

## News

### Study Looks at a Beaumont Maglev Distribution Center

By Timothy Smith  
Record Gazette

A study at Cal State Long Beach is looking at three Maglev proposals to transport cargo from Long Beach and Los Angeles ports to distribution centers in Beaumont, Victorville and Los Angeles.

This would be the first freight application of the technology in the world. Japan and China currently have Maglev passenger trains in operation.

Maglev stands for magnetic levitation. It is a form of transportation that suspends, guides, and propels the train via electromagnetic force. This method of moving cargo would reduce highway congestion and pollution in Southern California. Maglev technology isn't compatible with conventional railroad tracks. This means that a Maglev system must be designed as a complete transportation system including the vehicles and the guideway.



**MAGLEV TRAIN - The 'Transrapid' German magnetic levitation passenger train at a test facility in Emsland, Germany.**

"If we are going to get serious about cleaning up the port, we need to bring electric power into the transportation system. We need to be emission free if we are going to grow," said S. David Freeman, president of the Los Angeles Harbor Commission, in an article that appeared in the Nov. 28 edition of the Los Angeles Times. "Maglev is one of several options we are looking at. It has a lot going for it."

Dave Dillon, Beaumont's economic development director said he is "all for it. Building more freeways is definitely not the answer."

Cargo moving through the ports is expected to triple to 21 million containers annually by 2030, triple today's volume. Freight rail service is expected to double during the same time period. Roads and existing rail will not be able to keep up with that kind of cargo and transportation growth.

General Atomics of San Diego is designing cargo containers for the system and working with the Center for the Commercial Deployment of Transportation Technologies at Cal State Long Beach.

The study is looking at a 100-mile network that would connect the port to distribution centers in Beaumont and Victorville. Estimated cost is about \$8.5 billion, according to the Nov. 28 Times article.

With the Maglev network being built on elevated guideways in highway medians and along utility rights of way the trains could travel at 90 mph.

Maglev freight systems are becoming financially attractive. A maglev cargo system reportedly costs around \$100 million per mile, similar to building a mile of freeway in urban areas.

One piece of the puzzle will be maintaining enough affordable electricity in Southern California by building more power plants to cover the increased load a Maglev system will require. With less traffic congestion and diesel pollution the tradeoff would be worth the investment.

One drawback to a Maglev system is the noise. The type of noise is more disturbing than a steel on steel intercity train. It can be characterized as a high noise level of brief duration, similar to a jet airplane, which can be startling to those nearby.

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