

## **TRANSIT UPDATES**

Effective June 16, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus will combine the existing Lines #4 and #15 into a new line #4. This line will connect the existing two routes via San Vicente Blvd. in Brentwood, providing service from Downtown Santa Monica, through Brentwood, the VA Hospital and Sawtelle.

Culver City has moved the northern terminal of its #6 (Sepulveda Blvd) to serve the Ackerman bus stop on the UCLA campus, instead of the Hilgard/Strathmore terminal used by MTA and Santa Monica. (According to member Ken Ruben, there have been noise-related issues related to the Hilgard/Strathmore bus turnaround at UCLA).

Foothill Transit is holding meetings this month to gather input on a proposed fare restructuring (see calendar for locations, dates and times):

- Regular fare would increase from \$.90 to \$1.10
- Express Zone 3 routes (i.e. the busway between El Monte and Downtown) would cost \$2.75 (currently \$2.25)
- Express Zone 4 (#493 and #495) would become Express Zone 5 routes, see below
- Express Zone 5 (#498, #499 and #699) would cost \$3.35 (currently \$2.75)
- Instead of a monthly pass, a 31-day pass (similar to Omnitrans) would be offered.
- Seniors and disabled passengers paying

cash fares would pay express charges (about 1/2 of the regular fare) The price of a senior pass would rise from \$8 to \$10

- College students (but not K-12 students or senior/disabled) would also pay express charges when using a pass. The passes would cost \$53 (Zone 3) and \$64 (Zone 5).
- Transfers would be valid on any Foothill route, even the same one or one going in the opposite direction.

We hope to prepare a position on the proposal.

Santa Clarita Transit also has a fare increase, effective Jun 30:

- Local cash fare will be \$1.00 (\$.50 senior/ disabled), with passes at \$25 and \$15 respectively. Regular and student fare will be the same on the local routes
- Fares to the San Fernando Valley will be \$3.50, or \$1.75 for students/seniors/ disabled. Passes will cost \$120/\$60
- Fares to Downtown Los Angeles, West Los Angeles or Lancaster/Palmdale will be \$4.00 (\$2.00 for students/seniors/ disabled). Passes for these lines will cost \$140/\$70.

Member Juan Cornejo sent us a clipping from the Whittier Daily News that Whittier Transit fixed route service may be eliminated due to tightening budgets. An idea the city is exploring to reduce costs would be negotiating with Montebello or Norwalk Transit for them to modify some of their existing lines to serve the current Whittier Transit users.■

## **MEMBERS IN ACTION**

Rail Advocates of Orange County was profiled in the OC Weekly May 24 article "Train in Vein - Jane Reifer lives for mass transit". It can be viewed at <http://www.ocweekly.com/ink/02/38/news-pignataro.php>

Mark Panitz's letter to the editor "Bus Advocate Responds to Complaints" appeared in the May 10 Santa Monica Mirror. In impressive fashion Panitz point by point rebutted comments critical of Big Blue Bus made in the May 3 letter column by Rufus baker. It can be viewed at [http://www.smmirror.com/volume3/issue47/letters\\_to\\_the.asp](http://www.smmirror.com/volume3/issue47/letters_to_the.asp) ■

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

A survey has been included with this issue of the Transit Advocate. Please complete it and return it to the June 8 meeting, or mail it to SO.CA.TA, 3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles 90010. An online version is also available at <http://socata.lerctr.org/survey.html> Your answers may determine the future of SO.CA.TA. Thanks for participating.

Captain Kenneth Garner, Commanding Officer of L.A.P.D. Transit Bus Division, will be the speaker at our June 8 meeting beginning at 2:15 p.m. After his remarks there will be a question and answer period. We will also have a brief discussion of whether to support the statewide High Speed Rail system proposal and whether to endorse the PCL transportation initiative on the November ballot.

Our comments on the proposal for MTA line 125 were submitted via e-mail and forwarded to the Project Manager where they will be considered along with all other public comments. The text of SO.CA.TA's comments can be read on the front page of our website.

Thursday, June 13, 7:00 p.m. the next general meeting of Friends 4 Expo Transit will be held at Hamilton High School (main building), 2955 S. Robertson Blvd. in West Los Angeles. Topics include a funding update and discussion of livable communities.

Saturday June 22 from Noon to 8 p.m. Santa Monica will hold a downtown street fair to celebrate the completion of its transit mall. Big Blue Bus service will

be free that day, there will be entertainment, giveaways, artist and vendor booths, plus a kids play area. We are exploring the possibility of having a booth at the event.

Friday July 12 The Pacific Railroad Society will have MTA CEO Roger Snoble as a guest speaker to discuss MTA's plans. PRS is encouraging all with an interest in transportation to attend. This will be held in the Joslyn Center (Alhambra Room) in Alhambra, 210 N. Chapel Ave beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Beach trains will again run this summer between Rialto and Oceanside. For further information on ticket prices, dates of service, stop locations, etc. call (909) 787-7938.

The California Futures Network e-newsletter Land Use Lines in its May edition includes the address for a useful resource: a database compiled by the California League of Cities of website addresses for nearly every city in the state:  
[http://www.cacities.org/cities\\_online/cities\\_online.asp?intParentID=3](http://www.cacities.org/cities_online/cities_online.asp?intParentID=3)

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](mailto:transit@lerami.lerctr.org)). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting.■

## **PUBLIC & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**



Dana Gabbard  
(dgabbard@hotmail.com)

May 30 I stumbled across a Bus Riders Union event being held in the afternoon at the intersection of Wilshire/Vermont. 10 or so yellow shirts were handing out flyers promoting their "Civil Rights Watch" I mentioned last month. Evidently this is part of a count-down to June 30 when the final load standard of the consent decree (no more than 8 standees) becomes active. The BRU is soliciting data from riders, handing our forms that only have space for negative information (overcrowding/late). Under the circumstances won't the information be tainted by the bias of the instructions?

Giving credit where it is due, Bart Reed of The Transit Coalition tipped Rick Orlov of the Daily News to an item Orlov used in his May 27 column that "the Bus Riders Union is circulating a proposal to have its members go on record calling for the U.S. to end its support of Israel for its actions involving Palestinians." Some BRU members disagree with this stance. I'd bet some of the contributors to Eric Mann's bulging coffers feel the same way.

Think the Patsaouras Transit Plaza is cramped? If MTA goes forward with its development plans for the Wilshire/Vermont Red Line station site the bus plaza will be moved to a currently unused 1 acre parcel east of Shatto fronting Wilshire. OUCH! Just the thought of the turn radius makes me wince. Has anyone in MTA Operations seen this? (item #26, May 16 MTA Planning and Programming Committee

meeting).

May 31 the Select Senate Committee on MTA held a dog & pony show at the San Fernando City Hall on the sector plan. About the only real news to come out of the event is Senator Alarcon has again amended SB 18, this time to state if the valley secedes that the Mayor of the new city would take over one of the L.A. seats on the MTA Board.

interesting legislation of the month: AB 2189 (Koretz) would require public transit contractors to retain for 60 days employees of the previous contractor. Currently it is before the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee.

The "People/Briefly" column in the May Metro Investment Report notes L.A. Mayor James Hahn has appointed Wayne Tanda as General Manager of the L.A. Department of Transportation. Tanda formerly was the City of San Jose's Director of Transportation.

Was amused to learn MTA still subsidizes Avalon ferry fares for commuters (page 2, item #31, May 23 MTA Board meeting). A report I read years ago on improving transportation on Catalina explained why this is done: MTA can report the route miles of the ferry as part of the regional transportation network for purposes of formula federal subsidies.

Did you know on May 9 \$28.1 million was released by the Governor for the Exposition Line? This assures planning will proceed while the funding issues are settled, perhaps for the entire project.

Well, sanity finally reigned in the close 3-2 PUC vote on Gold Line grade crossings. Most impressive is the spin doctoring the Mt. Washington Association has undertaken in claiming this defeat of their anti-Gold Line campaign as a victory:  
<http://www.mtwashington.org/projects/blue-line/final.htm>

I am attempting to obtain a recent report on core rideshare services provided by the Southern California Association of Governments. Evidently it explains why the various County Transportation Commissions are about to take over rideshare support services SCAG had been handling.

In the minutes of the May 29 AVTA Board meeting Chairman Carter asks why staff doesn't recommend purchasing Gilligs to replace three 1991 Gilligs slated for replacement in Fiscal Year 2003. Dave Mistik, Contract Compliance manager, replies the new Gillig low floors AVTA currently has spent about 40% of the time in the shop and are having many problems with oil consumption. In further Board discussion of the Gillig situation one option contemplated was retrofitting the Gilligs with 50 series engines

(perhaps at manufacturers' expense via legal action). Oh, what staff did recommend for the replacement coaches was piggybacking on an RTA contract option with North American Bus Industries for delivery in December.

The May-June issue of California Rail News has several articles on the proposed statewide high speed rail network critical of Central Valley track placement, the use of Diablo Pass and cost estimates for a Grapevine crossing. Hard to tell if these will have an impact among opinion leaders.

I'll conclude this month with an addenda to last month's column by noting the quote of Shawn Ryan came from a April 12 L.A. Weekly article by Brendan Bernhard "Behind The Shield". ■

*Editor's Note: This letter was sent to SO.CA.TA via the comments form at <http://socata.lerctr.org/comments.html>*

Did you know that three cars a day are stolen from the MTA red line parking lot?

No? Well, neither did I -- not until it was too late.

I live in North Hollywood. I work in downtown Los Angeles I commute on the MTA's red line.

On Friday, May 24, 2002, my car was locked, alarmed and parked not thirty feet from one of the MTA's so-called "security guards." Someone took the windows out, broke into my car and stole my stereo and all personal property that was locked out of sight (they pried open the locked console with some kind of crowbar). All this in broad daylight.

While reporting it to police I was shocked when they told me I was "lucky" to still have a car because up to THREE cars are stolen every single day from that very lot!

This is horrifying. One to three cars a day stolen! It's like shooting fish in a barrel. I mean, it's nearly impossible to find a parking spot at the red line, and now to discover that if you do find a place to park your car, you may not have a car to return to!

Something has to be done about this. I plan to write to every newspaper, radio station, news program and citizen of Los Angeles if I have to. The MTA can't be allowed to run a little auto-theft ring right in their own parking lot. We need LAPD patrolling those lots at all times. Uniformed police officers are a proven crime deterrent.

If the city of Los Angeles wants my vote against secession, then they need to assure me that my car isn't a sitting target while parked at the MTA station.

If you have any suggestions for who else I can write, I'd really appreciate it.

Thank you for your time!  
Sincerely,  
Laurie Perry ■



## HIGH SPEED RAIL

*To facilitate discussion of whether SO.CA.TA should take a position on the proposed statewide High Speed Rail network we solicited comments from members. Members wishing to submit statements (please limit to 150 words) for publication in a future newsletter can submit them to the Executive Secretary.*

A high-speed rail system connecting the major urban centers of California is an essential part of the future of transportation and sustainable development. High-speed rail is a viable and convenient alternative to air and private auto travel. It requires less land than airports and roadways, reduces air and water pollution, and promotes healthier lifestyles.

The ideal high-speed rail system for the Golden State links San Diego, the Inland Empire, the Central Valley, Sacramento, and San Francisco. While it is essential that the system be developed promptly and appropriately, it should not be a replacement for other modes of alternative transit. Commuter rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit are all an important part of California's infrastructure, and their development should be coordinated with high-speed rail.

It is very important that the State government understand the need for high-speed rail. The system must be embraced by the Federal government, local jurisdictions, and the residents of

California as well. It is the only way to alleviate the growing pressure of medium- and short-distance trips on our fine state's infrastructure.

-David Davenport

I believe that HSR should be very strongly supported on principle. Qualms about particulars on financing, vehicle technology and routing should be carefully noted and a very strong emphasis should be put on having technical questions intensively evaluated by the best technical expertise-- and not in the political arena. But the primacy of a major high-speed ground transportation system connecting the state north to south has to be established with the voters.

What routing should it have between Bakersfield and L.A.? Central Valley and Bay Area?

The Grapevine segment is a vexing one. Believe the state and the transportation system would be best served by a route taking the most direct route to Bakersfield (i.e. the Grapevine) and not detouring through the Antelope Valley. Should address the Antelope Valley (and perhaps the Inland Empire as well) with aggressive upgrades in commuter rail, reminding those constituencies that that service format is likely to be more responsive to the finer-grain needs of development-- without overwhelming communities.

Strongly advocate for going up the east side of the Great Central Valley, reinforcing existing concentrations of development.

(I don't have that keen a feel as to all of the issues involved in the approaches to the Bay Area and Sacramento. Maybe

leave that to those advocate groups?)

Should we instead concentrate on upgrading existing intercity rail services?

Emphatically: We need to do both. Existing commuter rail is vital and needs to be grown. It will be an essential feeder to the HSR hub at Union Station. It will probably be the vital response to the Inland Empire and the Palmdale communities. The LOSSAN corridor is going to need both the commuter rail and the Amtrak service formats to complement a HSR link.

But build the link to the Bay Area first, because there is no truly viable link now and the needs of the Central Valley to be connected right are pressing. After the Bay Area link, then Sacramento, then San Diego, then the Inland Empire.  
-- Jeff Carpenter

I encourage So.Ca.T.A. members to support California high-speed rail. If new rail lines will get some of the trains their own right-of-ways, that would be the best way to do it. As freight traffic has picked up, and from some of my recent travels on commuter and Amtrak routes along Union Pacific, on time reliability has become a problem.

Also, I feel that building a right-of-way for passenger only use is desperately needed between Bakersfield and Los Angeles, not over Union Pacific's twisting, winding route over the Tehachapis. I think one Surfliner branch route extension that might be worth trying would be to run a couple of trains between Santa Clarita and San Diego. Even if Metrolink could run a Sunday night train to Lancaster from Los Angeles (or even Glendale straight out

of the yard), I am sure it will draw a good crowd if it connects from the last northbound Surfliner to Santa Barbara.

This is no time to lay back. A larger voter turnout could help make good things happen for transportation. No project or initiative is going to be 100% perfect, but getting something is better than saying "no" and leaving things broken as is.  
-- Steve Crosmer, SO.CA.TA co-founder

I strongly support the proposed statewide high speed rail (SHSR) network and urge SCTA to join with other groups in behalf of SHSR - to improve society for us/our children. Rationale:

Save time. Though flight times LA-to-No. CA are fast, total time used must be considered: We should include traffic home- or office-to distant airport, parking, baggage clearance, loading/unloading planes (typically through only one door), etc. And we all have been stalled for hours by Tule fog. We certainly shouldn't drive.

Reduce pollution. Today we have sickening fumes from planes delayed on ground with engines running while waiting for take-off clearance or landing gate availability, or circling while fog or clouds clear, plus the auto exhausts while slowed /from distant airport.

Grow CA economy. East access from SO.CA to Sacramento, San Jose and San Francisco, plus to expanding central valley cities, will help speed up the States' economy.

A rapid N-S railroad will help us all. It is worth the investment for CA's future.  
--Frank Forbath



TAOC Newsletter  
(866) 4-SOCATA, ext. 4 or  
info@railadvocates.org

**OVER 1 BILLION SERVED**  
OCTA officials recently celebrated their billionth bus rider at the Fullerton Transportation Center. As Martha Izaguirre of Anaheim stepped off a 43 bus, she was presented with prizes of a year's worth of free groceries, passes to Disneyland, and a lifetime OCTA bus pass. Other riders on the same bus won monthly bus passes, and all bus riders won recognition for the contribution to OCTA's rapid growth.

**NEW ANAHEIM RESORT TRANSIT SERVICE**  
Interesting new service; lots of nice new buses and bus stop signs all over the Anaheim Resort, but its very hard to get information. There is nothing on their website, and nothing on the signs but the route letter and stop number. We had to beg one of their Coach USA drivers for a system map. There are eight routes, none of which go to the Anaheim Stadium train station, the MTA 460 bus stop, or the Airport Bus Terminal. It seems like an improved level of service could have been provided with fewer routes. East Shuttle Area, the driveway next to the main stop for Disneyland, is used by all the routes but not named on any of the maps. Also, it's very hard to know from the cover of the brochure that it is about their new bus system. The brochure indicates that all

buses are clearly marked "Anaheim Resort Transit", but, in fact, there are two types of buses in the system, and one is not marked at all. Some of the new buses are electric- and propane-powered. Fares are \$2 for an all day adult (over age 9) pass, and there seems to be no transfer policy to OCTA or MTA buses. Maps and passes are available at hotels, Disneyland (but where?), the Anaheim Convention Center, and the Anaheim Tourist Information Center (not the Anaheim Visitors Center!), and not on board. Headways are every 10 minutes peak hour, every half-hour otherwise. There are no printed schedules, and when a phone operator was asked, "How can we know when our bus will be by" she answered, "That's a good question!"

**LEISURE WORLD BUS RESTRUCTURING**  
Leisure World bus service underwent a major restructuring this month. Many riders are upset at the new changes. The routes are now known by letter and color rather than number. Bus benches in residential areas are lettered to help residents understand where their bus will pick up. There are three types of fixed route buses: residential, commercial and market. Residential routes take patrons to and from their homes; market buses take residents to destinations like supermarkets, churches/ temples, City Hall and the Community Center; and commercial buses take patrons to shopping, medical and dental facilities. There are two main transfer points: Clubhouse 1 and Gate 12 West. At Gate 12 West, port-a-potties, shelters and benches have been installed for patrons.

**K-MART PLAZA BUS RIDER SURVEY**  
OCTA will be conducting a survey of bus riders at K-mart Plaza to get their input, a

piece of the puzzle currently missing in the sticky situation caused by local residents complaining about too many noisy buses in their neighborhood.

#### DAY PASS SWIPING

OCTA's new fareboxes have caused monthly pass holders to have to swipe their passes instead of the old "flash and go" system. On July 1, Day Pass holders will also have to swipe, further lengthening the boarding process. July 1 will also be the day that monthly passes switch over to the "30 day" pass rather than "calendar month" passes.

#### JUNE BUS BOOK

The June bus book continues the recent tradition of having errors that could easily have been caught prior to publication, and in fact, were. We will be investigating the reasons why corrections submitted to OCTA are not used.

#### NEW OCTA TRIP PLANNER ONLINE

Ready or not, the "Your Trip" itinerary planner is now on the OCTA website. Transtar will still be available for regional and intermodal trips, but "Your Trip" is plugged into OCTA's own Hastus schedule database with the hope of having fewer errors. Our experience shows that there ARE fewer strange routings, some doozies still occur. An extremely annoying feature is a compulsory, time-consuming verification of every single origin or destination (slow even on DSL). To OCTA's credit, they are warning people to expect this verification. On the bright side, there do seem to be fewer errors than with Transtar, and trips can be

planned in 10 minute increments, a major improvement. Also, some routes with detours are designated with "D" (although you need to call a phone operator or go to the Rider's Alert section of the website to find out what the detour actually is).

#### NORTH ORANGE COUNTY CITIES PUSH FOR CENTERLINE

A meeting was held May 28 with the cities of Brea, Fullerton, La Habra, Yorba Linda and Placentia planning to re-ignite the effort to have CenterLine extend to north Orange County. They will also be looking at other ways to improve bus and rail transit, much like the West Orange County cities project.

#### IRVINE GROUP FILES TO PUT ANTI-CENTERLINE INITIATIVE ON BALLOT

Although voters in the City of Irvine are scheduled to vote yes or no on CenterLine after the environmental impact studies are complete, an anti-CenterLine group is filing an initiative to have Irvine voters reject CenterLine as soon as February 2003.

#### METROLINK GRAND OPENINGS: "91 LINE" SERVICE AND LAGUNA NIGUEL/ MISSION VIEJO STATION

Rail Advocates of OC had successful public outreach efforts promoting CenterLine at these two events. OCTA Director Art Brown was kind enough to mention us at Fullerton, and County Supervisor Tom Wilson acknowledged us at the Laguna Niguel event.





## **RIVERSIDE TRANSIT AGENCY**

The Riverside Transit Agency has presented its latest Short Range Transit Plan (S RTP). Planned are a number of proposed service changes, to be made effective March 2003 (or earlier if equipment and drivers can be secured).

A Bus Rapid Transit system (similar to MTA's Rapid Bus) is being considered for the Magnolia Ave corridor in Riverside. This is currently served by RTA's busiest route, the #1.

Peak hour service will be improved on the following routes (some of RTA's busiest)

- #15 (Arlington Av)
- #16 (Riverside-Moreno Valley)
- #29 (Riverside-Rubidoux-Jurupa)
- #49 (Riverside-Mission Bl-Rubidoux)
- #100 (Riverside-San Bernardino Express)

New services include

- Express (Regional Flyer) service between Temecula, Murrietta, Lake Elsinore and Corona

- Express service between Riverside and Montclair Plaza (hello, #496?)
- Express service between Temecula and Escondido (connections to San Diego County transit systems)

- Express service between Sun City, Perris, Moreno Valley and Riverside
  - An additional local fixed route in Hemet
  - A local fixed route running between Corona and El Cerrito (south of Corona)
- A couple of routes will be modified:

- #37 (Hemet-Sun City-Temecula) will be modified to run on only a part of the route (most likely between Sun City and Temecula). But headways will be shorter.
- #39 (service to the mountain communities of Idyllwild, Anza, etc) will be cancelled, and replaced with community-operated services of some sort.

In addition, two new lines, jointly supported by RTA and OCTA, will connect Riverside and Orange Counties:

- #793 will serve the Irvine Business Complex (near MacArthur)
- #794 will serve Hutton Center and South Coast Plaza.

#793/794 will use the toll lanes and other HOV facilities as much as possible.

It is very likely that RTA will approve this S RTP at its June 27 board meeting.