consecutive quarter of ridership growth, according to the American Public Transportation Association.

Ridership is showing particular growth in areas of the country where the economy is rebounding. Transit agencies might be seeing signs of an economic rebound in their ridership stats, but it hasn't yet hit their pocketbooks. And even if it does — in the form of higher farebox revenue and sales tax receipts — states and the federal government have vowed to cut spending, which likely will continue to impact capital and operating dollars.

Concerns about current and near-term funding were top of mind for many transit agency staffers who submitted information for this year's *Passenger Rail at a Glance*: from Dallas/Fort Worth's Trinity Railway Express and Nashville's Regional Transportation Authority raising concerns about how they'll fund positive train control; to Denver's Regional Transportation District and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority coming up short on program budgets funded through sales tax measures; to the Alaska Railroad Corp. determining how federal funding reductions will impact 2013 capital programs.

Of course, budget concerns always top the list of worries for public transit executives. And while the past few years might have elevated stress levels in the budget department, agency officials have adapted. With the near-term outlook appearing to be just as grim, the funding shortages have become less of a temporary impact of the recession and more of the "new normal" for transit agencies.

The pace of transit investments has slowed as a result, but that doesn't mean they've come to a halt. The 26 agencies that provided information for this year's guide had plenty of capital project information to share about line extensions, station upgrades or additional services being studied.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is in the midst of a handful of light-rail and subway extensions. Dallas Area Rapid Transit is wrapping up the majority of construction on its multi-year light-rail expansion program, and New York City-area agencies have a range of projects under way to upgrade existing infrastructure and build new lines.

Details on those capital projects and more are included below, along with general agency information.

## **CALIFORNIA**

### **Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)**

Connects the San Francisco Peninsula with Oakland, Berkeley, Fremont, Walnut Creek, Dublin/Pleasanton and other cities in the East Bay. Service launched in 1972.

**Route miles:** 104 heavy rail

**Rolling stock:** 669 rail cars, 30 years old, plus 410 rail cars on order from Bombardier Transportation, to be delivered in 2020

**Annual ridership:** 110.8 million

**Annual operating cost:** \$669.4 million

**Annual capital cost:** \$869 million

**Number of stations:** 44

In FY2012, BART is upgrading some existing rail cars to feature rubber floors and/or vinyl seats. The improvements will give the cars a fresh interior before BART replaces its entire fleet by 2024.

The agency also continues to reinforce vulnerable parts of its infrastructure under the ongoing earthquake safety program, scheduled to conclude in 2015.

The agency also is building: the 5.4-mile Warm Springs extension to the Santa Clara County line, scheduled to open in late 2015; the Oakland Airport Connector, a 3.2-mile automated guideway system running from the existing Coliseum Station to Oakland International Airport, slated to begin service in summer 2014; and the 10-mile eBART extension, which will run east to Antioch and accommodate diesel multiple units, and is expected to open in December 2016.

In addition, BART is expanding its maintenance and storage facilities at the Hayward Maintenance Complex.

### **Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)**

VTA is an independent special district responsible for bus, light-rail and paratransit operations, as well as congestion management, specific highway improvement projects and county-wide transportation planning. Light-rail service launched in 1987.

**Route miles:** 42.2 light rail

**Rolling stock:** 100 light-rail trains with 1, 2 or three cars per consist, average age 6 years

**Annual ridership:** 10 million

**Annual operating cost:** \$57.4 million

**Annual capital cost:** \$335 million (includes total projected cost of projects in preliminary engineering, final design or construction, as of July 1, 2012)

**Number of stations:** 62

VTA is overseeing construction of a 10-mile Bay Area Rapid Transit extension that will run from Warm Springs/Alameda County to Berryessa/Santa Clara County. Construction began in April and is scheduled to be completed in 2016, with service anticipated to begin in 2017.

The agency is completing final design for a 2.6-mile light-rail extension into east San Jose/Santa Clara County, and completing project development and environmental clearance work for a 1.57-mile extension to the city of Campbell/Santa Clara County. Construction on both projects is on hold until the federal environmental review phase is completed, as the projects depend on funding availability.

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