

TRANSIT UPDATES

Access to the platforms at Union Station will be limited to the pedestrian tunnels per the January Metrolink Matters newsletter. The catering truck will still be available but new gates will limit access for vehicles and pedestrians.

Santa Monica Big Blue Bus is holding a series of meetings dealing with route changes and a possible fare increase this summer. Proposed changes are:

- increased service (including more frequent service later at night) on #1, 2, 7 and 12
- fewer trips on #10 to Main/Pine due to low ridership
- #13 would serve Pico to Cheviot Hills only
- new #15 would serve Olympic, Sawtelle and the V.A. Hospital (with a possible extension south to Venice Bl.)

Culver City Bus has extended its Route #6 (Sepulveda Blvd) to serve the Aviation Metro Green Line station. Buses continue

south of the LAX Transit Center via Airport Bl, Century and Aviation.

Culver City #6 also serves the new "Bridge Mall" on Howard Hughes Parkway.

The El Segundo shuttle as of Sept. 2001 added three more stops and now runs an extra half hour, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. (this information supplied by a clipping from J.K. Drummond)

Drummond also reports that Palos Verdes Transit plans to acquire three new, larger buses. Several PV Transit runs are at capacity now.

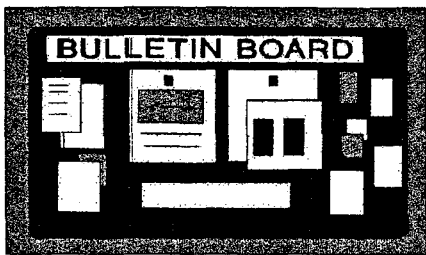
Santa Clarita Transit now serves a new transit center, located near Valencia/McBean Parkway. This facility replaces the existing temporary transit center located on Citrus. All regular local bus routes, as well as express routes #790, 795 and some #793 trips will be routed to the new transit center. This will cause changes in current schedule times by up to five minutes.

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Feb. 2 the Railroad Passenger Association of California has its annual meeting at the Santa Ana Amtrak station (we will have a report John Ulloth on the program in next month's newsletter). Members attending included Woody Rosner, Dana Gabbard, John Ulloth, Bart Reed, Barry Christensen, Jerry Pass, Eric Griswold, Kirk Schneider and Ken Ruben. Kirk and Ken were elected Directors during the business part of the meeting.

Cecil Carpio attended the Dec. 7 SCAG Transportation Conformity Working Group meeting.

Ken Ruben, Alan Michelson, Mark Panitz, Charles Hobbs and Anthony Loui attended the Jan. 26 Big Blue Bus community meeting at the Ken Edwards center. Dana Gabbard and Ken Ruben attended the Jan. 29 meeting at the main Santa Monica library. Joe Dunn participated in the Feb. 1 meeting at Tom Bradley Youth and Family Center. ■



Our thanks to the many members who promptly renewed their membership for 2002. A special thanks to those able to include an additional donation to assist our burgeoning activities.

Dan Leavitt of the California High Speed Rail Authority is the guest speaker at the Sierra Club Angelus Chapter Transportation Committee Tuesday Feb. 12. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. and non Sierra Club members are welcome to attend. This is at the Chapters' office, 3435 Wilshire Blvd Suite 320 (one block east of the Red Line Normandie station).

At our January meeting Tim Fox of Viacom Decaux LLC made a presentation on the streetscape contract his company has with the City of Los Angeles, followed by a question and answer session. Tim promised to return at a future meeting with a status report on implementation. We hope at our March meeting to have John Catoe of MTA as our speaker.

Also at the January meeting we endorsed the Alliance for a New Transportation Charter. Further details: <http://www.transact.org>

At our Feb. 9 meeting we hope to set dates for our first two study tours of the year: the 2002 night owl trip and the

PCH exploration.

New MTA system maps are available for free at Nix Check Cashing locations. For the one nearest you call (310) 538-2242, ext. #301.

The Riverside Transit Agency is holding a series of Public Meetings to gather community input on proposed short-term route adjustments and long-term transit needs, as well as the location of Park 'n' Rides and Transit Centers. Dates, times and locations are listed in the Calendar. Comments may be submitted to RTA via e-mail (cleroy@riversidetransit.com), mail (RTA Planning Department P.O. Box 59968, Riverside, CA 92517) or phone [(909) 565-5164].

Access Services, Inc. (the ADA mandated paratransit provider for L.A. County) will be holding community meetings on proposed changes to its services:

Wednesday Feb. 13
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Braille Institute
714 N. Vermont Ave. (at Melrose),
Los Angeles

Wednesday Feb. 13
6 p.m.-8 p.m.
West Covina Senior Center
2501 E. Cortez Ave., West Covina

A workshop on freight movement along the Interstate 10 corridor will be held Wednesday Feb. 13 in the MTA Board Room (3rd floor of MTA's headquarters building at Gateway Transit Center) from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Further information: (866) 441-0399. (to page 10)

PUBLIC & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS



On behalf of our members I sent a letter to Montebello Bus Lines expressing our appreciation at their reaching an agreement with MTA to accept MTA passes on all their lines. Way to go, Montebello!

Unexpectedly Senator Alarcon revised his moribund MTA Board reform legislation (Senate Bill 18) and arranged for it to be heard by the Transportation Committee. The new version was a weird hodgepodge with one provision mandating a seat on the MTA Board be reserved for a representative of the Bus Riders Union! Consulting with our Executive Committee I prepared and faxed a letter of opposition which was duly noted in the analysis of the bill. Thankfully Senate Transportation Committee chair Kevin Murray arranged for a further amending of the bill to instead have it mandate a study of the composition of the MTA Board. Hey, we may even support that!

Claudette Moody, Director of MTA Government Relations, made an excellent presentation at the MTA Citizen's Advisory Council Jan. 23 meeting. She stated opposition by the local Congressional delegation seems to have aborted any action on the GAO recommendation to reallocated L.A. County transportation corridor funding. Regarding our region's

prospects during the drafting of TEA3 she noted given new financial realities it is unlikely the new bill will be larger than the current TEA-21.

Also at the CAC meeting several members who recently underwent Passenger Count Training and spent a day in the field reported on their experiences. This is the same training BRU members underwent to produce point-check data for evaluating consent decree compliance. The consensus of the participants was producing counts is more difficult than it perhaps seems at first glance and their experiences made them question the accuracy of the counts MTA and the court are currently relying on.

Karen Ruben's "Bus Station Blues" in the Jan. 22 San Gabriel Valley Tribune on the El Monte Bus Station quoted me on the deplorable condition of the bathrooms and how important the facility is ("...the anchor of the most successful transportation project in the past quarter-century in Los Angeles County".) Thankfully Foothill Transit is undertaking a long overdue renovation of the station, including a revived transit store. Bravo to Foothill!

I had great fun at the Jan. 24 US 101 Freeway Corridor Community Workshop held at Los Angeles City College mingling with consultants, agency staff, interested residents, etc. (another attendee was member Isa Meksin). I was puzzled at one entry in a list of already approved transit improvements in the corridor called the Westlake Community Based Intercept Intermodal Facility. Eventually one of the consultants explained they had found it on the list of items receiving funding from MTA's Call for projects. The only other

tidbit they could offer was the project had been submitted for funding by the city of Los Angeles. A subsequent search of the L.A. City Council File Index revealed this is a project at MacArthur Park Red Line station near where I live! But what is its status?

Interesting Board Member Comment of the month: Foothill Transit Executive Board Vice-President Bob Huff in the minutes of the Dec. 14 meeting is recorded as stating that the Executive Board's fiduciary duty is to provide good service at a reasonable price, contrary to the contractor's objective to remain profitable. He noted that the Board's duty is not personal but good business, and that a contractor's service is not indispensable.

Posted on our website is the text of a Jan. 16 letter I sent MTA regarding the 3rd tier concept. The gist of it was a desire to have this component of the Long Range Plan evaluated to make sure we have a firmer grasp of what we can and cannot expect from it.

John Ulloth and I sat down after the Feb. 2 RailPAC meeting we both attended and discussed preliminary concepts for the first phase of the Metro Rapid campaign. John hopes to have prototypes at our Feb.9 meeting that we can look over during the work session after the main meeting.

Those wishing to monitor the situation at Amtrak are advised to consult the writings of journalist Don Phillips at the Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com>). Member Ken Ruben brought Phillips' reporting to my attention and it certainly

is the most in-depth and knowledgeable I've encountered in the popular press.

I had to guffaw at L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky using words like "bold" and "courageous" in soundbite comments appearing in the Jan. Metropolitan Investment Report offering predictions for the coming year. Yes, we need those attributes in our leaders. Sadly Zev (ever ready to swing whichever way the political winds blow) is the last person one would expect to exhibit such attributes. Instead Zev is currently pompously pontificating and posturing that the San Fernando valley Transit Zone will continue apace even though it is now obvious reality (and realistic financial numbers) are quickly consigning this misguided effort to oblivion.

Laugh of the month: here comes another magic bullet transportation solution - AVT Train (<http://www.avt-train.com/>). A high-speed train that runs parallel to freeways on elevated guideways carrying autos as cargo long distances. And they claim to be able to do it at a profit. Words fail me.

I'll end this month by noting the recent passing of Dr. Stephen B. Dobrow, one of the pioneers of transit advocacy who was involved with transit issues in the New York area for 40 years and founded the Committee for Better Transit. ■

SANTA MONICA- ORANGE COUNTY ADVENTURE PT 1.

(Charles P. Hobbs)

It was *supposed* to be a quick trip over the hill to Santa Monica (for one of their service change meetings) and then via Culver CityBus to the Aviation Green Line station (to try out their new route). After that I'd ride back to Downtown LA, and then, on the way back to the Valley, stop by the new Hollywood/Highland mall. But...

I started around 8 a.m. with a Rapid Bus (#750) along Ventura Bl. I got on at Victory/Topanga, and we went around the block to the next stop down at Burbank Bl. After about 10 minutes, a bus (not the forward-most one, however) loaded us, and we continued the trip. The bus filled up at the Topanga/Ventura Bl stop.

I got off at Sepulveda to wait for the #561 to West LA. After about 15 minutes, one showed up. I rode down to the Getty Center stop, then transferred to the Santa Monica #14. There were only a couple other riders on this bus until I got off at Santa Monica Bl, to await their route #1.

Or at least that was my original plan. After seeing several MTA #4's go by, without a SMMBL #1 in sight, I took one of the MTA buses. It was a bit of a trick because at Bundy/Santa Monica, SMMBL stops nearside but MTA stops farside. Luckily the MTA driver let me on at the SMMBL stop. The #4 was about 1/4 full, mostly with senior citizens, as we cruised down Santa Monica Bl to downtown Santa Monica.

Downtown itself was a bit of a mess, with construction of the Transit Mall (due to open in Mar-Apr 2002). But I picked my way around all the barricades and made my way to the SMMBL meeting at the Ken Edwards Center.

The meeting was no great shakes. Several SO.CA.TA members (I saw Anthony Loui, Ken Ruben, Alan Michelson, and Mark Panitz) were there, as well as SMMBL officials and the general public. The biggest changed involved creating a new Line #15 down Sawtelle and Olympic. (SMMBL might consider extending it to Venice Bl if UCLA keeps the "BruinGo" student passes in effect. There was also talk about the transit mall project).

After the meeting was over (it was around 11:00 or so), I walked along the 3rd St.

STOP ANNOUNCEMENTS--COURTESY OR REQUIREMENT?

(from Transit Times Jan. 2002 published by Action Committee for Transit in Maryland, reprinted by permission)

Up to a decade ago, stop announcements on fixed route transit systems were a courtesy; it has been a requirement since the Americans with Disabilities Act [49 CFR 37.167] was enacted to meet the needs of the visually impaired. These stops include transfer points (inter- or intra- modal) as

well as major intersections and any stop requested by a disabled passenger. The rules allows an announcement to be made by personal voice if the vehicle is small enough to be audible' otherwise the vehicle must have a public address system. Some bus systems, e.g., Albuquerque's SunTran, have external speakers mounted so that the visually impaired can hear the route number and destination before boarding. ■

Promenade. Frankly, I liked it less than in years past: fewer places to eat, more high-end boutiques, expensive restaurants and mall-type stores; fewer street performers and more bums and people soliciting for charities of one sort or another. The farmers market was pretty cool, though. I walked away from the Promenade and had lunch on Santa Monica Bl, near one of the new transit shelters (think an ultra-artsy-craftsy version of the Rapid Bus shelters, done up in silver). It didn't look like it would do a good job of actually sheltering anyone at the bus stop from the weather (this was another point of discussion at the meeting).

Anyway, I took a MTA #4 (there still didn't seem to be too many SMMBL #1's out) and rode to Sepulveda Bl; there, I transferred to Culver Citybus #6. This bus was lightly loaded, except between Venice and Fox Hills Mall, when it carried a full load. All except for two other passengers got off at the airport; a third got on at the "old" post office on Century Bl. The #6 followed the same route as SMMBL #3 and MTA #561 down Aviation to the Green Line station and boarded an eastbound Green Line. It was one of those snazzy new trains, with the yellow digital headsign. Nice. I wished the Blue Line ran these!)

Originally, I was thinking about going down to Long Beach, perhaps to ride an Aquabus. But I decided to continue on to Norwalk. Maybe I'd enter Orange County via Norwalk #4 and OCTA #20, then ride back on the MTA #490. There would still be plenty of time to do that, and get back home at a decent hour... would there be? (It was around 3 p.m. or so now.) At the platform, I watched as MTA #270, Norwalk #2, and the Long Beach buses arrived and departed. Then a Line #460 pulled up. It's headsign read "Disneyland". Hmm, I hadn't been in

O.C. for a while, maybe I'll go check it out. I boarded the nearly-full bus, flashed my pass and paid \$1 for the Orange County fare; the driver gave me an Orange County transfer.

At Norwalk, a couple of skateboard kids, who were headed for Knotts Berry Farm, got on. Three more got on along Imperial. So all five were in the back of the bus, with their boards, chatting about skateboards and stickers and such. We didn't pick up too many more passengers as we stair-stepped through Norwalk toward the I-5 freeway. I say about 1/2 of the passengers got off in Buena Park, and the rest got off at the end of the line at Disneyland.

Since the last time I was there, the Disneyland bus stop had been improved considerably. It was on Harbor Blvd, where OCTA buses also stopped. The monorail occasionally glided just over our heads. Using my transfer, I caught a southbound OCTA #43 (one of the big articulated buses).

And boy, was that big bus needed. The bus was quite full when I boarded, and became standing-room only through Anaheim and Santa Ana. As we entered northern Costa Mesa, it emptied out considerably though.

My original plan was to ride this bus all the way to Newport Beach, then catch the #57 to Brea, and ride #490 back to LA. But due to all of the service changes in OCTA-land, the #43 now terminated at "Triangle Square", a small shopping mall in Costa Mesa. To get further south would require a transfer to #71, which ran every 30-minutes.

(So...did I give up here, or continue on to Newport Beach? The answer will be found in the next issue of The Transit Advocate!) ■



TRANSIT ADVOCATES OF ORANGE COUNTY - Mark Strickert and Jane Reifer - 866-476-2282 ext.4, or zineland@yahoo.com

WHAT WILL PROPOSITION 42 DO FOR TRANSIT?

The Transit Advocates of Orange County and Auto-Free Orange County invite you to the second in their series of transit lectures. Come hear what ballot Proposition 42 could do for transit in Orange County, and California in general, should the proposal receive a positive response on the March ballot. Prop 42 would require that sales tax from gasoline purchases would be earmarked for funding transportation, such as highways, roads, and yes transit. Also included will be an update on transit projects in Orange County. The lecture will be held on Thursday, February 21, 6-8 pm in the 4th floor meeting room of the Santa Ana Amtrak/Metrolink Station. Volunteers to help out are also welcome!

NEW METROLINK SERVICE FOR WEST IRVINE--I MEAN, TUSTIN

All Orange County and Inland-Empire-Orange County Metrolink trains will now stop at the new Tustin station, which opened for business on January 21st after several delays. The station, located near Edinger and Jamboree in a quiet back corner of the city of Tustin, is just a 24 minute ride from Fullerton. Dedicated StationLink buses 470 and 471 meet

trains and shuttle riders to further destinations such as the Irvine Business Complex, John Wayne Airport, and UCI. OCTA "big bus" route 70 (on Edinger Ave.) stops just outside the station, with service to Huntington Beach, Mater Dei High School, Irvine Valley College, Irvine Spectrum, Leisure World, and Dana Point. By the way, valid Metrolink tickets are also good for rides on all OCTA local and in-county express buses on any weekday.

The Laguna Niguel-Mission Viejo station is expected to open in spring, and is already noted on the schedules for both the OC and the Inland Empire-OC lines. Said station will, however, have no StationLink shuttle service at least at the start.

ORANGE COUNTY PEDESTRIAN SAFETY EXPERT SPEAKS

Rock Miller, a transportation engineer at Katz, Okitsu & Associates of Orange County, spoke recently at the January meeting of the Santa Ana Pedestrian Safety Task Force. He is a leading expert in pedestrian safety and his studies in Santa Ana, Santa Monica, and other cities have recommended effective ways to improve pedestrian facilities. He also had some innovative thoughts on the appropriate use of crosswalks, and the Safe Routes to Schools program.

A SUBCOMMITTEE IS MORE THAN JUST A GROUP THAT ORDERS SANDWICHES

The Transit Subcommittee of the OCTA Citizens Advisory Committee recently chose Irv Glasser of the Irvine Transportation Commission, and Jane Reifer of Transit Advocates of Orange County as their chair and vice-chair, respectively. One of the group's goals for the current year is to expand its scope

Orange, via the 91 "FasTrak" toll/HOV lanes. This bypasses all the former stops along Santa Ana Canyon Road, further cutting local bus service in Anaheim Canyon.

PEDESTRIANS FOR LIGHT RAIL

On Saturday, January 26, several TAOC and Rail Advocates members walked the the proposed CenterLine alignment from approximately Irvine City Hall to Alton and Sand Canyon. It was great to see the alignment "close-up". The study notes (including very detailed alignment maps) are now available; just ask for a copy. Thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to the successful study tour.

BUS SHELTERS FOR DOWNTOWN FULLERTON?

The downtown redevelopment committee recently discussed the issue of whether to recommend bus shelters on Harbor Blvd. in the downtown. It was decided to recommend that they be looked into on a case-by-case basis for appropriateness. Special concerns were that the shelters actually provide bus riders with shelter from rain and sun, that they not block business signage or visibility, and that they not include advertising. It was also recommended that a distinctive style

be used, possibly incorporating public art. Coincidentally, Laguna Beach is also looking into installing bus shelters and is considering opening their bus shelter project to local artists in a design competition.

BUS SHELTERS FOR LAGUNA BEACH?

The Parking, Traffic and Circulation Committee of Laguna Beach has started the process of getting bus shelters at bus stops in their city. Many stops are shared by OCTA and Laguna Transit; others within the city are for Laguna Transit only. Jay Laessi, a member of the PTC Committee and also SO.CA.TA, wants the shelters to be aesthetic contributions to the town as well as amenities providing comfort for riders. His main concern for the practical comforts for riders is that the shelters provide rain and sun protection and have maximum set-back from the curb. Laessi is suggesting that the bus shelter design be opened to local artists in a design competition.

Letters of support for new shelters can be written to: Laguna Beach City Council, 505 Forest, Laguna Beach, CA 92651.

Jay Laessi, the Executive Director of Auto-Free Orange County, can be reached at (949) 452-1393 or www.auto-free.net. ■

BAXTER WARD, 1919-2002

We have received word that former Los Angeles County Supervisor Baxter Ward has passed away at 82.

Baxter Ward was also a broadcast journalist, getting his start at a Seattle radio station when he was 16. His broadcasting career took him to Washington DC, and then to Los Angeles, where he became a news director and anchorman for two TV stations until 1969.

He entered political life in 1969, losing a mayoral election, but winning a County

Board of Supervisors seat in 1972. He kept that position until 1980, when he was ousted by Michael Antonovich.

Baxter Ward was known for his early efforts to get rail transit into Los Angeles County. He proposed 230-mile, \$7-billion system of elevated trains, called the Sunset Coast Line. Although the voters rejected it in 1976 and a more modest version in 1978, another of his projects, a short-lived commuter train between Los Angeles and San Diego, was somewhat more successful. Arguably, these early efforts paved the way for the transit projects we have now. ■

(Bulletin Board, from pg. 3)

There will also be an Open House in San Bernardino on Tuesday Feb. 19 at the County of San Bernardino Administration Building.

Thursday Feb. 21 SCAG and Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald, who sits on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, are sponsoring a Regional Transportation Summit at Carson Community Center (3 Civic Plaza) in Carson from 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Further information: Charlottee Eckelbecker, (213) 236-1811.

In the near future (date and place to be set) SCAG and its Regional Transit Task Force will be holding a Transit Funding Workshop.

Smart Growth Without Borders is a summit being held by the San Diego Association of Governments on Friday March 8 from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the San Diego Marriott Hotel. Further information: <http://www.sandag.org> or (619) 595-5300.

Pepperdine University's Graziadio School of Business and Management offers a Transit and Para-Transit Management Program leading to a certificate. For further details call Trichelle at (310) 568-2388.

Those wishing to monitor the Air Quality Management District's changes to

rules for transit buses can be placed on a notification list by e-mailing subscriptions@aqmd.gov and mention rule PNRL1192.

The Public Utilities Commission maintains information only lists for interested members of the public to receive rulings and decisions on matters before the agency for free. The Pasadena Gold Line grade crossing applications are no.00-10-012 et al. Requests to be placed on its list can be sent to the PUC Process Office, 505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco CA 94102.

Congratulations to the Action Committee for Transit of Maryland for adding over 500 new members during the past year with an aggressive outreach effort. Also kudos to Mary Harris of Thousand Oaks, long-time transportation activist on Ventura County issues, who has been appointed to the Ventura County Transportation Commission's Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee/Social Services Advisory Council.

As always, The Transit Advocate needs articles, letters, Transit Tips, photographs and research 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. ■