



Zocalo: Are Trains the Future of L.A.?

By Damien Newton | Oct 18, 2014 | [COMMENT HERE](#)

For a century, the hearts of Angelenos have belonged to cars and to flying machines, not trains—even though we never would have become a city without the railroad, and couldn't survive as a global trade center without the rail links to our seaports.

But today, in a potentially historic shift, Southern California governments are betting billions that trains can win us over. Five rail lines are under construction right now in L.A., part of a 30-year wave of projects that could give Southern California the most highly developed rail system in the country, save New York.

But will we go along for the ride?

Only a tiny percentage of us use the Metro rail regularly, and California's high-speed rail project is deeply unpopular in L.A. Will we change our ways and depend on trains daily—and embrace development around rail networks? What is it about rail that captures people's hearts—and why has L.A. remained immune to this almost universally beloved mode of transport?

Journalist and Chapman University English scholar **Tom Zoellner**, author of *Train*, and UCLA and UC Berkeley legal, business, and environmental scholar **Ethan Elkind**, author of *Railtown*, visit Zócalo to discuss the past and future of trains here, and whether Los Angeles will finally fall for rail.

Books will be available through [Skylight Books](#).

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CALPIRG Students Rally for High Speed Rail

By Damien Newton | Oct 21, 2011

It's no surprise that CALPIRG is a strong supporter of High Speed Rail for California. While the rest of L.A. County was holding their breath on the L.A. County transit tax ballot proposition known as Measure R in 2008, CALPIRG was more concerned with a state bonding proposition that would set aside billions for the [...]

What High Speed Rail Funding Bill Means for Southern California in the Next Decade

By Damien Newton | Jul 10, 2012



(High Speed Rail is a hot topic on the Streetsblogs. For more check out CA Senate Approves Funds for High-Speed Rail, Commuter Rail Upgrades at Streetsblog San Francisco, A Victory for CA High Speed Rail but Still a Long Fight Ahead by “Streetsblog.net” director Angie Schmitt) Last week, the State Senate and Assembly passed legislation [...]



Fall Railroadiana Swap Meet

By Damien Newton | Sep 2, 2014

Train enthusiasts, history buffs and those wanting to learn about Southern California’s railway history are welcome to attend Fall Railroadiana Swap Meet at the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris. “It’s Southern California’s largest celebration of train memorabilia and railroading history,” said Joe Fuller, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Orange Empire Railway Museum. [...]

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By Damien Newton | Jul 30, 2012

This weekend saw three pretty amazing events in Downtown Los Angeles. Each unique and important in its own way, that shows how Los Angeles is on the cusp of becoming a world class city for reasons beyond the film industry and a truly livable city. In chronological order. If you have any experiences with the [...]

Battle Lines Drawn in High Speed Rail Vote

By Damien Newton | Jun 27, 2012

Later this week, the plan to build a High Speed Rail line connecting Los Angeles and San Francisco faces a crucial vote in the California legislature. Governor Jerry Brown asked lawmakers to release \$2.7 billion of the \$6 billion in bonds passed by California voters in 2008 for High Speed Rail. Combined with \$3.3 billion [...]

TRAINS, TRAINS, TRAINS!!!

By Damien Newton | Nov 20, 2008

In 1902 Southern California was a collection of small farm towns. It was waiting for something to pull it together. That something was The Pacific Electric. This Was Pacific Electric is the story of the rise and fall of the "The World’s Greatest Electric Railway." It is a complete history starting in 1872 with L.A.’s [...]

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