

that was larger and more modern than WP's own 0-6-0s. Assembled by Alco-Schenectady, the 4 engines were heavier and more powerful than any of the 0-6-0s used on rival Southern Pacific, and would be among the last steam locomotives in active service on the WP.

Acquired for \$16,000 each, the little workhorses soon found a long-term home at in Stockton and they spent much of their careers working this important yard as well as Portola and Wendover. The 165 herself was often documented working the Portola Yard.

In the early 1950's, diesels were coming in greater numbers and the days of steam on the Wobbly were numbered. In late 1957, 164 and 165 became the last 0-6-0's retired, outlasting their sisters and the WP's original fleet. The 165 had been last used in March, 1953, but saw one last hurrah when it and WP 94 were towed down the Tidewater Southern to Escalon and used as stationary boilers at a cannery in October 1959. It returned to Stockton for storage, one of only 3 steamers left on the railroad (along with 4-6-0 94 and 2-8-2 334). On April 4, 1962, it was donated to the city of San Leandro and eventually was displayed near the San Leandro BART Station. At some point in the 1980's, it was relocated to the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

Currently stored at the Niles Canyon Railway, the 165 will move to Portola following the completion of their new connection to the Union Pacific. Once she comes home, a cosmetic restoration is planned along with evaluation for a possible return to operation. Someday, perhaps our wooden freight cars will once again polish the rails, clacking the joints to the rhythm of steam exhaust and the haunting wail of a whistle.

Reference:

Guy Dunscomb and Fred Stindt, *Western Pacific Steam Locomotives, Passenger Trains and Cars*

## Western Pacific 917-D

F7A locomotive, built Electro-Motive Division, 19

By Eugene Vicknair

In 2003, the FRRS completed an agreement for a major trade of equipment with the Bay Area Electric Railway Association. Perhaps the most significant piece of equipment exchanged in this deal is Western Pacific F7A 917-D, one of WP's "Fab 4" F-units and one of only 7 WP Fs to survive.

WP 917-D was delivered in the first of two orders WP placed for freight F7s. It arrived on February 4, 1950, just three days before the 921-D which has been part of the FRRS collection since 1983. The Fs quickly became the backbone of the motive power fleet, supplementing WP's FTs and later joined by small groups of high nose GP locomotives.

Nothing unique set the 917-D apart in its WP career. It would become special only through luck and longevity. By the mid 1960's, the FTs were gone and time was running out on the F7s. As new U30Bs and GP40s arrived, the F7s were rounded up and sent east as trade-ins for the new power. In 1972, most of the survivors, including the last B-units, rolled off the property, traded for new U23Bs that were intended to banish the Fs from the mainline. Only 6 units survived this final purge, 920-A (renumbered 913), 914-A, 915-D, 918-D, 921-D and 917-D (the suffix-

es were dropped in 1975). The 914-A had suffered an electrical fire in 1972 and was scrapped in 1975, while 915 was sidelined in 1974 and finally cut-up in 1979. The remaining four soldiered on as the WP was too cash-strapped to replace them. Their regular assignment was a train commonly called the *San Jose Turn*. Working from Stockton to Milpitas, they delivered cars to the San Jose area and WP's biggest customer: the Milpitas Ford Plant.

In 1972, the 917-D and the 914-A became the first two Fs to receive Perlman green paint. The 917 would remain the only green F until late 1977, following its sidelining in July. Assigned to a 5400 ton train with only 913 and a U30B for companions, the 917 (and 913) caught fire on Altamont Pass and joined the 921 (which had tangled with a gravel truck the previous month) in the Stockton deadline. The WP decided that it still could not afford to replace the units and rebuilding was more cost effective. The railroad sent 913 and 921 off to Boise for a rebuilding at Morrison-Knudsen while 917 was reworked in the Stockton shops. While 913 would famously receive a new version of the classic silver and orange colors, the other three were painted in new versions of the Perlman green scheme. WP 917 returned to service on February 2, 1978, just two days shy of the 28th anniversary of its arrival.

While 913 and 918 would be donated by the WP before merger day, 917 and 921 were the property of the UP as 1983 dawned. Both were quickly shutdown then shipped to North Platte, NB where they received zephyr-style paint schemes patterned after the 913's livery. In late 1983, they returned to California and were donated by WP to their new homes: 921 to the FRRS and 917 to the BAERA.

With the acquisition of the 917-D, the FRRS now has 2 WP freight F7As and, with FP7 805-A, holds 3 WP Fs all together. Eventually it is hoped that additional B-units can be acquired as stand-ins for the long gone WP Bs and permit Portola to field an A-B-B-A set of these classic locomotives. On a more practical note, the nicely-preserved 917-D will permit the museum to continue showcasing an operational WP freight F while our well-used 921-D undergoes a deserved restoration, leading to the day when the two sisters will again work together on home rails.

Reference:

Joseph Strapac, *Western Pacific's Diesel Years*

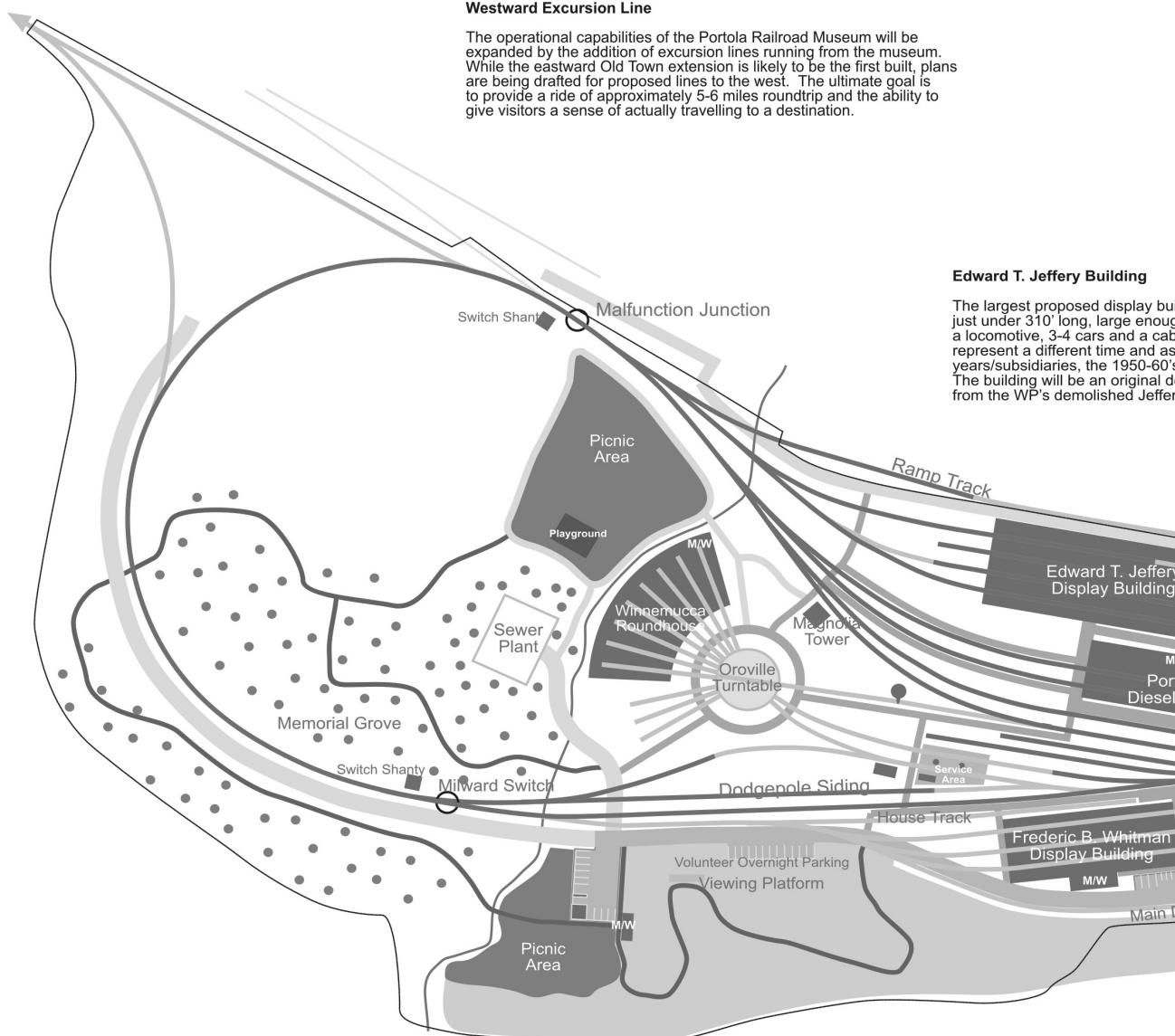
## Portola Railroad Museum Master Plan

By Eugene Vicknair

As the FRRS enters its next 20 years, the Portola Railroad Museum is poised to undergo a renaissance in its appearance and layout.

Starting five years ago, an aggressive effort began to define a cohesive master plan for the museum facility. This plan would address several issues with the facility, including a lack of visitor amenities, a need for more covered railcar storage and restoration space, Americans with Disability Act requirements and a desire to present a more polished museum and provide a visual context for the rolling stock.

After spending time holding public meetings, questioning visitors and members, reviewing the results of the museum mission statement survey and exploring the efforts of other rail-



#### Westward Excursion Line

The operational capabilities of the Portola Railroad Museum will be expanded by the addition of excursion lines running from the museum. While the eastward Old Town extension is likely to be the first built, plans are being drafted for proposed lines to the west. The ultimate goal is to provide a ride of approximately 5-6 miles roundtrip and the ability to give visitors a sense of actually travelling to a destination.

#### Edward T. Jeffery Building

The largest proposed display building is just under 310' long, large enough to hold a locomotive, 3-4 cars and a caboose. It will represent a different time and area, years/subsidiaries, the 1950-60's. The building will be an original design from the WP's demolished Jeffery

#### Winnemucca Roundhouse Orovile Turntable

replica

Never substantially modified and featuring eight stalls, the Winnemucca Roundhouse is a perfect prototype for a replica roundhouse. Built to the most common of WP's roundhouse plans, it was in use into the diesel era. The 110' Orovile Turntable, the same size once used in Portola, provides an ideal companion to the Roundhouse.

#### Frederic B. Whitman Building

This small display building, located west end of the lower parking lot, will house up to 9 individual pieces of equipment. Displayed here will be the rarer and more delicate items of rolling stock and those that can tell a historic story on their own (such as the WP construction outfit car, WP 2001, etc.) This building will be an original design taking its styling cues from either the DRGW/WP Salt Lake depot or the WP's Oakland depot.

#### Replica WP Depot

Forming the gateway to the museum, this building will be a classic, wood frame structure after similar structures at Gerlach. It will house the FRRS Gift Shop and provide train boarding for excursions. It will be a reproduction of the famous WP's San Jose Depot.

#### Magnolia Interlocking Tower

Now owned by the FRRS, Oakland's Magnolia Tower was built by the Southern Pacific to control the junction with the WP near the Oakland Waterfront. It was at this location that Walter Bartlett led a team of workers to cut a crossing into the SP line and break the monopoly on the port. This historically important structure will house the dispatching center for FRRS trackage and function as an interpretive display.

# Master Plan Map of the Portola Railroad Museum

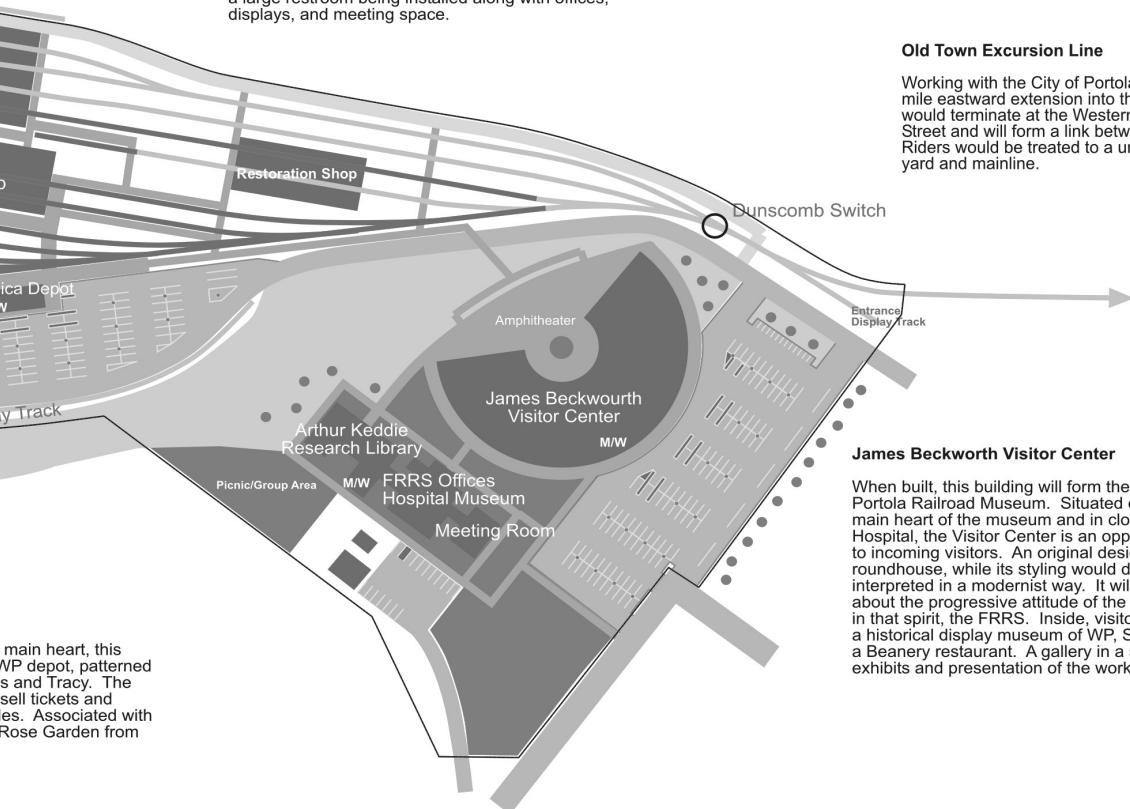
- Existing Trackage
- New Tackage
- Concrete Walkways
- Asphalt Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt Trail
- Water



this structure will be house 4 short trains of each train would i.e.: steam era, early the pre-merger years. taking its styling cues Shops in Sacramento.

## Portola Diesel Shop

The original 1954 built diesel shop is the centerpiece structure of the PRM. This structure will be returned to its original function as a working repair shop, with a large restroom being installed along with offices, displays, and meeting space.



main heart, this WP depot, patterned s and Tracy. The sell tickets and es. Associated with Rose Garden from

## Old Town Excursion Line

Working with the City of Portola, the FRRS hopes to construct a 3/4 mile eastward extension into the heart of Old Town Portola. This line would terminate at the Western Pacific caboose along Commercial Street and will form a link between the museum and the community. Riders would be treated to a unique view of the parallel Union Pacific yard and mainline.

## James Beckworth Visitor Center

When built, this building will form the main, grand entrance to the Portola Railroad Museum. Situated on the hilltop overlooking the main heart of the museum and in close association with the WP Hospital, the Visitor Center is an opportunity to make a bold statement to incoming visitors. An original design, its shape would echo a roundhouse, while its styling would draw on WP, SN and TS influences interpreted in a modernist way. It will be an architectural statement about the progressive attitude of the Western Pacific and, continuing in that spirit, the FRRS. Inside, visitors will find interactive exhibits, a historical display museum of WP, SN and TS artifacts, a Gift Shop and a Beany restaurant. A gallery in a second story will allow rotating exhibits and presentation of the work of railroad artists and photographers.

## Western Pacific Portola Hospital

The Western Pacific Hospital is the most significant and rare preserved railroad structure owned by the FRRS. Its large interior space and prior uses make it perfectly suited to function as the library and offices for the FRRS. The large west wing is two stories, with large rooms and an open plan. The lower story will function as archives and storage, while the top story will contain the Arthur Keddie Library, research and reading spaces. The center wing will hold a reception area, FRRS general offices and meeting rooms.

road and transportation museums, the FRRS Site Committee began issuing a series of recommendations on the final form of a Site Master Plan.

As currently envisioned, the plan represents a build-out of the PRM facility that includes restorations and replicas of buildings that span the entire history of the WP system, from the Portola Hospital, which began construction in 1914, to the Diesel Shop itself, built in the 1950's. The final piece will be a modernist visitor's center located on the bluff above the main museum and housing our artifact collection and historical displays covering the WP system and its context among the nation's railroads. Display and restoration buildings will be patterned after WP, SN and TS prototypes and create the atmosphere of a working railroad.

Careful attention was paid to placement of both buildings and public access. Development is concentrated in the eastern end of the property, leaving the tree-studded balloon loop area relatively natural. Walkways allow visitors multiple paths through the facility and different vantage points to observe operations. In the museum's main heart, the area between the proposed depot, the Diesel Shop and the replica roundhouse, one will experience locomotives being serviced, crews prepping trains and general the environment of a vibrant railyard. Moving toward the western end of the property, visitors can watch trains roll by while enjoying a walk among the trees or a picnic in a sheltered grove. Inside the balloon loop, near Malfunction Jct., will be a grassy family play area, isolated from the movement of equipment but located to allow good visibility of all operations.

Equipment display is spread among four distinct buildings. The largest will be the Jeffrey Building, a 310' long, 4 track structure that will allow display of representative trains from different eras. The Portola Diesel Shop will continue as a running repair and display facility and provide visitors a chance to see and explore our rolling stock as it receives regular TLC. The Whitman Building, located adjacent to the Depot, will hold some of our rarest equipment, those which present a unique, individual story and require special storage and care.

The final display building is a replica of a WP roundhouse. Patterned after the structure that once stood in Winnemucca, NV, this 8 stall roundhouse will be capable of storing a maximum of 16 locomotives, both steam and diesel. The highlight of this building will be the restored Oroville Turntable, which is now owned by the Society. Tracks lead to different service areas for steam and diesel motive power, both easily visible to visitors.

A replica WP depot will house the Gift Shop and ticket office, located in the current parking lot next to the proposed Whitman Building. Patterned after standard WP plans, the depot will be a nice entry into the main heart of the museum. The restored Magnolia Tower will anchor the other end of the facility. Located along the balloon loop, the tower will be returned to functional operation and serve as the dispatching center for the PRM in addition to providing an interactive lesson in the role of interlocking towers to our visitors.

Up on the hillsides above the museum will be the oldest and newest structures in the plan. The WP Hospital will be completely renovated and eventually house the FRRS' library and archives, as well as the Society's business offices and meeting rooms. Additional space will be devoted to displays explaining

the workings of the Hospital and galleries where photos and artwork relevant to the museum's mission can be shown.

The Beckwourth Visitor Center will be the new entrance to the museum. As visitors enter the building, they will find themselves in a great hall with full size locomotives and cars on static display. These will be interactive exhibits that display the technology of railroading and provide a basic understanding of the artifacts they are about to see. The south wing of the building will present artifacts of the railroads in a timeline fashion, allowing one to walk through the complete history of the WP and gain a context for the people and events that coexisted with it. The north wing will house a snack bar/restaurant and another gift shop. Additional space within the visitor center will include an upstairs gallery for temporary exhibits, a children's activity room and meeting rooms that will be open to the community. Visitors will exit the building into a large amphitheater that overlooks the main museum. Tours can start here and open air programs can be held, including historical talks and slide shows.

These are ambitious plans. While they may take years, or even decades, to reach completion, the end goal is the creation of a true experience that showcases the people and history of the Western Pacific and its corporate family and allows the visitor to immerse themselves in the environment, allowing them to gain a better understanding of the role the railroad plays in our lives.

## Sacramento Northern 712

GP7 locomotive, built Electro-Motive Division, 1953

By Eugene Vicknair

SN 712 is the second locomotive we are receiving from the Bay Area Electric Railway Association as part of the groundbreaking trade between our organizations in 2003. It also brings another subsidiary locomotive into our collection, one with a long and interesting history.

WP 712 was built in 1953 as part of the road's second order for narrow hood road diesels. The arrival of GP7s 710-713 signaled the completion of full dieselizeation of the WP and the last steam locomotives were removed from active service that year. The WP's GP7s and their later kin quickly found jobs in every aspect of WP service, from switching to road freights, while the more numerous FTs and F7s were confined mostly to the mainline. Even as the streamliners were replaced by later high horsepower roadswitchers, the small GPs soldiered on and remained an active part of the roster right up to merger day.

In the 1950's, the Sacramento Northern had decided to abandon its carferry across the San Joaquin River. Heavy trains of steel for the plant in Pittsburg were pounding the mainline and bottlenecking at the venerable carferry "Ramon". With the collapse of the Lisbon Trestle, the SN began detouring over the WP and Santa Fe from Sacramento through Stockton to Pittsburg. To power these trains, the SN purchased F3As from the abandoned New York, Ontario and Western. By 1971, these two engines were worn out and the road needed replacements. The F3s went to WP as trade-in fodder and two GP7s, WP 711 and 712, were transferred to the SN. Along with NW2u 607, transferred from WP in 1973, these were the last locomotives acquired by SN.

While intended for the SN *Detour* steel trains, the two