

BULLETIN BOARD

We will have a booth June 24-25 at the North Hollywood station during the opening weekend of the Red Line extension. Come by and say hello! It is always educational to meet the public and spread the word about SO.CA.TA!

We may be screening the documentary "Beneath Los Angeles" (30 minute version) on construction of the Hollywood extension of the Red Line at our June 10 meeting, in which case we'll meet in the library of Angelus Plaza on the 3rd floor. Call our hotline to confirm ahead of time: (213) 388-2364.

Members in the news: Raphael Zahler had a letter in the May 24 LA Times suggesting MTA explore converting some of its bus routes to electric trolley buses as an alternative to addressing pollution concerns with alternative fuels. Jane Reifer was quoted (actually a garbled mis-quote) in the May 13 Orange County edition of the Los Angeles Times ("Local Group Protests Bus Route Changes") on the continuing effort by bus riders to seek changes in the restructuring recently approved by the OCTA board.

Groundbreaking for the Chinatown Station aerial structure of the Pasadena Blue Line will be held Friday June 9 at Alameda and College Street from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. RSVP: (626) 403-5517.

AQMD's public hearing on rule 1192 mandating CNG public transit vehicles will be held Friday June 16 beginning at 9 a.m. at its headquarters, 21865 E. Copley Drive in Diamond Bar. For more information contact Dave Coel at AQMD (909) 396-3143 or dcoel@aqmd.gov - http://www.aqmd.gov/news1/Fleet_Rule_Home.htm has links to the rule and draft staff report.

<http://www.redcar-la.com> is the new website for the Los Angeles Red Car Concept, the historical/tourist oriented revival effort being led by George Eslinger.

Reminder: at our July 8 meeting Bob Huddy will give a presentation on smart shuttle and other transportation technology developments. We are hoping for our August or September meeting to have a presentation by SCAG on the proposed mag-lev regional system and the update of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Executive Secretary Gabbard maintains a member e-mail address list that he uses to send members reminders of upcoming club events and information on transportation related events as needed. To be added to the list simply send an e-mail to: dgabbard@hotmail.com

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. ■

TRANSIT UPDATES *Have anything to report? Call 213 388 2364*

June 3 a new circulator DASH-like system began operation in unincorporated East Los Angeles. The three routes (Gold-Saybrook Park, Green-Salazar Park and Orange-City Terrace) connect at the East Los Angeles Civic Center (Three St. and La Verne Ave.). The fare is twenty-five cents, free for seniors/disabled and children under five. Transfers between shuttle routes are free (no interagency transfers issued). Operation Shuttle is the contractor. Funding comes from MTA and Prop A local return funds. Further details: (626) 458-3968 or <http://elanet.co.la.ca.us/shuttle/shuttle.html>

AVTA is considering changes to its system, based on the recently completed Nelson/Nygaard Local Transit System Study. If approved these would include improved connections at transit centers, extending line 6 to the AV Mall to provide Littlerock passengers with easier connections, the addition of Sunday service similar to current Saturday service, splitting the northern and southern ends of current route 2 into new routes 11 and 12 and elimination of low ridership lines 8 and 10. School trippers are proposed to provide regular routes with relief from crowding by students. AVTA is also contemplating a slight fare increase for local and commuter routes. Under the proposal local fares would increase to \$1.10 on Sept. 1 and \$1.20 in July 2001, with monthly

passes increasing to \$33 and \$36 respectively. Fare for commuter routes would increase to \$8.50 and then \$10.

RTA this summer is introducing a summer youth pass, good June thru August. Cost is \$39 (half that of three monthly bus passes). In other RTA news the Riverside Downtown Terminal is being converted for use by the Riverside Fire Department as its administrative offices. As of June 17 RTA routes will move their connection point to 3rd and Market. Greyhound for now will continue to use the Terminal. Fremont Place will be extended thru the current bus loading area. It is planned that a streetside bus loading zone for up to 8 buses will be provided near the current Terminal. And the city of Riverside is agreeable to eventually providing a new Terminal, with the stipulation that it is located outside downtown Riverside.

VCTC and San Barbara County Association of Government continue planning the implementation of commuter bus service between Ventura County and Santa Barbara County in July 2001 as a three year Congestion Management Air Quality funded demonstration project (similar to the current Conejo Connection route between Oxnard and Warner Center).■

MTA has delayed the next Long Range Plan stakeholder meetings to mid-July to allow time for staff to complete detailed modeling. As our representative I'd welcome input from members as to which issues I should stress.

May 23 I attended the open house for MTA's Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor Studies (ironically held at the Peterson Automotive Museum). And as I guessed the residents opposed to a busway on Wilshire were there in force, handing out flyers urging opposition. I left early but Anthony Loui later told me he witnessed the consultant teams nervously begin talking among themselves as word spread of the L.A. City Council's anti-busway motion.

And indeed the next day the L.A. City Council on an 11-1 vote came out against the Wilshire busway. Looks like Mayor Riordan and Supervisor Yaroslavsky misplayed this issue. You would have thought after the battle over LAX expansion they would understand the need to have community support. But I guess that isn't part of their thought processes.

Astonishing Zev quote of the month #1: in the May Metro Investment Report (<http://www.ablinc.net/mir/>) Zev Yaroslavsky is interviewed about the proposed San Fernando Valley Transit Zone. He states "Our goal is finding a middle ground where no one loses a job or takes a pay cut" and then in the next answer on whether cost savings are possible "[that] will depend on whether the new Zone is saddled with the kinds of extremely high costs that currently exist at MTA. Not just wages and benefits-that's the least of it-but the variety of work rules and add-ons that make MTA one of the most expensive public transit agencies in the U.S." How can they not have pay cuts if Yaroslavsky sees a need to reduce wages and benefits?

May 24 members Anthony Loui, Kymberleigh Richards and John Ulloth attended the San Fernando Valley East/West Bus Rapid Transit project open house in Sherman Oaks. Anthony tells me that when he began discussing some of the serious busway issues (i.e. the need for grade separation) it was clear the consultants hadn't considered this. And perhaps even a bit unprepared to deal with it.

June 1 members Anthony Loui, Perias Pillay, Cara Rice, Jane Reifer and Joe Drummond attended the 1st MTA Pedestrian Symposium. Presentations were made by several cities, including Santa Monica and Los Angeles. Participants were given an impressive resource book (which listed SO CA.TA as an organization of note). And by all accounts it was a successful first effort to share information on vital pedestrian issues.

At the May 24 MTA Citizen Advisory Committee meeting Rick Hittinger, director of the Regional Rebuild Center, gave a presentation on the Center's Quality Improvement Program. The RRC is located near the Gateway Transit Plaza and is where MTA sends buses that need heavy maintenance, repainted, etc. In the past the Center has been plagued by problems and Hittinger was brought in to shake things up. It was good to see progress being made in addressing this source of longstanding concern.

This week the state legislative conference committee is hashing out the transportation funding package. I have reports that the Governor's proposal will be tweaked by the conferees and augmented. Gray Davis will be displeased but likely sign the result. For the latest news check out the Planning and Conservation League transportation page: <http://www.pcl.org/transportation/summary.html> It includes updates and the Livable Communities

RED LINE SNEAK PEEK *Dana Gabbard (dgabbard@hotmail.com)*

Saturday June 3 at 10 a.m. members of Southern California Transit Advocates gathered on the Red Line platform at Union Station to participate in a tour of the soon to open extension of the Red Line to North Hollywood. Our gracious guide was Beverly Voran of MTA.

After hopping on the departing Red Line car we were on our way! This also happened to be the day MTA was having a preview of the extension for its employees. So at Hollywood/Vine station we were not the only ones allowed to stay onboard. Ms. Voran decided we should first ride to the end of the line at Burbank/Chandler station before disembarking. It was especially exciting for the first time to experience the Red Line going 70 miles an hour while on the 3 mile stretch under the Santa Monica Mountains. In no time at all we were in North Hollywood.

Transportation Proposal we have endorsed.

Amtrak has released a five year draft plan, part of the effort I mentioned in my last column, to invest \$4 billion to improve intercity train service in California:

<http://www.amtrakWest.com/califuture/5yearplan.htm>

Astonishing Zev quote of the month #2: "Don't abandon ship when the going gets rough". This was Zig-Zag Zev at the end of the May MTA Board meeting referring to staying committed to CNG. The irony is one wonders about his own abandonment of rail (remember he claimed Prop A would facilitate light rail?). Also will he stay the course now that BRT on Wilshire is creating a firestorm of criticism? What a silly question.

Director Perias Pillay has pointed out regarding my comments on the BRU documentary last month that I am not the audience it is aimed at. People of leftist predisposition would likely find their

As we made our way up to the mezzanine we gazed at the murals that artist Anne Marie Karlsen placed there and above the entrance. The color of the dome over the escalator to the surface is meant to evoke the citrus groves that once filled the area. Someone said the area around the N. Hollywood station reminds him of the Santee San Diego Trolley station. I could understand the comparison, as both are in wide open areas. Just west of the station, equipment was parked for constructing the bus plaza that is to be therein. There will also be space for 800 automobiles. After getting a good look we descended to board a train and made our way to the Universal City station.

Ms. Voran informed us a second entrance into this station beneath Lankershim is due to open in about a year. It will provide (*cont'd on pg. 6*)

message effective. Which means with a friendly audience it will prove a useful fundraising tool.

The Surface Transportation Policy Project has two new reports on their website

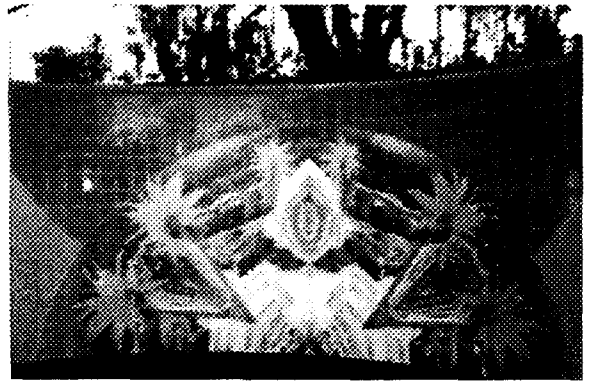
<http://www.transact.org/> worthy of perusal: Changing Direction Federal Transportation Spending in the 1990s and Beyond Gridlock: Meeting California's Transportation Needs in the Twenty First Century.

We regret to note that Dana Reed was not reappointed to the California Transportation Commission. His efforts on behalf of transportation improvement over the years are appreciated. On a happier note, Phil Aker of the L.A. Dept. of Transportation, who has commuted to work by bicycle for 31 years, in April was awarded a Rideshare Diamond Award by SoCal Rideshare as Bike Commuter of the Year. Way to go, Phil!■

(Red Line from pg. 5) access to Universal Studios without the need to cross the street. The metal tree-shaped overhangings on the platform were nicely subtle. We couldn't access the surface since that area is still being finished, so we again boarded the train and headed out under the mountain.

While the subway goes fast under the mountain, it isn't easy to notice since travel on the straightaway is smooth and you can only gauge the speed by watching the light fixtures whiz by. Midway the tunnel widens for the seismic zone (if an earthquake occurs tracks in a wider tunnel are easier to realign). And then we arrived at Hollywood/Highland station. Artist Sheila Klein has created a whimsical sense of playfulness with the arched structure above the platform. And on the stairs to the surface projected images appear on the walls. In its own way like Hollywood/Vine station it evokes Hollywood. Ms. Voran pointed out an extra mezzanine was constructed but for now isn't being used. When ridership warrants this will provide a second entrance.

Our tour over, members got back on the subway and returned to civilization. Our thanks to Beverly Voran for being our guide. And a big thank you to all the participants: Mark Panitz, Kymberleigh Richards, Kecia Weller, Mike Baron, Edmund Buckley, Joseph Dunn, Charles Hobbs, Kris Sharp, David Duarte, Hank Fung, Nate Zablen, Robert Meinert, Barry Christensen, Chris Paley, Frank Roldan, Charles Powell, Dana Gabbard, Alan Michaelson, Joseph Markham, Kirk Schneider, Anthony Loui, Russ Jones, Andy Novak, Perias Pillay, Roger Christensen, Armando Avalos, and Sean Bainbridge. ■



Mural in N. Hollywood Station. Mark Panitz photo



Artwork at Universal City Station. Mark Panitz photo