

U.S. High-Speed Lines Demand Action, And Steel

The map shows 11 of the 12 high-speed rail corridors designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. The rough estimate of steel tonnage inputs for these specific networks alone—modernizing a minimum of 7,500 track-miles—would require at least 5.4 million tons of steel for rail and accessories alone (double-track, not counting construction of culverts, pilings, bridges, and so on).

These 11 grids interconnect major American cities representing more than three-fifths of the U.S. population. High-speed rail is defined as a rail system that travels at 90 miles per hour (150 km/hour) or greater.

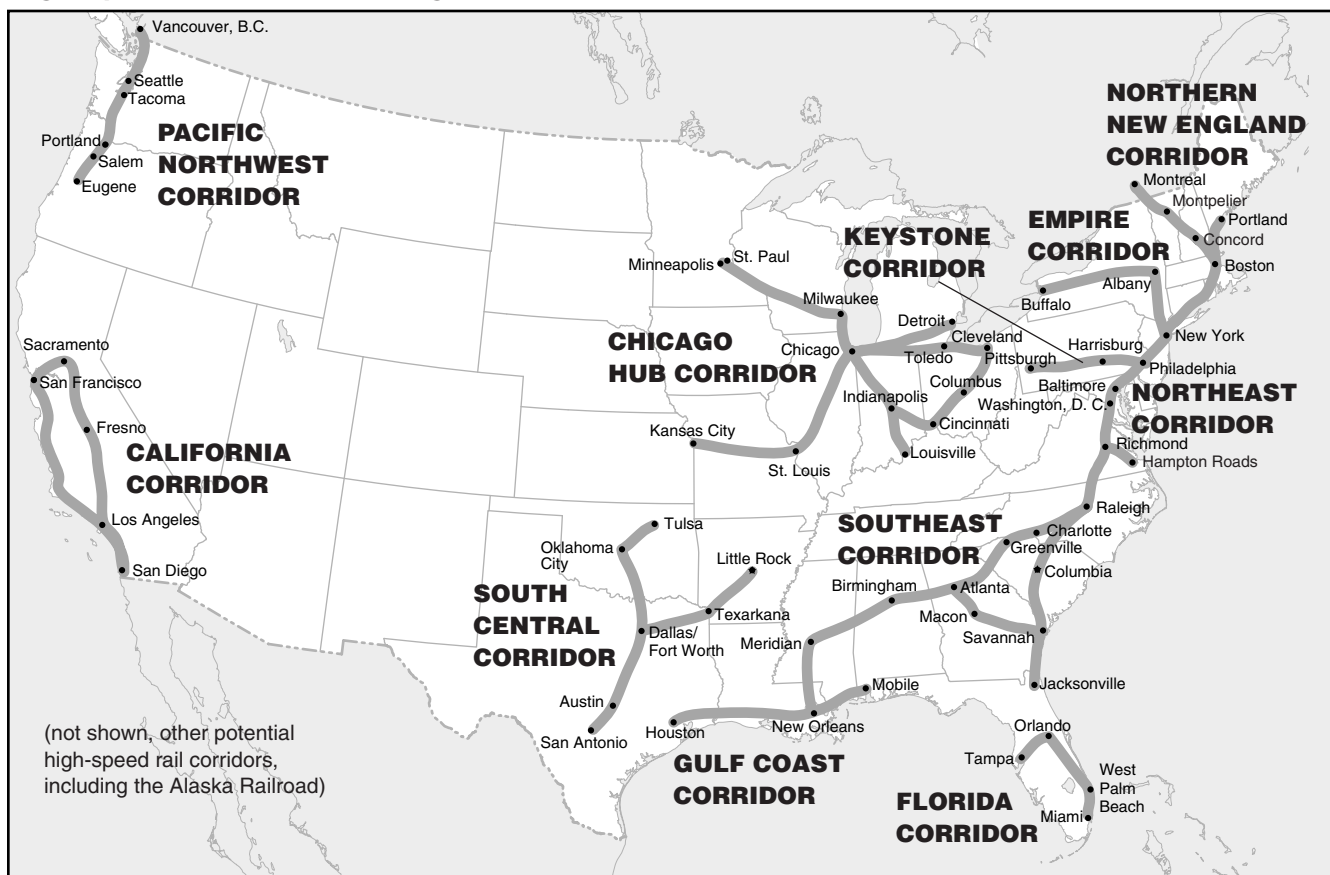
At least \$100 billion is needed to upgrade the existing rail system. This is the estimate of transportation consultant Hal Cooper, who bases his figures on rebuilding up to 70,000 track-miles of lines up to double- and triple-track specifica-

tion. On Sept. 8, referring to rail and other collapsed infrastructure in the country, Lyndon LaRouche advised, “The crash is on! It’s time for all good Democrats to propose public works, public spending on economic infrastructure.” In August, Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) had spoken out for a “Marshall Plan for Renewal,” for infrastructure-building across the board.

On Sept. 25, 2001, the RIDE-21 rail expansion bill (H.R. 2950) was introduced by Rep. Don Young (R-Ak.). It calls for \$71 billion in different types of funding, from tax-exempt bonds, to loan guarantees, to grants for rail-corridor planning. An earlier bill, H.R. 2329, the “High-Speed Rail Investment Act of 2001,” largely sponsored by Democrats, called for an expenditure of \$12 billion. As a Congressional staff member commented, “We proposed \$12 billion before the Sept. 11 incidents. If we had proposed \$70-80 billion then, we would have been denounced as crazy.” After Sept. 11 there has been an impetus to restore the economy and provide transport security, but Congress has not *acted* on any new infrastructure bill.

Senator Reid teamed up with Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.V.) to push a smaller package of \$15 billion in infrastructure spending, in the name of Homeland Security preparedness,

FIGURE 5
High-Speed Rail Corridor Designations



which was thwarted. December is ending with the Wall Street-serving media gloating that nothing happened. The Dec. 20 *Washington Post* wrote of Reid: “His Marshall Plan proposal fell flat.”

Here is the *demand* problem, on which steel and other industry unions and groups need to act, rather than suicidally trying to cut world steel production further.

Maglev Projects On The Agenda For 2002

by Rainer Apel

Reviewing 2001, one of the most positive developments was the signing of the maglev cooperation agreement between China and Germany, at the end of January. The agreement on a 32 kilometer Transrapid link from Shanghai to Pudong, the first magnetically levitated train project outside of Germany, has sparked initiatives in Germany and in other countries of Europe.

Whereas the main obstacle to the realization of maglev projects on German territory, the fiscal austerity and budget-balancing policy of the government, has not been removed, politicians from several parties are promoting proposals for local, regional, and European-wide projects. The latest is a proposal by Bernd Protzner, Christian Social Union member of the Bundestag (parliament) in Berlin, for a maglev line from Munich to Berlin, via Bamberg and Erfurt. This would involve the construction of about 600 kilometers of track, and it would go beyond the envisaged local project of building a maglev line between Munich and its international airport—comparable to the Shanghai-Pudong project.

An even broader perspective was laid out at a July 10 seminar of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Hamburg, which called for a “Eurorapid,” which would link major cities in the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Hungary. Several other chambers of industry in Germany, for example in Dresden, Leipzig, and Schwerin, have held similar events.

In Poland, the first public call for a maglev project was issued in late August. Krzysztof Makowski, Deputy Mayor of Lodz, proposed a maglev connection between his city (the second-largest in Poland) and Warsaw, in connection with numerous other projects for developing transportation infrastructure and the industrial production base of Lodz. If the government could not provide the funding, the 200 km maglev line from Lodz to Warsaw could even be carried out by private investors, who would also operate the train, Makowski said. Improvement of highway and railroad infrastructure is viewed as crucial for further industrial buildup in the region, according to both Makowski and Lodz Mayor Krzysztof Panas, and the maglev system would be the ideal solution, in their view.

And in Austria, Gerhard Rübiger, a Member of the European Parliament, proposed to include maglev in the discussion about future close cooperation among the three airports of Vienna (Austria), Bratislava (Slovakia), and Gyor (Hungary). At least for the envisaged Vienna-Bratislava connection, a maglev system should be considered, he said. Maglev

FIGURE 15
Transrapid Maglev Projects for Central and Eastern Europe



Source: Transrapid.