The University of Delaware IPA gratefully acknowledges that the Building Inter-Metropolitan Rail Corridors Public Policy Forum and Report were made possible with funding support from a State of Delaware Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Bill through a Delaware Department of Transportation Infrastructure Grant to IPA.
Preface

Jerome R. Lewis, Ph.D., Director, Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware

As the director of the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware, I am pleased to provide this report on the Building Inter-Metropolitan Rail Corridors Public Policy Forum. The forum was held on February 21, 2006, at the University of Delaware’s Clayton Hall and was co-sponsored by the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) and The National Corridors Initiative with support from the Delaware Department of Transportation and the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO). The forum focused on the status and future of inter-metropolitan transportation corridors. The goal was to provide an opportunity for stakeholders involved in rail service—such as scholars, transportation planners, policymakers, and advocates—to discuss the future direction and strategy for inter-metropolitan corridors. For a complete list of attendees, see Appendix A.

Building rail capacity and efficiency in the United States is critical for both effectively meeting projected increasing transportation demands over the next several decades and reducing our dependency on fossil fuels. To achieve this, there is a need to expand rail infrastructure and shift a portion of the movement of people and freight from highway to rail. The policy forum acted as a venue to discuss progress that is being made, problems that need to be overcome, and which steps should be given priority to move corridor development forward and create wider public understanding, support, and use.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those who contributed time and energy toward the forum’s success. My colleague, Dr. Robert Warren, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, was principally involved in the forums planning. I would especially like to thank United States Senator Thomas R. Carper for his opening address “Rail Policy – A View from Washington.” I want to acknowledge our outstanding speakers whose presentations included: “Inter-Metropolitan Rail Corridors and Regional Development,” Dr. Jean-Paul Rodrigue (Hofstra University); “Achievements in and the Future of Rail Corridor Projects,” Tom Till (Cascadia Center), Howard Learner (Environmental Law & Policy Center), and Eugene Skoropowski (Capital Corridor Joint Powers Authority); “Elements of Success for High-Speed Rail Projects in the U.S.,” Dr. Allison L. C. de Cerreño (New York University); and “Amtrak is Only the Symptom,” James P. RePass (The National Corridors Initiative).

I would also like to thank IPA staff member Nell Downer and graduate research assistants Ivan Mitchell and Garrett Wozniak who were responsible for coordinating the forum. Lisa Moreland (IPA) and Ivan Mitchell managed the overall effort to produce and edit this report. IPA research assistants Barrett Edwards, Susanne Thomaier, Lindsey Interlante, Cori Burbach, and George Morse provided notes on the forum. Mark Deshon (IPA) supported all graphic needs, including flyers, events programs, attendee name badges, and the cover for this report.

Please note: The pages that follow contain edited summaries of the speakers’ presentations. The speaker’s presentations are available as Podcast on IPA’s website at http://www.ipa.udel.edu/infrastructure/rail/corridors_forum/podcast.html.
Table of Contents

Opening Address: Rail Policy – A View from Washington .................................................................2
United States Senator Thomas R. Carper

Inter-Metropolitan Rail Corridors and Regional Development..........................................................4
Dr. Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Department of Economics and Geography, Hofstra University

Achievements in and the Future of Rail Corridor Projects...............................................................8
Howard A. Learner, President and Executive Director, Environmental Law and Policy Center

Building Inter-Metropolitan Rail Corridors .....................................................................................9
Eugene K. Skoropowski, Managing Director, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Development, Lessons, and Prospects of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor: An Inter-
Metropolitan Rail Corridor in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia ...............................10
Thomas A. Till, Managing Director, Cascadia Center for Regional Development, Discovery
Institute

Panel Discussion: Achievements in and the Future of Rail Corridor Projects ..............................11

Elements of Success for HSR Projects in the United States............................................................13
Dr. Allison L. C. de Cerreño, Ph.D., Co-Director, NYU Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation
Policy and Management; Research Associate, Mineta Transportation

Amtrak Is Only the Symptom.........................................................................................................16
James P. RePass, President and CEO, The National Corridors Initiative

The Future of Rail Transportation in America ..............................................................................18
David L. Gunn, Former President, Amtrak

Open Discussion and Comments with David L. Gunn .................................................................20

Appendix A: List of Participants....................................................................................................21

Appendix B: Speaker Biographies .................................................................................................27
Opening Address: Rail Policy – A View from Washington
United States Senator Thomas R. Carper (D-Delaware)

Background
As a member of the Amtrak Board of Directors, then-Governor Carper was instrumental in advocating for additional Amtrak funding to repair infrastructure and acquire more trains. He continues to be an advocate for passenger rail in his current position as a United States Senator, particularly within the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee.

The Importance of Amtrak

Foreign Reliance
The United States is currently reliant on foreign countries for 60 percent of its annual oil supply. Promoting rail usage as a transportation mode would increase commuters’ options and decrease the number of cars on the road, decreasing the nation’s oil consumption.

Pollution and Health
Idling vehicles emit more carbon monoxide and other toxic gases than moving ones. Therefore, traffic congestion results in increased pollution. Research has shown that pollution is one cause of asthma. In Delaware, 50,000 people suffer from asthma. Increased rail ridership would help decrease fuel consumption and improve air quality, which would hopefully help in improving public health.

Energy Efficiency
Studies show that in 1982, the average American spent 16 hours per year sitting in traffic. That number increased to 47 hours per year in 2005, which costs the United States $60 billion, not including the cost of fuel. These numbers, combined with increased population density on the country’s coasts, support the need for passenger rail.

Transportation Demands
The volume of freight being hauled on the roads in this country has increased 20 percent from 1993 to 2002. It is expected that by 2020, the demand will have increased by 60 percent. Much of the freight that is currently hauled on roadways could be more efficient and economically hauled using rail. For example, it requires only one gallon of diesel fuel to move a ton of freight by rail from Washington, D.C., to Boston. Additionally, rail requires a smaller usage of land and can move a large number of people more efficiently.

The Problem: Long-Term Support
Partnerships to provide and fund passenger rail can be a viable solution to these and other problems. The only way rail will be able to grow and function effectively is with the long-term sustainable support of state and federal governments.

State Efforts
Currently, states provide a majority of the efforts (in terms of advocacy and financing) to develop passenger rail systems in the country. Successful enterprises that are currently operating
in the United States include portions of the Northeast Corridor, the Capitol Corridor in California, and the Cascade Corridor in the Northwest. The projects are largely state-funded and operate in coordination with Amtrak and private railroad owners.

Additionally, states have developed efficient short-distance rail service in conjunction with major airports. Development of such lines has already been completed connecting airports from Boston to Maine and from Milwaukee to Chicago.

**Federal Support**
Without federal support, states cannot continue to finance the development of passenger rail. Federal transportation money is currently allocated in other areas; states can receive up to 80 percent of the costs from the federal government to complete aviation projects, and up to 50 percent of the costs of local roads and bridges can be federally funded. However, federal subsidies, including funds allocated for congestion mitigation, are not being spent on rail development.

There have been recent small successes in the process to bring federal assistance to rail development. In 2005, Congress approved $1.3 million in its budget to continue Amtrak’s operations. The Passenger Rail Investment Act of 2003 reauthorized Amtrak, opened the door to competition with Amtrak, and is expected to bring much-needed improvements to the Northeast Corridor. Additionally, a federal tax credit has been approved to provide regional freight lines throughout the country.

**Future Success of Passenger Rail**
Passenger rail could help the United States solve current problems of foreign oil reliance, pollution, and congestion. In order for rail to be successful, it will require support from the entire country. Increased federal support, combined with continued and increased state support, can make rail a viable transportation option to serve the needs of population densities and corridors across the country.
The recent years have been challenging in regard to the relationships between transportation and regional development. Regional development used to be a dominantly endogenous process where local forces were “unleashed” by investments in productive capacities and infrastructures. Partially due to transportation, other forces have also been unleashed. Comparative advantages can be exploited at an extended geographical scale without the diminishing returns linked with higher management and distribution costs. This came to be known as globalization, which is challenging our understanding of regions and their dynamics.

Corridors have been acknowledged since the 1960s as structures shaping urbanization and regional development. Although they initially emerged in developed countries, particularly in North America, Europe, and Japan, corridors are now a global urbanization trend and have taken a variety of functions. Such corridors are dependent on efficient and high capacity transport systems. However, many corridors show serious accessibility and transport capacity issues. In such a context rail appears to be resurfacing after decades of unmitigated growth in road and aviation. The rail industry is increasingly competitive and gaining a market share. Although this observation applies dominantly to rail freight, there is also some potential regarding passenger rail, as we have seen with the emergence of high-speed train (HST) systems in Europe, Japan, and recently in South Korea.

Transport Corridors
A corridor almost can be seen as a natural spatial structure as it connects the locations that are most accessible, which, in time, reinforce their accessibility. The development of transportation networks commonly leads to the creation of corridors. The current paradigms of corridor development and the new role that rail is to play in such a setting can be simplified in four phases:

- **Development of feeders**—Some centers are developing infrastructures connecting them to a growing hinterland [mainly because they have a natural advantage (e.g., harbors at the head of a river system)].
- **Interconnection**—Transport networks that have been developing independently become interconnected gradually. Intermediate centers, collecting traffic from their respective hinterlands, also start to emerge. Initial centers become the hubs of large regional economies.
- **Emergence of corridors**—The emergence of high-density circulation corridors is observed once the network reaches a phase of maturity and becomes fully interconnected. Traffic concentrates on the most connected locations.
- **Emergence of global gateways**—At this point, the regional economy is large, complex, specialized, and increasingly integrated to the global economy. The gateway phase creates corridors within the corridors since at this point local, regional, and global flows are overlapping.
**Maritime Corridor**
The maritime corridor implies a maritime/land interface where maritime transport is connected to inland transportation systems. Considering that maritime corridors have almost an unlimited capacity, the capacity of maritime transportation is related to the transshipment capacity of ports. Maritime corridors are structured by integrating port cities (maritime services and transshipment functions) to port systems (maritime distribution functions), forming a global trade network. The fluvial corridor corresponds to important waterways having access to hinterlands. It is an overlay of canals, waterways, and fluvial ports. For many urban regions, the fluvial corridor is the main defining spatial structure, although used less for transport than before.

**Modal Gateways**
A gateway is a location that promotes the continuity of circulation in a transportation system servicing supply chains. It is the interface among different spatial systems including terminal facilities and the numerous activities linked with freight circulation such as distribution centers and warehouses. These separate but closely integrated activities along with the terminals they are linked to, form an agglomeration of freight distribution. The emergence of intermodal transportation systems reinforces gateways as major locations of convergence, whereas transshipment has modified their geography with increased location flexibility.

Almost every land, maritime, and aviation gateway is characterized by traffic imbalances where inbound traffic far exceeds outbound traffic. This is particularly the case for maritime gateways linked with long-distance international trade.

**Corridors and Regional Development**
Corridors used to be solely regionally focused entities, where development was the outcome of exploiting the region’s comparative advantages. This situation has changed significantly with corridors becoming extensions of the global economy. As the exploitation of comparative advantages took a global dimension, several corridors started to show a shift in the pattern of the flows they handle. Some corridors became more consumption-based while others became more production-based. The symbiosis between North American and Chinese corridors is the best example of this emerging transnational structure.

**Short Distance Rail Corridor**
The Alameda Corridor is a 20-mile rail freight expressway linking the port cluster of Long Beach and Los Angeles to the transcontinental rail terminals near downtown Los Angeles. It was built to provide better rail access to the port cluster, which is the most important in North America in terms of the volume and value of its containerized traffic. The Alameda Corridor consists in a series of bridges, underpasses, overpasses, and street improvements that separate rail freight circulation from local road circulation. The outcome is a higher efficiency level of both systems.

**Challenges Facing Urban Corridors**
Urban corridors face several challenges including:

- **Road congestion**—Investments in highways have mainly benefited the trucking industry in recent decades.
- **Circulation bottlenecks**—Freight distribution is currently hitting many road, rail, and port bottlenecks raising questions about the capacity of regional transport systems. Urban areas and access to major port, rail, and air terminals represent significant bottlenecks impairing trucking. Rail transport is also facing this issue with aging infrastructure that was designed to cope with the mobility requirements of another era.

- **Intermodal capacity**—Rail transport is related to the capacity of ports to efficiently transship containers to on-dock rail facilities, from which freight can use rail corridors to reach inland centers. Inland rail terminals could act consequently as satellite terminals and permit freight circulation to avoid the congested road systems of metropolitan areas, especially near port terminal facilities.

- **Modal shift**—Attempts at separating freight and passenger circulation are likely to improve the performance of both systems. Intermodal transportation is changing the dynamics of regional transportation from a situation of modal competition to the development of multimodal transportation networks.

- **Freight diversion**—Rail corridors, through transloading, could help capture freight movements at the fringe and then bring them to the congested hub, using rail instead of road.

- **Rail ownership**—The organization and fragmentation of the rail transport system must be addressed. Various ownerships of class one rail lines by rail companies, Amtrak, and regional public transit systems complicate the process.

**North American High-Speed Dreams**
Public transit and passenger rail were private ventures up to the mid-twentieth century. Studies by the Federal Railroad Administration point that some HST corridors would require subsidies in the range of 60–80 percent of their costs. The least subsidized corridor would be Boston–Washington where subsidies would only be in the range of 45 percent.

**Land Bridges in Circum-Hemispheric Corridors**
Rail freight in the United States has experienced a remarkable growth since deregulation in the 1980s (Staggers Act) with a 77 percent increase in tons/km between 1985 and 2003. A significant share of this transformation concerns the emergence of long-distance rail freight corridors linking the two major gateway systems of North America: Southern California and New York/New Jersey via Chicago. This represents the most efficient land bridge in the world, which reduces travel times between the east and the west coasts of the United States.

In the railroad industry, land bridge refers to the transport of containers by rail between ports on either side of a land mass, such as North America. Thus, the North American land bridge is mainly the outcome of growing transpacific trade; container traffic represented approximately 80 percent of all rail intermodal movement. Land bridges are particularly the outcome of cooperation between rail operators eager to attract lucrative long-distance traffic and maritime shippers wanting to reduce shipping time and costs, particularly from Asia.

The North American land bridge poses as an alternative to freight shipments across the Panama Canal or the Strait of Magellan. For instance, a container coming from Singapore takes 36 days to reach New York using the Panama Canal sea route. The same journey takes 19 days if the land bridge is used (double-stack rail transport using the Seattle–Chicago–New York rail chain).
On average, transport services between the east coast of the United States and Pacific–Asia are reduced from six days to two weeks. The North American land bridge is also competing for a market share of the traffic between Europe and Asia. On average it requires maritime shippers 5–6 weeks to service the harbors of Tokyo and Rotterdam. With the land bridge, this time is reduced to about three weeks with an 80-hour railway journey across North America.

With the land bridge service, several maritime companies abandoned the Panama Canal and were able to shift to post-Panamax class container ships. Their productivity and long-distance shipping costs were reduced proportionally as maritime shippers were able to use larger ships with a higher level of service frequency. Thus, a higher capacity can be achieved with the same number of ships. The North American land bridge includes a Canadian (Vancouver–Montreal–Halifax) and a Mexican section (Salina Cruz–Coatzacoalos). As opposed to the Eurasian land bridge, the American land bridge has the advantage of providing a transcontinental link through a single country (Canada, the United States, or Mexico).

**The Northern East–West Freight Corridor**

The Northern East–West freight corridor would be composed of a maritime segment and a land segment. The maritime segment (sea bridge) links the Atlantic coast of North America with the port of Narvik, Norway, a distance of about 6,600 km. Narvik offers year-long, ice-free, and direct access to the Trans-Siberian Railway through Sweden and Finland. The main routes of the land segment (land bridge) would use the Trans-Siberian Railway either branching to Vladivostok with connections to Eastern China, the two Koreas, or by sea to Japan; or branching to Kazakhstan, entering western China at Druzhba and then through the Lanzhou rail hub and onward to central China’s coast.

The necessary infrastructure exists to ensure setting the new corridor, particularly along the Trans-Siberian Railway, which is double-tracked and electrified. The question remains, how to improve some segments to ensure a better integration of all the elements of this very complex multinational transport chain. Among the numerous challenges of the new corridor is multinational cooperation. There are seven countries involved in the land segment that are politically, economically, and culturally very different. Unlike the North American land bridge where rail segments are entirely contained in an individual nation (Canada, the United States, or Mexico) the multitude of actors requires multinational cooperation. This does not present much difficulty for the Scandinavian chain since the concerned countries have a long history of political stability. However, a transport chain is as reliable as its weakest link.

**Conclusion**

A global modal shift is currently in the making, which will trigger a significant resurgence of rail transport. It mostly began in the 1980s, focusing on freight for North America and passengers for Europe. Rail corridors of the twenty-first century will take shape to accommodate additional transport demand, alleviate higher energy costs, and cope with congestion. I am much more confident about the future of rail freight corridors than for passengers, particularly in North America. Containerization has ensured a global freight distribution market that enhances the need for efficient and functional rail networks.
Achievements in and the Future of Rail Corridor Projects

Howard A. Learner, President and Executive Director, Environmental Law and Policy Center

The Midwest is about practical policy solutions for pragmatic people; policy that matters to real people. High-speed rail (HSR) is a practical solution because it enhances economic development and pulls together the regional community. Rail corridors are valuable economic development tools because they decrease commuting times for employees, while drawing resources into urban center city areas, which decreases sprawl. HSR is good for jobs, the regional economy, and the environment.

In the Midwest, nine states have collaborated to work on rail issues. These midwestern states are contributing their fair share, but the federal government needs to step up and assume some of the costs. There needs to be a true federal-state partnership because states cannot do it alone. Michigan and Wisconsin have been very successful in creating rail systems. Ohio has created many plans that have never materialized, but currently they have a plan with a lot of potential. The broader vision is connecting the Midwest to the Northeast Corridor.

Illinois has experienced a lot of success and obtained federal government support, but something needs to be done to untangle the gridlock that occurs in Joliet. If the freight gridlock is not fixed, high-speed rail service is not going to work. CREATE funding has been very helpful to fix transportation problems in Illinois, but administrative changes have resulted in reduced funding.1

The Midwest needs stable policy, real money, and a federal partnership. Until the federal government resolves its policy regarding Amtrak, federal policy on rail development in regional corridors is going to be stalled. No matter who runs the trains, the tracks still need to be upgraded and fixed. It will be difficult to do, but regional rail issues need to be separated from Amtrak. A federal-state partnership needs to be created for high-speed rail to become a reality, which requires a federal investment. Tax credit bond financing, such as CREBs, could be the way to get this done.

Passenger rail is alive and well and beginning to advance in the Midwest. States are doing what they can, but federal funding is needed for regional rail to really grow.

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1 The Chicago Regional Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Project (CREATE) is slated to increase efficiency and reliability of the regions rail service by reducing pollution, congestion, and delays while improving safety.
Building Inter-Metropolitan Rail Corridors

Eugene K. Skoropowski, Managing Director, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

A leader in passenger rail throughout the country, California has achieved success without relying on non-state sources. In 1990, voters approved nearly $2 billion in bonds to enhance California’s rail system. California is home to the largest non-federal investment for intercity passenger rail in the nation. Now, California is home to three of the top five busiest Amtrak routes in the country, containing 20 percent of all Amtrak riders. About $1.7 billion has been spent in direct state capital investment, and the annual state operating subsidy is $75 million. The results are really just beginning to surface from the initial 15-year investments, and it is likely that another 10–20 years will be needed to demonstrate real potential at the current rates of investment and available operating subsidy.

Highway capacity cannot be added or expanded fast enough to offset more vehicles, while construction and maintenance costs are enormously expensive and disruptive. Rail provides an additional choice for people to travel.

California has not used federal money for operating funds, but has utilized federal money for other capital costs. The state funding comes from voter-approved bonds, sales tax revenue on gasoline, and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Passenger fares cover about 50 percent of the operating costs and the other half is a line item in the state budget.

Amtrak is important for California because it assumes the rail system’s liability. The Capitol Corridor, running from San Jose to Sacramento, has the goal of capturing 8 percent of the travel market served in the corridor, achieving a minimum 90 percent on-time performance, and building constructive relationships with organizations associated with the rail system. They have set a market-based fare, which has increased annually, but ridership has still managed to triple. Rail service in California is not going to relieve traffic congestion, but it is going to give residents a choice.

Policymakers must be taken on train rides to see what rail transportation is all about, and they must know that people will use trains. It will not be cheap, but other forms of transportation are also not cheap.

The bottom line is that passenger rail will work in this country. American voters will support spending public funds on it, people will ride the trains, and passenger rail can be efficiently run within the existing institutions. However, passenger rail will not be profitable (an unrealistic and unique expectation for a public service), will require political leadership and commitment, and will require an on-going adequate level of capital investment. California’s experience over the last 15 years has proven all of this.
Amtrak Cascades began in the early 1990s by using the Rail Passenger Service Act’s section 403(b) provisions, which allowed states to initiate intercity rail service operated by Amtrak, but funded on a federal-state matching basis. Of the overall investment in Amtrak Cascades from 1994 through 2005, 45 percent was from federal programs, with 55 percent coming from private and state/regional investments.

Ridership for Amtrak Cascades has increased in each of its eleven years to 636,982 riders in 2005. With the midsummer addition of a fourth Seattle–Portland round-trip, 2006 ridership is projected to reach 680,000. Since its inception, the states and Amtrak have covered the operating losses of the Amtrak Cascades service, with Washington State paying $150 million, Oregon $34.5 million, and Amtrak $103 million. In recent years, the states have been covering a larger share of Amtrak’s operating losses as the federal government has emphasized using its contribution for capital costs.

The long-term plan for the service is to focus on the Portland–Seattle–Vancouver, B.C., corridor, which is projected, when fully developed, to carry 3 million riders annually. For service south of Portland, however, Oregon has faced substantial challenges in securing stable and adequate state funding to develop its intercity passenger rail program.

The Amtrak Cascades service has regularly ranked as either first or second in service quality in the national passenger rail system, outperforming Amtrak’s basic system services more often than not. Then-U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta recognized its quality in a speech in which he stated, “The Pacific Northwest is one of the best examples I know of. And, in fact, it would be fair to say that the Cascades service between Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, British Columbia, serves as the model for national reform.” Amtrak Cascades has achieved this success despite obstacles such as a lack of priority over freight rail, a lack of federal and state funding for capital improvements, and high costs for capital and labor.

To improve intercity passenger rail service in the United States, it is vital to change Amtrak’s structure and modes of operation. A key change is to introduce competitive procurements for selecting private train operating companies who will operate Amtrak’s rail passenger services. This will introduce improved management systems and help reduce the spiraling operating and capital costs that have made Amtrak increasingly unsustainable. The reform proposals of the Bush Administration, Senator Lott (S. 1516), and Amtrak itself (Amtrak Strategic Reform Initiatives, April 2005) all have faults that need to be remedied, but each also contains measures that will help overcome obstacles that Amtrak faces. Issues specific to the Northwest that need to be addressed include: growth of rail freight traffic (particularly Asia–Pacific and NAFTA freight), funding for Oregon’s capital and operating costs, investment to increase the speed of Amtrak Cascades services north of the United States-Canada border, and preparations for increased service to support the 2010 Winter Olympics.
Panel Discussion: Achievements in and the Future of Rail Corridor Projects

Question
How likely is it that the role of rail corridors and intercity rail in natural disaster response will help increase funding to improve capacity and access in such situations?

Answer
Mr. Skoropowski: There is not a lot of rail equipment in the country, and the equipment is spread all over it. It would be difficult to gather enough equipment to efficiently move people.

Question
Has anyone ever looked at how much tax revenue is lost by building highways and losing the property taxes?

Answers
Mr. Learner: It is complicated and necessary to look at the interchanges.
Mr. Till: In Washington they are trying to put a highway under the ground so they can create value in the land where the freeway now stands.

Question
What are the benefits or possibilities of developing a joint powers association that would survive changes in governors?

Answer
Mr. Learner: The nine state DOTs have survived over at least the past half-dozen years. An actual joint regional agency would help. There are informal relationships in the Midwest, but no joint operating agencies; in any case, the regional rail initiative will continue.

Question
What is the level of interdependency between regional and national ridership on rails?

Answers
Mr. Skoropowski: In California, it depends on the corridor, but there are places where a substantial link exists between the regional and national rails.
Mr. Till: It depends on the timing of the trains in Washington State.

Question
In an effort to attract more riders, are attempts being made to increase services on Amtrak trains, such as Internet access or teleconferencing rooms?

Answer
Mr. Skoropowski: Californian regional rail providers own their own equipment which affords them the liberty to make strategic decisions without the blessing of Amtrak. For example, the Capitol Corridor has been able to install outlets at some seats and is currently testing wireless Internet access. They are working hard in California to make trains the best service available, and some people ride the trains specifically for the amenities.
**Question**
What can be done to overcome Berlin Walls between states such as Illinois and Indiana?

**Answers**

**Mr. Learner:** There is no Berlin Wall between those states. The airport in Gary, Indiana, is jointly owned by the two states. States in the Midwest are starting to work together. If there ever was a Berlin Wall, it is starting to come down. There is a long way to go, but things are getting better.

**Mr. Skoropowski:** In California it took joint leadership and political will between both sides of the “wall” to make it happen, and that is what is needed.

**Question**
Is there any push on the Hill to either modify the Federal Railroad Administration’s charter or to get an advocate within the federal government to push for rail?

**Answers**

**Mr. Till:** There has been a proposal in the past to create a safety administration within the Department of Transportation. It would be good to take the regulation component out so there is not the conflict of interest of being a regulator and a promoter.

**Mr. Skoropowski:** He thinks the problem is that there has been no will or desire by the Federal Railroad Administration to take on the role.

**Question**
How are corridor agencies going to achieve the breakeven point on operating costs when higher costs are required to accommodate higher ridership?

**Answers**

**Mr. Skoropowski:** He does not believe this is going to happen and he did not say this. However, the state goal is to recover 50 percent of the services in California. Even up to 60 percent might be possible, but not much beyond that will happen. The success of the passenger services is largely dependent upon the ability/willingness of the freight railroads to deliver the passenger trains on schedule. Right now, the freight railroads are unable and/or unwilling to do so, and this by itself can undermine or destroy all the public investment and confidence in the nation’s passenger rail system.

**Mr. Learner:** No mode of transportation gets 100 percent, so rail should not be required to get the same. There will be more room for recovery, however, because pricing will become more flexible as all other transportation methods get more expensive.

**Mr. Till:** Washington has forecasted 100 percent, but there must be a restructuring of the capital, labor, energy, and materials structure to create a more efficient service or it is not going to happen.
Elements of Success for HSR Projects in the United States

Allison L.C. de Cerreño, Ph.D. Co-Director, NYU Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management; Research Associate, Mineta Transportation Institute

Since the 1960s, high-speed ground transportation (HSGT) has held the promise of fast, convenient, and environmentally sound travel. Japan, France, and Germany all developed HSGT methods decades ago; South Korea recently began offering high-speed ground transportation, and Taiwan will follow shortly. The United States, however, has not kept up with worldwide efforts to increase the use of HSGT. Congress first authorized studies aimed at deploying high-speed ground transportation in 1965, and even ran several demonstration projects in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but these efforts had mixed results. Legislation designated eleven different rail corridors between 1991 and 1998; however, the United States has still been reluctant to develop high-speed intercity passenger rail. To date, only two corridors have such systems, and there is a great deal of debate over whether or not they actually qualify as high-speed rail corridors.

Key Themes of HSR Projects in the United States
The four key themes of high-speed rail projects in the United States are:

- **Cost and financing**—It is unclear what cost actually connotes; it could refer to environmental cost, capital investment requirements, etc. This uncertainty complicates efforts to validate funding. Debate exists over the role of public investment: who benefits and who should bear the risk.
- **Competing and/or unclear goals**—Clarity is needed regarding the goals of HSR. This could include high-speed, market penetration, reducing congestion, competing with air travel, etc.
- **Technology choices**—Most importantly, the technology that is selected and implemented must be aligned with goals.
- **Authority, responsibility, and ability**—It is important to determine who is in charge, who is accountable, and whether or not these entities are capable of overseeing and performing the necessary work.

Florida HSR
Florida has experience with high-speed rail dating back thirty years. The state has experienced starts, stops, multiple plans, and pieces of legislation, yet still has been unable to develop a HSR system. Florida’s history with HSR spans three distinct periods, the first of which began in 1976 with a legislative mandate for the *Florida Transit Corridor Study*, which was meant to assess feasibility of HSR between Daytona Beach and St. Petersburg. Governor Bob Graham authorized the creation of the Florida HSR Committee in 1982. Two years later, the legislature formed the Florida HSR Commission, which was authorized to grant a franchise to build a privately funded and operated HSR system connecting Miami–Tampa–Orlando. During the next few years, there were several reports issued highlighting the importance of HSR for mobility in Florida as well as an RFP that received two responses.

During round two, the legislature was still keen on HSR and enacted a new HSR act, transferring the Florida HSR Commission’s responsibilities to the Florida Department of Transportation.
(FDOT). FDOT was then charged with the task of providing an updated rail system plan every two years. In October of 1992, the Miami–Tampa–Orlando corridor received federal designation as an HSR corridor, allowing federal funding for studies. The multiple feasibility studies led to an FDOT commitment to fund HSR and set aside $70 million per year, plus a 4 percent inflation adjustment, for at least 30 years. A 1995 RFP generated five proposals, from incremental, to new, to Maglev, with cost estimates ranging from $740 million to $20 billion. From these, Florida Overland Express (FOX) Consortium’s proposal for a grade-separated, fully dedicated new HSR system was selected. However, opponents began questioning the need for HSR, the cost, the environmental impacts, and the technology that would be used. They also questioned ridership projections and assumptions of cost sharing, doubtful that HSR would have the ability to persuade drivers to take the train instead. The United States General Accountability Office (GAO) released a report reviewing FOX’s HSR proposal in 1999 and concluded that there were several uncertainties regarding the projects, and that if FOX was allowed to proceed, federal TIFIA money would be withdrawn, severely limiting other eligible projects. Shortly thereafter, Governor Jeb Bush was elected, and, citing the GAO report as well as environmental and financial concerns, terminated funding and redirected funding to highways and aviation.

Round three represents the most recent attempt at HSR and has taken two forms. In 2000 Amtrak and FDOT released their joint Florida Intercity Passenger Service Rail Vision Plan, which focused on incremental rail rather than HSR and could be implemented for significantly less money. In 2000, Doc Dockery drafted a constitutional amendment that was passed through public vote and was enacted in 2001, in the form of the Florida HSR Authority Act. It created the Florida HSR Authority, which was charged with controlling and managing HSR in Florida. From 2002–2003, an RFP was issued for a Tampa–Orlando rail project and new studies on ridership and a draft of the Environmental Impact Statement were released. By fiscal year 2004, the federal government had appropriated nearly $9 million for planning and $4 million for crossings, and the Florida Legislature authorized another $14 million. However, Governor Bush had vetoed $5 million the prior year, and he said that he would not support further funding of the effort, which leaves FDOT committed to the Vision Plan, but a halt in action since the repeal. Doc Dockery suggests that prior legislation holds, but admits that HSR efforts will probably need to wait for a “more sympathetic governor.”

From this Florida example, it is clear that goals need to be carefully tailored to match objectives and capabilities. It also became evident that the role of public investment needs to be more clearly defined, as the state wanted the private sector to bear more risk for what is essentially a public good. To date, cost has also been purely bottom-line driven, and in the future, it may be prudent to figure in public benefits and costs that would be incurred if the rail systems were not constructed. Without clear institutional authority and responsibility, individuals played a particularly important role in starting and stopping HSR efforts, and even a constitutional amendment was insufficient to overcome obstacles faced by such organized and active opposition.

Keystone Corridor
The federally designated Keystone Corridor stretches from Philadelphia–Pittsburgh, but current HSR efforts focus on roughly 100 miles between Philadelphia and Harrisburg. The Philadelphia–Harrisburg portion of the Keystone Corridor has been in existence since the early
1800s and has been electrified since 1938; however, for many years, service on the corridor was poor and ridership dropped significantly between FY 1980 and FY 1990, from just over 1 million to roughly 300,000. In 1983, the Pennsylvania High Speed Intercity Rail Passenger Commission was established to examine the possibility of HSR implementation in Pennsylvania. In 1987, Governor Robert Patrick Casey terminated staff funding for the Commission.

In 1995, Pennsylvania entered into an agreement with Amtrak for operating assistance on the Keystone Corridor. PennDOT began providing $2.6 million per year in operating subsidies to increase frequency of service on the Keystone and to make capital improvements. This increased to roughly $6.5 million in FY 2006. In December 1998, federal designation as an HSR corridor reinvigorated plans for HSR. Work was scheduled to begin in 2000, but it quickly became evident that Amtrak might have difficulty meeting its obligations given its own financial crisis. In 2004, the amended $145.5 million plan was announced by David Gunn and Governor Edward Rendell. Norfolk Southern had been supportive since the scheduled track enhancements, but they remained concerned about changes that might “freeze them out” of the corridor. SEPTA Regional Rail has also expressed concerns over capacity. However, they are currently ahead of schedule on all counts relative to the amended work plan, and electric train sets are expected to begin in the fall of 2006, with 90-minute express service.

Several unique circumstances were encountered in Keystone Corridor efforts, including varied track ownership, varying electrification status, grade crossing conditions, and frequency of freight shipments along the track. Goals were clear, attainable, and beneficial to multiple stakeholders, and the cost of improvements was reasonable. Pennsylvania also committed financial support, and Amtrak and PennDOT have the authority and ability to make the amended rail plan a reality.

Key Themes and Findings
In choosing technologies and approaches, clear objectives and transparent assessments of goals are needed. Plans must clearly show who benefits and costs must be defined more broadly. Efforts need to be shaped into an institutionalized process with clear authority, responsibility, and ability. It is also important to note that public investment is critical to the further development and expansion of rail efforts.
Amtrak Is Only the Symptom  
*James P. RePass, President and CEO, The National Corridors Initiative*

**Background**
As the founder of The National Corridors Initiative (NCI), James P. RePass has contributed to the enhancement of rail transportation. After advocating and achieving improvements in the Northeast Rail Corridor, NCI has expanded its work across the country to develop support for a balanced rail transportation system, in particular high-speed rail integrated with airports and city-centers.

**Amtrak and the Federal Government**
Even though the federal government has reset its financial support for Amtrak from zero to $900 million, which in and of itself is a good development, there is no strong, long-term commitment of the government to Amtrak. Rather, the Bush Administration’s plan seems to be to break Amtrak apart, sell off its (saleable) pieces, and close down the rest of it. By giving up a broad rail system, it neglects the transportation needs of working and middle class, as well as elderly people, whose ability to use air transportation is not great. The discussion about rail in the United States highlights that Amtrak is only a symptom that is caused by a broader range of political and economical factors. The failure to build an integrated rail system, including Amtrak and transit, can be attributed to a much larger problem.

**The Changing Challenges of America**
From its very beginnings, America was blessed with wealth and opportunities due to fortunate happenstances of geography, technology, and events that have worked together. Its early economic development was fueled by the industrial revolution and a strong labor force of immigrants. Global politics in the twentieth century, influenced by two wars in Europe and repressive systems in Russia and China, opened the field for American business and allowed the development of its economic dominance.

Political and economic changes in the last decades caused a massive shift in the global arena, which resulted in the technological catch-up of other nations, the elimination of the American working class, and an increased mobilization of commodities and persons. Instead of undertaking the needed steps to compete in this new economic environment, America continues to build infrastructure for a society that has ended. The continual construction of highways and the failure to build a network of high-speed ground transportation is reflecting an unsustainable and costly economic model.

**Amtrak Is Not an Isolated Incident**
Just like the disinvestment in a proper levee system and the lack of a proper disaster management in New Orleans or the military’s second-rate body armor, the lack of support for a national rail system is not an isolated incident, rather a result of a certain mindset of the government.

The provision of a fundamental level of infrastructure that keeps people safe, enables them to communicate securely, and allows them to work to improve their lives is one of the government’s basic functions. It is an important part of that equation and should become an even more important part as the nation realizes that it can never pave its way out of highway
congestion. Amtrak is, alike New Orleans and Baghdad, a logical result of a philosophy that is damaging to the underpinnings of the American way of life and runs counter to the American notion of fair play and square deal. It is not Amtrak that is at stake, but it is America. Amtrak is only the symptom.
The Future of Rail Transportation in America
David L. Gunn, Former President, Amtrak

Current Problems of the Transportation System
Rail transportation in America needs to deal with a series of problems. Statistics prove that the United States is losing mobility in both freight and passengers at a fairly alarming rate. While demand is growing, the physical infrastructure of highways, rail, and aviation is inadequate. The country is suffering from an immense shortage of capital investment for maintenance as well as expansion in all modes. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has reported on the immense problems of highway and rail systems. Besides this, the country is reaching the physical and environmental limits of what can be built.

The problem of congested highways certainly cannot be solved by a further expansion of the highway system. The United States is not only hitting limitations physically, but also in the financial sphere. Another essential problem is the transportation system’s reliance on fossil fuel. In addition to rising prices due to a growing demand for oil all over the globe, its finiteness requires new solutions.

Resources to deal with the problem are scarce. Thus, decisions about a thoughtful resource allocation have to be made, both in terms of what is physically possible and what is most cost efficient. As the different transportation systems are interrelated, investments on one mode affect the other modes. Nevertheless, the United States has always handled transportation as if each mode is isolated rather than connected. Rail has not being perceived as a governmental responsibility, while water is fully funded by the Army Corps of Engineers. As a result, transportation policy is not working effectively. Local and state governments are realizing the need for transit system funding and recognizing the severity of the problems. It is the federal government that has failed to engage.

Intercity Passenger Rail in the United States
Currently, Amtrak is the main operator of intercity passenger rail. As the demand of passengers increased and initiatives for passenger rail developed, the relevance of passenger rail to solve some serious transportation problems became obvious. However, running Amtrak is a deficit operation. To operate the existing system, financial resources of $1.6 billion per year are needed, including $800 million for investments, $300 million for debt payments (for the Acela), and $500 million for operating the system. To the federal DOT the situation of passenger rail is not a transportation policy problem, but a budget problem. Their goal is to eliminate the cost of Amtrak. Even though they give lip service to corridors, their objective is to get out of the passenger rail business. The $900 million in federal funding sounds reasonable, but will only have a minimal impact.

What Should Happen?
An environment has to be created where independent operators, including Amtrak as well as others, have a chance to provide efficient and reliable service. The idea of one monolithic operator is not a long-term solution. Thus, one essential element of a reform is to eliminate the hurdles of creating competition.
The most important issue that needs reform is the Railway Labor Act. The goal is not to drive Amtrak employees into low-paying jobs, but to use them more efficiently. The railroad industry and Amtrak have a workforce in the maintenance area that does not possess adequate qualifications for dealing with modern equipment. The result is a complicated workforce, large measures, and technical qualifications that Amtrak cannot insist upon, even though it needs them to maintain modern equipment. The Railway Labor Act impedes flexibility in employment policies and, therefore, a more efficient operation. Thus, a serious commitment to an efficient, viable, and competitive rail service requires reforms in the labor situation, namely to offer management more choices and the opportunity to make more efficient use of employees. Phasing out railroad retirement and moving it into Social Security would also help to enhance a competitive environment. Implementing these two reforms would drop Amtrak’s deficit by about $200 million.

Another issue that has to be changed is the role of states. States need the power and capital to make their own decisions. Federal funding has to be available for intercity passenger rail, and neither Amtrak nor the federal government but the states have to be the decision-making units about whether they want to make the investments.

**What Is at Stake and What Are the Risks of High-Speed Intercity Rail?**
The collapse of Amtrak would mean losing a substantial amount of competent human capital that has a unique skill set. Reacquiring these assets would require a large reinvestment that would cost millions.

Another risk is that freight railroads are growing, while passenger rail is dependent upon freight railroads for track usage in most areas. The problem is not just passenger rail, but it is how to get enough investment to key points in the freight system so that they can move their tonnage. Freight railroads need new investment in order to overcome the constant congestion problem and to open the way for HSR. The problem involves not only a passenger component, but also an industry component. Instead of promising great leaps forward, the incremental approach is pointing to the right direction, because there is no sufficient depth of supply or human capital (especially engineers) for great leaps.

The last risk is that the rail industry increasingly fades out of the public perception, partially because the media lacks basic knowledge about the rail industry.

The American rail transportation system faces enormous problems; however, the need for creative solutions will hopefully force the market to demand some solutions for these problems that will overcome the resistance in Washington.
Open Discussion and Comments with David L. Gunn

David L. Gunn is the former president of Amtrak. After his presentation, Mr. Gunn fielded questions during a discussion session. The following is a summary of the main points discussed by those in attendance during the Q&A session.

- There is support, even from some conservative interests, for passenger rail due to its economic impacts. However, while the prospect was discussed, Mr. Gunn thus far has not been able to discuss these impacts with lawmakers.
- Currently Mr. Gunn is working on an effort to secure increased capital investment for freight railroads.
- While President Bush has recently spoken at length about the need for the United States to become less dependent upon foreign oil, Mr. Gunn does not believe that the President is giving serious consideration to rail transportation as a means of helping to ease the nation’s oil dependency.
- While the use of passenger trains with 15–20 cars is not feasible, Mr. Gunn does not believe that the single car passenger rail trains, like those being used in Europe, will be economically viable either.
- In general, the technical aspects of rail service must be considered very carefully at every point in the process of developing and managing a passenger railway.
- As with any public service, passenger rail service must consider matters of scale. If the rail service is not expansive enough then it will not provide the levels of service needed to meet demand, but if it becomes too large it will not respond to local needs. One method of addressing this is to develop a degree of competitiveness among Amtrak and other carriers. However, Mr. Gunn believes that service demand must grow enough to support multiple passenger carriers. Breaking Amtrak into smaller carriers is not a legitimate solution, according to Mr. Gunn.
- The concern about liability is a major reason why state-run freight lines are reluctant to combine their services across state boundaries and jurisdictions. The lack of coordination among different state-run freight lines is a major obstacle to the effective management of those lines.
- The level of demand for passenger rail service is highly underestimated, especially for rural areas.
- Mr. Gunn agrees with the idea of separating the accounting statements for the operation of the Northeast Corridor rail line from those of the entities responsible for operating the trains themselves.
- Mr. Gunn is unsure of the future direction of Amtrak. Currently there are those who wish to liquidate it in order to save funds. Mr. Gunn believes that the ability of Amtrak to produce a 5-year capital plan will have serious implications for the question of Amtrak’s future existence.
Appendix A: List of Participants

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Daniel Carleton
Danbury Railway Museum

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

Allison L. C. de Cerreño
Rudin Center for Transportation Policy & Management

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Nancy Finch  
Virginians for High Speed Rail

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Michael Fortner  
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Drew Galloway  
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Roberta Geier  
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Shayne Gill  
Bartlett & Bendall, LLC

Bryan P. Grady  
University of Delaware
Dave V. Gula  
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David L. Gunn  
Free Congress Foundation

Michael Hill  
Machinist Union (IAM)

Bruce Horowitz  
ESH Consult

Marilyn Jamison  
Amtrak

James Jordan  
Interstate Maglev Project

Jonathan Justice  
Institute for Public Administration

Alison Kepner  
The News Journal

Lawrence H. Klepner  
Delaware Center for Transportation

Robert Kogan  
University of Pennsylvania School of Design

Janek Kozlowski  
United States Army

Howard A. Learner  
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Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers

Salvatore A. Matina  
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Terry McDonald  
Lawyer

Bill McGowan  
Cooperative Extension, University of Delaware

Lisa McIlvaine  
Institute for Public Administration

Molly McKay  
National Corridors Initiative

Jeanne D. Minner  
Town of Elkton, Maryland

Ivan Mitchell  
Institute for Public Administration

Joseph Mitchell  
Delmarva Rail Passengers Association

Troy Mix  
Institute for Public Administration

Phillip Moll  
Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy College of Music and Theater, Leipzig

Lisa Moreland  
Institute for Public Administration

George Morse  
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Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers

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Virginia High Speed Rail  

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Dover/Kent County MPO  

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New Jersey Transit  

Michael D. Woffenden  
Information Results Corporation  

Martin Wollaston  
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Garrett Wozniak  
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Town of Smyrna, Delaware  

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Appendix B: Speaker Biographies

The Honorable Thomas Carper .............................................................29
Dr. Allison L. C. de Cerreño .................................................................31
David L. Gunn ...................................................................................32
Howard Learner .................................................................................33
James P. RePass...............................................................................35
Dr. Jean-Paul Rodrigue .................................................................36
Eugene Skoropowski ....................................................................37
Thomas Till .....................................................................................38
The Honorable Thomas R. Carper

Born in West Virginia and raised in Virginia, Tom Carper attended Ohio State University on a Navy R.O.T.C. scholarship, graduating in 1968 with a B.A. in economics. Tom Carper first fell in love with Delaware when he looked out the window of a military transport aircraft flying into Dover Air Force Base during his first year in the U.S. Navy. He went on to complete five years of service as a naval flight officer and continued to serve in the Naval Reserve until retiring from military service in 1991 with the rank of captain.

After serving as a naval flight officer in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War and later as a P-3 aircraft mission commander, Tom Carper returned to Delaware in 1973 where he earned his M.B.A. at the University of Delaware.

His career in public service began in 1976 when he was elected to the first of three terms as Delaware’s state treasurer. In 1982, he was elected to represent Delaware in the U.S. House of Representatives.

After serving five terms as a U.S. congressman, Tom Carper became the 78th governor of Delaware in 1993 and served two terms in that role. As governor, Tom Carper pursued a common-sense agenda that cut taxes, increased employment and the “rainy day” fund, boosted Delaware’s credit rating to an all-time high, overhauled the state’s education system and helped lead welfare reform initiatives in Delaware and the nation.

During his second term as governor, Tom Carper was selected by his colleagues to serve as vice-chairman, then as chairman of the National Governors’ Association (NGA). After serving as chairman, he directed the NGA’s “Center for Best Practices,” which focused on developing and implementing innovative solutions to policy challenges faced by governors around the nation. From 1994–1998, he served as a member of Amtrak’s board of directors.

On January 3, 2001, Tom Carper became Delaware’s junior senator. With his election to the U.S. Senate, he became the winningest politician in Delaware’s history, having been elected to statewide public office a record 11 times.

During his almost 30 years of public service, Tom Carper has worked tirelessly to develop practical solutions to real problems. His ability to work across party lines has earned Senator Carper a reputation for consensus-building that is unique in today’s political climate. The Washington Post’s David Broder calls Tom Carper “a notably effective and non-partisan leader, admired and trusted on both sides of the aisle.”

Tom Carper joins his colleagues on the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, the Environment & Public Works Committee, and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee as well as the Special Committee on Aging. He is currently the ranking democrat on both the Clean Air Subcommittee and Federal Financial Management Subcommittee.
In 2004, Tom Carper was named Deputy Whip – the first time since 1881 that a United States senator from Delaware has served in a leadership position. Tom Carper continues to be a leading voice of moderation within his party, advising the Senate leadership and helping to devise, coordinate, and implement strategy for the Democratic caucus.

Most recently, Tom Carper was named vice-chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council, a leading centrist organization formed in the 1980s to promote “New Democrat” messages of national security, economic growth, and personal responsibility.

Tom Carper and his wife Martha Ann reside in Wilmington with their two sons, Chris and Ben. Both of their children attend a public charter high school in New Castle County.
Dr. Allison L. C. de Cerreño

Allison L. C. de Cerreño is Co-Director of the NYU-Wagner Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management as well as a Research Scientist and Assistant Research Professor at New York University. She is also the Executive Director of the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and is a Research Associate at the Mineta Transportation Institute in San José, California. She holds a Ph.D. in political science from the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York.

Prior to joining the Rudin Center, Dr. C. de Cerreño was Director of Science & Technology Policy at the New York Academy of Sciences (1998–2002) where, among other responsibilities, she led two major efforts: one to develop pollution prevention plans for the New York/New Jersey Harbor, and one to boost technology-led economic development in the tri-state region.

Before the Academy, Dr. C. de Cerreño was Associate Director of Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (1996–1998). As Associate Director of the think-tank component of the Council, Dr. C. de Cerreño managed programs for a staff of 65 senior- and junior-level professionals with a budget of approximately $6 million. With a long-standing interest and experience in educational issues, she directed the study group on “Reforming Education in Latin America,” co-authoring the resulting monograph that was widely distributed during the Second Summit of the Americas in April 1998. Prior to assuming her role as Associate Director at the Council, Dr. C. de Cerreño was Research Associate for Latin America (1991–1996).

Dr. C. de Cerreño taught courses in international relations at Hunter College (1991–1994) and at City College (1996). Among her recent publications are High Speed Rail Projects in the United States: Identifying the Elements for Success (San Jose, CA: Mineta Transportation Institute, forthcoming); “The Dynamics of On-Street Parking in Large Central Cities,” Transportation Research Record 1898 (January 2005): 130-137, Dividing The Pie: Placing the Transportation Donor-Donee Debate in Perspective (May 2003); and Pollution Prevention and Management Strategies for Mercury in the NY/NJ Harbor (July 2002). She is editor of Maintaining Solid Foundations for Hi-Tech Growth: Transportation & Communications Infrastructure in the Tri-State Region (2001); University-Industry-Government Relations: Obstacles and Opportunities (1999); and, Scientific Cooperation, State Conflict: The Roles of Scientists in Mitigating International Discord (1998). In addition to speaking on topics related to transportation in the local and national press, she has spoken about weapons proliferation and political and economic modernization in Latin America and on technology-led economic development and education—both in New York City and in Latin America.
David L. Gunn

Prior to 1974, David L. Gunn acquired private-sector railroad experience with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, the New York Central Railroad System, and the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad. Mr. Gunn worked for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) from 1974–1975 as Director of Commuter Rail and from 1975–1979 as Director of Operations. From 1979–1984, he worked as General Manager and Chief Operations Officer for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). He served for several years (1984–1990) as President of the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) until joining the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in 1991 as General Manager. In 1995, Mr. Gunn was named Chief General Manager of the Toronto Transit Commission in Canada and held that post until 1999.

In 2002, Mr. Gunn’s reputation as an experienced and straight-forward manager led to his appointment as Amtrak’s President. Since his separation from Amtrak in 2005, he has been serving as an adjunct scholar with the Free Congress Foundation.

Gunn received a bachelor’s degree from Harvard College in 1959. He served in the United States Navy Reserve from 1959–1962. In 1964, he received a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.
Howard A. Learner

Howard A. Learner is the President and Executive Director of the Environmental Law and Policy Center (ELPC)—the Midwest’s leading environmental legal advocacy and eco-business innovation organization. One of the Center’s premises is that environmental progress and economic development can be achieved together. Mr. Learner is responsible for the overall strategic leadership and program direction for ELPC’s work to promote clean energy development solutions to global warming problems, improve the Midwest’s environmental quality, and preserve the region’s natural resources and heritage. He is an experienced public interest attorney, specializing in complex civil litigation.

Mr. Learner previously served as General Counsel for Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, a public interest law center in Chicago, where he specialized in complex environmental, energy and community economic development litigation and policy development (1980–1993).

Much of Mr. Learner’s work on behalf of environmental organizations has concentrated on developing and advocating new directions on environmental policy issues, including: developing clean energy efficiency and renewable energy resources to avoid pollution from conventional power plants; designing “smart growth” transportation and land use strategies to counteract sprawl; protecting the Midwest’s wild and natural places and natural resources; and leading efforts to develop a Midwest high-speed railroad network that can produce complementary environmental quality, economic development, and employment benefits.

Mr. Learner is an Adjunct Professor at Northwestern University Law School, teaching an advanced seminar on environmental law and sustainable development. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Jewish Funds for Justice and Board of Directors of the Leadership Greater Chicago Fellows Association and as Midwest Regional Coordinator for ACORE. He recently served on the Executive Committee of the Board of the Environmental Law Institute and as a Trustee and Chair of the Grantmaking Committee of the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. He was the founding Chair of the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance and the Illinois Citizens Utility Board.

Mr. Learner received a law degree from Harvard Law School (1980) and a B.A. (Honors) from the University of Michigan (1976). He is married to Lauren Rosenthal, an attorney, and they live in the Edgewater neighborhood of Chicago with their three children.
James P. RePass

A businessman and former journalist who advocates for a comprehensive national transportation policy, James P. RePass founded The National Corridors Initiative (NCI) in 1989 to develop public support for rail transportation. NCI’s first project involved efforts to re-start the stalled Northeast Corridor Electrification (High Speed Rail) Project, which was approved by the Congress in 1979, but blocked for the next decade by the Reagan and George H. W. Bush Administrations.

After creating a board of directors of leading New England citizens, Mr. RePass took this effort to the White House, at the invitation of White House Budget Director Richard Darman. Mr. RePass—accompanied by his colleagues including then-NCI Executive Director (now Rhode Island Senator) Lincoln Chafee, former Rhode Island Governor Joseph Garrahy, New York Power Authority Chairman and CEO Richard Flynn, and others—led three visits between 1990 and 1991 during which time he negotiated the release of $125 million in funds in September 1991 for the same project that had been authorized by Congress, but embargoed by successive presidential administrations.

These funds were used to begin the project, which was completed in 1999 at a total cost of $2.7 billion (including the purchase of Acela trainsets for $800+ million by Amtrak). The result has been a drop in New York–Boston travel time, from 5–6 hours to 3½ hours. Eventual repairs to the New Haven–New York segment of that route, owned—not by Amtrak but by the state of Connecticut—will further reduce that time to 3 hours.

Since then, NCI has worked to develop support across the country for balanced transportation system, especially high-speed rail integrated with airports and city-centers.

Mr. RePass is a graduate of Wesleyan University with a degree in government. He was trained as a journalist at The Washington Post and The St. Petersburg Times. Until founding NCI, Mr. RePass worked as a management consultant for small, high-tech start-ups.
Dr. Jean-Paul Rodrigue

Jean-Paul Rodrigue has been an Assistant Professor of Geography in the Department of Economics and Geography at Hofstra University since 1999. He received a Ph.D. in transport geography from the Université de Montréal (1994).

Dr. Rodrigue’s research interests cover the fields of economic, transport, and urban geography. Area interests involve East and Southeast Asia (particularly China) and North America, notably concerning transportation, distribution, and trade issues. Specific topics cover transport systems and logistics, global production networks, transport corridors, urban regions, economic integration, international trade, and regional development. He is also interested by the application of multimedia tools for geographical education and Geographic Information Systems. His current projects involve the transport geography of logistics, inland freight distribution, gateways and freight corridors, and globalization and transport terminals.

Eugene K. Skoropowski

For more than six years, Eugene (Gene) K. Skoropowski has been the Managing Director for the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority in northern California. The agency is responsible for funding and administrative management of intercity passenger rail service between San Jose–Oakland/San Francisco–Sacramento/Auburn.

Prior to his current role, he spent ten years as Director of Transportation Services for Fluor Corporation, the nation’s largest publicly traded engineering and construction company. Mr. Skoropowski served as the head of a variety of rail projects, including a TGV-type high-speed rail (proposed for Florida) as well as rail projects in Montreal, London, Paris, and Amsterdam.

Mr. Skoropowski began his transportation career holding operations and finance positions on public transit systems in Boston, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles.

Mr. Skoropowski, a licensed architect in six states, ran his own architectural and planning business in Boston. He is a graduate of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and resides in Dublin, California.
Thomas A. Till

Thomas A. Till joined Discovery Institute’s Cascadia Center in Seattle in 2003 as Managing Director. From 1999–2002 he was Executive Director of the Amtrak Reform Council, an independent federal commission charged with making recommendations for the reform of rail passenger service in the United States. From 1992–1999, Mr. Till managed transportation investment projects in the former Soviet Union for both the World Bank and the London-based European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. From 1982–1985, he served as Deputy Federal Railroad Administrator and Acting Administrator.

Currently, Mr. Till serves on the adjunct faculty of the Intermodal Transportation Institute at the University of Denver. He holds a Bachelor of Science in international relations from the U.S. Air Force Academy, and a Master of Arts in international relations and a Juris Doctor from Georgetown University.
The Institute for Public Administration (IPA) is a public service, education and research center that links the resource capacities of the University of Delaware with the complex public policy and management needs of governments and related nonprofit and private organizations. IPA provides direct staff assistance, research, policy analysis, training, and forums while contributing to the scholarly body of knowledge. Program areas include civic education, conflict resolution, healthcare policy, land use planning, organizational development, school leadership, state and local management, water resources planning, and women’s leadership. IPA supports and enhances the educational experiences of students through the effective integration of applied research, professional development opportunities, and internships. Jerome Lewis is the director of the Institute and can be reached at 302-831-8971.