

Due to work on the tunnels, MTA is operating service to Wilshire/Normandie and Wilshire/Western stations on a shuttle basis after 8:15 p.m. Passengers destined to/from one of those stations will transfer to/from a Hollywood train at Wilshire/Vermont.

MTA has approved implementation of Rapid Bus, plus the cutback of freeway express routes #424 and #425 to terminate at Universal City station only (when the subway extension opens in June). MTA has also approved study of rail (or busway) systems for the Eastside and for the Exposition right-of-way (with a diversion along Venice and Sepulveda due to neighborhood opposition along the Westwood portion of the right-of-way)

Santa Monica Big Blue Bus restructured some of their bus routes effective April 2:

- Added evening service to Line #3, and extended later trips to the Metro Green Line (Aviation Stn.)
- Rerouted #5 to continue via Olympic to Downtown Santa Monica (Service along Sawtelle to the VA Hospital has been replaced by an extended Route #13, see below)
- Added service on #7 (including later night service) as well as providing new weekday rush hour limited stop service, called "Super 7". The limited stop version of #7 operates inbound to Santa Monica in the morning, and outbound to Pico Rimpau in the evening.
- Added trips on the weekends on #9 (which now runs between Downtown Santa Monica and Pacific Palisades, although some school trips continue on the old route to Sawtelle)
- Added Sunday service and late evening service to #10. This express route now serves Union Station at the Patsaouras Transit Plaza.
- Extended #13 to serve Sawtelle Blvd and the VA Hospital. Mid-day and weekends, #13 shuttles between the Pico/Westwood and the VA. During rush hours, #13 runs from the VA, via Sawtelle and Pico, to Westwood Blvd, then follows either

its current route through Cheviot Hills (mornings westbound, evenings eastbound) or through Century City (mornings eastbound, evenings westbound) and on to Pico/Rimpau via Airdrome and Robertson.

Also, Big Blue Bus is offering and accepting Metrocards (which are also valid on Culver City, Foothill, Norwalk and Montebello)

Santa Clarita Transit will change some routes and route numbers effective April 9. Also a new temporary(?) "Transit Center" has been set up on Citrus St, near the Valencia Town Center. SCT routes will generally be focused there instead of at the (Saugus) Metrolink station. The changes:

- New Line #1 replaces #10 between Valencia and Castaic, continuing into Whites Canyon (part of old #50 route)
- New Line #2 replaces #20 between Valencia and Val Verde, also continuing to Whites Cyn.
- New #3 replaces current #30 and #31 (Seco Cyn, Tourney Road, Six Flags Magic Mountain)
- New #4 replaces current #40 (Seco Canyon) and #15 through College of the Canyons and Tournament Road to Newhall.
- New #5 and #6 replace current #35 between Stevenson Ranch and Valencia. #5 continues via Soledad Cyn to Sierra Hwy/Vasquez; #6 continues to Shadow Pines.
- School tripper routes have all been given their own #600-series numbers
- New peak hour routes, connecting with Metrolink trains, have #500-series numbers
- Line #795 has been split into #790 between Olive View and Santa Clarita, while #795 runs between Santa Clarita and Lancaster.

The Sunlink express bus between Riverside and the Coachella Valley, has been extended to serve the Westfield Shoppingtown mall in Palm Desert. This location is near bus stops for Sunline #50 and #111.

BULLETIN BOARD

At our April 8 meeting Edward Simburger will show his latest video, The Red Line to Hollywood - Opening Weekend. Screening will start at 2 p.m. in the Angelus Plaza library (3rd Floor). Mr. Simburger will have copies of the video available for sale along with his other rail travelogues and Metrolink guidebooks.

March 18 we had a booth at the grand opening of the Jan Heidt Metrolink station in Newhall. Members Dana Gabbard, Woody Rosner and John Ulloth handled logistics and staffing the booth joined by allies Ed Simburger and family. SO.CA.TA stalwarts Charles Hobbs and Roger Christensen dropped by to say hi while enjoying the festivities. We had a chance to meet Ms. Heidt, a Santa Clarita councilmember about to retire who formerly was an MTA Board alternate and sat on the Metrolink Board. Also in attendance was VCTC and Metrolink board member Brian Humphrey. Besides handing out material about SO.CA.TA we answered transit questions (one man wanted to know how to get to Big Bear from the San Bernardino Metrolink station so he could ski!). A good time was had by all.

Due to a conflict with Fullerton Railroad Days our May meeting has been rescheduled to May 20.

Upcoming events we plan to have booths at include the aforementioned Fullerton Railroad Days May 13-14 and the Red Line North Hollywood opening June 24-25. April 22 we will share a booth at the Earth Day 2000 event in Exposition Park with the East-West Transit Coalition. Outreach pays dividends in Transit Guide sales, new members and raising our profile in the community.

One of the breakout sessions at the May meeting members will be a mass mailing to publicize the Transit Guide to local libraries, agencies and media. Sending out a few hundred notices should significantly boost the already healthy sales.

Member Roger Christensen from Sherman Oaks informs us he plans on taking at least ten trips from Ventura and Van Nuys to downtown (prior to June 24) at exactly the same time of day and monitoring the length of the journey, including at which point he arrives at the Universal. This will be followed by monitoring another ten trips after June 24 to measure the performance of Rapid Bus and the Red Line. This might be an exercise that other Valley SO.CA.TA members might want to try from their own point of origin.

Our APTA grant application was unsuccessful. We are exploring options for how a Westside transportation forum could still occur. Input on how to proceed is welcome.

OCTA has placed slides from informative staff Power Point presentations made at board meetings and other events on its website: <http://www.octa.net/slideindex.asp>

Thanks to our members we were recently able to send a \$200 check to Larry Rosenman as a thank you for donating space on his website for our web page.

Our newest newsletter exchange is with the Action Committee for Transit, Montgomery County (Maryland). In exchange for our newsletter they are sending us their quarterly "Transit Times". As with all exchange material, the new issues are brought to our next monthly member meeting and circulated in the newsletter folder.

Research and policy ideas on cities and metropolitan areas (including transportation) can be seen on the Brookings Institution website: <http://www.brookings.edu/urban/>

Transportation Research Information Services is an awesome bibliographic database on the Bureau of Transportation Statistics website. It offers more than 400,000 bibliographic records of books, articles, and technical reports from the 1960s to the present. And access is free! <http://tris.amti.com/search.cfm>
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This past month I have provided input to several organizations working on statewide transportation issues. I will be bringing the products of these labors to our April meeting. Also I am beginning to prepare for the California Futures Network events I will be attending in early May in Sacramento. And I am happy to learn a summit of transit users is being organized to take advantage of many groups like ours attending the CFN event.

Tired of the predictable mayhem and bloodletting of pro wrestling? But still in need of a dose of old fashioned excitement? Don't despair, because local transportation politics is about to become the hottest spectator sport in town. I'm serious! How often does one get the opportunity to witness the spectacle of pompous pontificating politicians withering under the ire of righteous fury? I predict Mayor Riordan and Supervisor Yaroslavsky in their spectacle of pompous pontificating politicians withering under the ire of righteous fury? I predict Mayor Riordan and Supervisor Yaroslavsky in their zeal to champion Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Wilshire Blvd. will collide with discontented politically savvy neighborhoods in the corridor whose fury will be of biblical proportions. These are not folks to mess around with. Adding fuel to the fire are idiotic comments Yaroslavsky made at the recent USC Curitiba forum (as quoted in the March Metro Investment Report): "This is a democracy-so majority rule. We don't demand unanimity on any decision. We're going to step on people's toes here." Will Zev provide political cover for his fellow politicians as the going gets tough? Or pull his usual sea change leaving them high and dry? Stay tuned!

Besides being busway zealots Riordan and Yaroslavsky again proved to be champion grandstanders with their phony demand that the mid-San Fernando Valley Burbank-Chandler busway they are pushing get its share of federal funding in the new appropriations bill being

finalized. This despite the corridor lacking a grant agreement for such funds. Thankfully I had a letter in the Daily News blasting this loathsome behavior. And these are alleged corridor lacking a grant agreement for such funds. Thankfully I had a letter in the Daily News blasting this loathsome behavior. And these are alleged leaders? Incredible!

I attended the March 6 USC Curitiba symposium. What I found interesting is while Martha Welborne put on an impressive event and drew a crowd of movers and shakers, the sales pitch for busways as a magic bullet didn't catch fire with the audience. Attendees were attentive but not enthused. Further dousing of the 'miracle in Curitiba' was columnist Robert Scheer in the May 19 Santa Monica Our Times quoting Brazilians that riders experience the system as being herded like cattle into an overcrowded vehicle and at the mercy of "crazy drivers' hands". This is the grand vision? Doesn't sound quite the same as advertised by its technocrat architects.

I also attended the March 17 Westside Urban Forum event "Which Way West LA?". It was useful because it provided an opportunity for me to finally meet Harold Katz, chair of the Los Angeles Business Council Transportation and Planning Committee. Katz has often had letters to the editor published in the Los Angeles Times that impressed me as unusually clear eyed and reasonable. Katz turned out to be exactly the same in person. Before the forum we spoke about the glaring lack of involvement with these issues by the business community. I have long held that mobility should be framed by our region as a economic competitiveness issue. But right now it isn't. As for the event itself, all I will do is observe many of our Westside friends need a lesson in regional transportation politics. Until then their goal of a subway under Wilshire is unlikely to ever be reached.

Obscure entity of the month: the Transportation and Human Services Executive Board. The is part of the L.A. County Welfare to Work Transportation Plan, under the direction of the Dept. of Public Social Services with input from local transit agencies, social service providers and Private Industry Councils. For more information contact Nestor Requeno at DPSS at (562) 908-8581.

Current scuttlebutt is Governor Davis will release his transportation funding package on about April 10. It is rumored to include \$1 billion from the budget surplus plus a package of around \$6 billion in projects to be funded by a bond measure to be placed on the November ballot. The caveats are due to Davis' penchant for playing things close to the vest. Jockeying behind the scenes is going on over who will get included in this package. And undoubtedly legislators will tweak the final version to suit their own priorities.

Best new legislation worthy of our support in my view is AB 2140 (Kelley), which requires regional transportation planning agencies to include transit, bike and pedestrian indicators in their 20 year plans, disclose funding for different modes and model a smart growth land use scenario. This is long overdue reform of the process.

The recent MTA stakeholder meeting for the Long Range Plan I attended seemed an exercise in going thru the motions. Breakout session participants were shown a set of questions and asked not to respond to the content of them but merely critique whether they deserve consideration by MTA staff as they draft the new Plan. It devolved into an exercise in semantics! ("Maybe it should be phrased this way"). I hope we aren't getting off on the wrong foot. One thing this region doesn't need is another MTA Long Range Plan that is DOA.

Our work with the East-West coalition seems to be producing results. Kudos to Kymberleigh Richards, Anthony Loui and Roger Christensen for being our voice at MTA Board meetings. Despite the NIMBY

inspired diversion to Venice Blvd. LRT for Exposition is still to be studied. And if rumors are true that Governor Davis will give funds for the eastside light rail things may finally progress.

In an amusing sideshow Yvonne Burke continues with her Crenshaw obsession (remember the wasted Major Investment Study done of Crenshaw rail?) She has convinced the MTA board to seek federal demonstration funds for a new technology to be tested on Crenshaw. STREAM guided electric bus from Ansaldo-Breda consists of electrical power contacts buried in the street that rise when the bus passes and provide it power, than retract below the surface. It supplies power without catenary or third rail and doesn't need grade separation. If it works (it is being tested in Italy). (<http://www.ansaldostream.com/English/menu.htm>) Sounds like a replay of ATTB/Stealth Bus (and Yvonne is again trying to revive ATTB - Yvonne, give up! It is dead and a manufacturing plant for it will never be built in your district).

Interesting statistics of the month: schedule adherence of Foothill Transit Jan. 2000 late trips - 60.07% of buses checked were 5-9 minutes late, 25.29% were 10-14 minutes late and 14.64% were 15+ minutes late (per minutes of Feb. 25 Executive Board meeting)

March 25 I was an invited observer of the Train Riders Association of California Board of Directors meeting at the Glendale Amtrak station. It was educational to observe the functioning of this long standing organization. And an added bonus of attending was I got to hear Dan Leavitt of the High Speed Rail Authority gave a progress report on the project. Leavitt diplomatically noted the current political climate and stated present activities are dual pronged: going forward with environmental review while funding options are reviewed. Best hope would be doing it in small bites in order to avoid the need for a dedicated tax. (*continued on pg. 6*)

(from pg. 5) Leavitt passed along one bit of news I hadn't heard before: for SCAG to apply for the federal TEA21 demonstration mag lev funds, it must commit the corridor to that technology. There is concern due to route duplication this would preclude high speed rail from L.A. to San Diego. And Leavitt confirmed the German government has pulled the plug on the Transrapid line that was supposed to be built in that country.

NIMBYS of the month: Mt. Washington Association, which wants the Pasadena Blue Line entirely underground
<http://www.mtwashington.org/projects/blue-line/index.htm>

Relief for the overcrowded El Monte busway may soon be provided at least during rush hour. But first some tricky politics have to be worked out.

Albert "Sam" Pratt, a new Temecula councilman and Retired Civil & Structural Engineer, bears watching for his vocal pro-transit and managed growth stances: http://www.ci.temecula.ca.us/cityhall/mayor_cc/pratt.htm

I'll close by noting it is an open secret AQMD has adopted a divide and conquer strategy for its proposed regulation of heavy duty vehicles. Suddenly instead of a single rule with mass resistance they are proposing 8 separate rules, most of which haven't been drafted yet. The rule for transit buses is 1192 (<http://www.aqmd.gov/news1/pr1192.htm>) and it is the subject of just as much controversy as the original rule. Meanwhile new similar California Air Resources Board regulations resulted from a cooperative process (<http://arbis.arb.ca.gov/newsrel/nr022400.htm>) which will result in air improvement without being draconian. Maybe AQMD could learn something from CARB? And maybe the clean air zealots should be advocating for state funds to pay for the heavy cost of conversion to "clean" technology. Mandates without a reasonable means of paying for them leaves open the possibility of service cutbacks being necessary to cover the shortfall due to increased capital and operational costs of CNG/LNG buses. Why isn't the BRU at the forefront of that issue?

(from pg. 3) Coordinating Council on Access & Mobility is a joint effort of the federal Departments of Transportation and Health and Human Services that works to ensure duplication doesn't occur among federally funded specialized transportation services: <http://www.ccamweb.org>

The Women's Transportation Coalition is a forum that shares information that affects the interests of women and women-owned business in the Southern California Transportation business. A key activity is sponsoring events with prominent local politicians involved with transportation issues as speakers. Further information: (213) 389-6490.

Wednesday May 10 Foothill Transit will have its annual membership meeting at its administrative offices, 100 N. Barranca Ave. in West Covina (adjacent to Eastland Center).

The Journey to Work, a UCLA conference on transportation and welfare reform, will be held on campus April 6-7. Further details (310) 206-4417 or <http://www.sppsr.ucla.edu/lewis/UCTC.htm>

As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs articles, letters, Transit Tips, photographs and research (newspaper clippings, etc.) from all members and interested non-members. All materials should be sent to **3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010.** (or e-mailed to transit@lerami.lerctr.org). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting date. ■