

TRANSIT UPDATES

MTA modified several routes, effective June 30, 2002 Here are the major changes:

- Line 16 - Rerouted to serve Burton Way segment of Line 27 in both directions. Line 27 will be cancelled. Alternate service along San Vicente will be provided via Line 305 (San Vicente Blvd.) and Line 16 (Burton Way and Santa Monica Blvd).
- Line 18 - Cancel service east of Whittier Blvd./Garfield Ave. all day. Service will be provided by Montebello Bus Line 10. MTA Line 18 will be providing service to Uptown Whittier (Philadelphia/Painter) during late night and owl service hours.
- Line 38-71 - Reroute to serve USC/LAC Outpatient Clinic. #605 will be returned to its regular route.
- Line 120 - Reroute service from Wilmington Ave. to Compton Ave. and 120th St at Imperial/Wilmington/ Rosa Parks Station.
- Lines 150-240 and 750 (Rapid) - Minor reroute will be implemented to access the Universal City Metro Red Line Station via the Campo Cahuenga Way Overpass. Bus stops at Ventura Blvd./Riverton Ave. and Lankershim Blvd./Campo de Cahuenga Way will be abandoned.
- Line 161 - Minor reroute to serve Agoura Rd. between Lost Hills and Cheesebro Roads.
- Line 201 - Minor reroute near Goodwin Ave. and San Fernando Rd. to accommodate the closure of Goodwin Ave. to through traffic. All current bus stops will be served.
- Line 243 - Route will be extended via Mason Ave. and Rinaldi St. to serve the Porter Ranch Shopping Center.
- Line 378-379 - Cancel limited stop service. Service to Santa Anita Race Track will be provided by Line 79 temporary schedules.
- Line 625 - Reroute to modify and combine routes A & B. New terminal at Alla & Jefferson. # 626 will serve Aviation

Green Line Station.

- Line 631 - Minor route modification and extension to Kaiser Hospital in Bellflower.

Also, effective September 1, the part of MTA #125 (Rosecrans Bl) east of the I-605 Green Line Station will be turned over to Norwalk Transit; it will become Norwalk #5. All, MTA fare media will be accepted as fare on the new Norwalk line, and there will be a timed-transfer at the Green Line station.

Omnitrans is proposing the following changes:

- Route #66 (Foothill Bl) would serve San Antonio Hospital via Hospital Parkway, 11th Street and Campus, instead of traveling to Arrow, through Euclid and Grove. Additionally, Montclair Plaza will be served via Moreno instead of going into the mall property via Monte Vista Avenue.
- The Inland Empire Connection (IEC), Route 90 will operate on a variable headway, which is based on actual travel times on the freeway, by direction and time period. This variable headway will provide more reliable service to the passengers and reduce the peak vehicle requirement by one vehicle.
- Route 100 is operated jointly with the Riverside Transit Agency (RTA). This route will also be changed to a variable headway to provide more reliable service to the passengers traveling between downtown Riverside and downtown San Bernardino via I-215. In addition, SANBAG and RCTC requested Omnitrans and RTA to operate Route 100 via the Metrolink stations in San Bernardino and Riverside.

The new VVTA commuter service starts July 15, with four peak hour round trips from Victorville to Downtown San Bernardino, and four peak hour round trips to Rancho Cucamonga (for connection with Metrolink).

BULLETIN BOARD

A quick reminder: if you haven't filled out one of the SO.CA.TA surveys (sent out with last month's newsletter), please do so and send it to us. (If you need a new form, call us at 213-388-2364 and request one). Or, you can fill out the survey on our website (<http://socata.lerctr.org/survey.html>). Your response will help determine the direction of SO.CA.TA for years to come!

Also, back issues of The Transit Advocate were sent out to those who requested them. If you are missing any back issues for 2002, please call us at 213-388-2364 or send e-mail to transit@lerctr.org.

At our June 8 meeting the membership voted to endorse Proposition 51 on the Nov. 5 ballot, also known as the Traffic Congestion Relief and Safe School Bus Initiative. Sponsored by the Planning and Conservation League, it will provide significant new funding for public transit (capital and operational monies) plus pedestrian and bicycle oriented projects. For more (including the text) see: <http://www.pcl.org/transportation/summary.html>

Our thanks to Capt. Kenneth Garner of LAPD transit bus policing for an illuminating presentation at our June 8 meeting. We hope to have Jane Matsumoto of MTA discuss the Universal Fare System at our August 10 meeting.

Regretfully Director Anthony Loui has tendered his resignation. A special election to fill the vacancy will be held at the July 13 meeting. Woody Rosner has consented to oversee the nomination and voting process. Also at the meeting orders and deposits will be taken for the new club T-Shirt. Our thanks to Rosner and John Ulloth for their hard work on the shirt over the past year or so.

Tentatively the L.A. area owl trip is scheduled for August 24 and the

exploration of OCTA's new late night and owl service will be Sept. 20/21.

MTA CEO Roger Snoble's appearance before the Pacific Railroad Society has been rescheduled to Friday August 9. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Joslyn Center (Alhambra Room) in Alhambra, 210 N.Chapel Ave. The meeting is free and open to the public.

A community meeting to gather input on Big Blue Bus route 4's extension "demonstration" will be held Tuesday July 23 from 12 noon to 2 p.m. at the Veterans Administration West LA Campus, 11301 Wilshire Blvd., Building 500, James Wadsworth Bldg., Room 6400. Comments can also be submitted by calling customer service - (310) 451-5444 or TDD (310) 395-6024 or e-mail Bus-info@bigbluebus.com

"Fare-Free Mass Transit" is a paper by Prof. John Bachar of the CSULB Mathematics Dept. To request a copy contact him at jbachar@csulb.edu or (562) 985-4724.

A Public Meeting 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 will be held by the Riverside Transit Agency on Wednesday July 24 at 7 p.m. at the Idyllwild Community Center.

Save the date: Railvolution will be held this year Oct.3-6 in Washington, D.C. 800-788-7077 or <http://www.railvolution.com/> for more information.

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.■



Our latest correspondence included letters commenting on the fare proposals of Foothill Transit and the Metropolitan Transit Development Board in San Diego County. We also complimented OCTA on its new late night and owl service to begin in Sept. and congratulated MARTA of Big Bear Lake for recently being named by Metro Magazine one of the 10 most improved agencies. And our letter to NCTD complaining about the Oceanside Transit Center running out of day passes by 10 a.m. on June 1st received a response that immediate action will be taken to correct this situation. The text of some of these letters are posted on the front page of our website: <http://socata.lerctr.org>

Also on the front page are two new informational postings on TEA3 renewal (the multi-year federal transportation funding legislation) and a compilation of significant regional transportation project and study websites.

At our last meeting one of our members tipped me they had read in the Pasadena Star News that the City of Pasadena was exploring seeking regional transit formula funding for an expanded ARTS system. Had an interesting conversation with Cathi Cole, Transportation Manager for Pasadena, about this. Turns out two reports on the topic [items 7.B.(2) and 7.B(3)] were presented to the Pasadena City Council at

its June 3 meeting (the reports in Acrobat format can be downloaded at http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/councilagenda/council_agenda_02.asp by clicking June 3 highlights and the applicable agenda item). Attaining "included operator" status is a long, arduous process with the first step being the preparation of a Short Range Transit Plan. We are certainly going to keep an eye on this process.

Dud of the month: the 222 page Five Year Infrastructure Report released by the State Dept. of Finance which as the June 28 edition of Political Pulse notes rubber stamps the Governor's Congestion Relief Program and the State Transportation Improvement Plan process while ducking the issue of unfunded needs: <http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/capoutly/CapOutlay02.pdf>

The situation at Access Services, Inc. (ASI) just continues to worsen. "Under the current service model, Access Services is estimated to run out of funding in mid-April 2003" (item #13, June 17 ASI Board meeting). Meanwhile the MTA Board at its May 23 meeting requested ASI keep services unchanged for six months. But the new fares (\$1.80 for up to 19.9 miles, \$2.80 for 20+ miles) will go into effect August 3.

Meanwhile ASI staff are exploring various funding options though few promise early relief of their budget problems. Adding to their woes are comments by Michael Winter, Director of the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights to ASI Board member Joel Ring that even supplemental same-day services must meet ADA requirements as to fare, etc. This may well mean if ASI offers any services beyond strict compliance with ADA it risks bankruptcy. Can it get worse? How about ASI CEO Richard de Rock announcing

his resignation as of July 3 to take a job in Seattle (ostensibly to relocate his children to a more congenial environment)? At this juncture, who would want the job?

With no fanfare Councilman John Fasana of Duarte appointed himself an alternate to the Metrolink Board just prior to the expiration of his term as MTA Board Chair. Fasana also appointed as an alternate fellow MTA Boardmember Beatrice Proo of Pico Rivera. This was made possible by bumping former alternates Nate Brogin (San Fernando Valley bigshot) and Palmdale Mayor James Ledford.

NIMBY of the month: Gavin Herbert of San Clemente who has raised \$40,000 for a campaign against double tracking along the beach per the June 24 L.A. Times ("Growth Demands Are Shaking a Sleepy San Clemente Awake").

Last month I expressed concern that the proposed replacement bus plaza for the Wilshire/Vermont Red Line station will be cramped. Faithful Reader informs me at an MTA Committee meeting member Allison Yoh said she had concerns about that site until she visited it and noted the lack of traffic on Shatto. Faithful Reader noted to me Yoh obviously hadn't contemplated what the traffic situation in the area will be like after the school and mixed use development are built. Oy!

Remember the problems AVTA was having with their new Gillig low floors I mentioned last month? Interestingly in the May 29 Board meeting minutes Contract Compliance Manager Dave Mrstik states all the agencies he has spoken to with the same equipment "have had some problems". And in fact the

Foothill Board May 24 minutes include this statement: "...the manufacturers have been advised that if a timely resolution is not reached on the turbocharger engine problems affecting 77 buses, Foothill Transit will appropriate funds to resolve the problems and seek reimbursement". Could this be the same problem AVTA is grappling with?

SCAG has entered into a "Western States Maglev Alliance" with the California-Nevada Super Speed Train Commission which is attempting to build a maglev that would eventually go from Las Vegas to Anaheim. They have cross-endorsed their respective maglev projects and begun coordinating their advocacy for federal funds. Now the Nevada group is approaching OCTA and the San Bernardino Associated Governments along with the cities of Anaheim, Ontario and Victorville to contribute \$125,000 to aid further study of the trans-Desert line. Words fail me.

I'll conclude this month by noting how tired I am of grandstanding politicians. Senator Alarcon recently made a big fuss when he amended SB 18 to give any new San Fernando Valley city a seat on the MTA Board. Only to let the provision be stripped when no cameras were present. Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky at the June 27 MTA Board meeting introduced a motion about treatment of janitors in a building MTA leases space in. If Zev believes laws are being violated why doesn't he call the police instead of requesting "MTA communicate its concerns to the building owner ... and report back to the MTA Board at the July Board meeting"? ■



Santa Monica's long-awaited transit mall was dedicated June 22nd, 2002 with a "street party" downtown and on the Pier, and free Big Blue Bus rides. Some riders, ignoring drivers' instructions, searched for coins until noticing the fareboxes taped-shut. Drivers were pleased with faster boardings, despite full seats (rare Saturdays), 8 standees outbound! After ceremonies, Santa Monica Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McKeon, MTA board's Pam O'Connor (+ mom), & Big Blue Bus officials were



spotted checking out the system. Big Blue Bus employees, stationed at most transit mall stops(Santa Monica Boulevard, Broadway, & 4th Streets), lured pedestrians onto the busses, and distributed maps & regalia.



A not-quite-as-Big Blue Bus- a Thomas- enters the Bus-Only lanes closest to the sidewalk- a grooved concrete paving (contrasting with blacktopped streets) that defines the streetside edges of the transit mall.



Not quite your living room, but the Transit Mall features substantial street furniture, tile mosaics, interactive video monitor/ trip planners and trellises that might be thought of as doorways to busses. Through the last decade of improvements, Santa Monica has transformed nearly every aesthetic element of its downtown streetscapes, making them noticeably more transit- bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly, while thoughtful urban planning has added value to the private sector cityscape beyond the sidewalk. ■

Philip D. Capo and John Ulloth, with Downey's mayor Burkens (center-right), and city clerk (a DowneyLINK-to-MTA Green Line commuter)



Over 150 turned out June 29th--elected officials (Lucille Roybal-Allard front row 2nd from left), transit operators, historical society members, Boy Scouts, and the public for the opening of Downey's \$3.2 million Transit Center. Funding came from Proposition A, 8 a state fund from oil spill fines.



DowneyLINK's operators line up with General Manager Judie Smith (2nd from right) in front of a new Orion bus that will see service July 1st. MV Transportation operates DowneyLINK, a weekdays-only 4-route system whose last trip leaves Downey's Transit Center at 5:45p.m. Headways are 40 to 45 min.



The transit center occupies the site of the 1888 . Southern Pacific rail station where, according to mayor Burkens, the first passenger train stopped 128 years ago. The mural shows the station, originally built for \$12,000 (demolished in 1968).



One of the center's architects, John Wulfmeyer, points out the brick "backs" of businesses facing Firestone should be oriented to face the Center.■





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

AS THE LEISURE WORLD TURNS

The voice of the consumer was heard, and Leisure World-Laguna Woods dropped its shuttle bus route restructuring plan (Transit Advocate, June 2002). According to their transportation office, they returned to the old route structure after 2 weeks.

DOUBLE TRACK DELAYS

The single track section of the Metrolink Orange County line will remain that way a bit longer. The cities of Santa Ana and Orange have requested yet another continuance, so the Metrolink board put off their vote until July 26th, at the 10am Metrolink board meeting.

NIGHT OWL LOGO-WHAT A HOOT

We got a sneak peak at the new OCTA Night Owl brand, as it appeared on route maps we were proofing for September. It's basically just "Night Owl", though with a vague rendering of an owl's eye in place of the "O". Either that, or a strange looking "U". We definitely appreciate their efforts to publicize the new service.

OCTA PASS/FAIL

July 1st marked the debut of the new OCTA passes. Many delays occurred as riders and drivers got used to the new electronic day passes and the switch from monthly to 30-day passes. Now everyone except single-ride cash passengers has to validate passes on the first use, and then

swipe for each successive use. This has caused substantially increased dwell time on many routes. With the old "flash and go" method, many more people could board quickly. We are hoping OCTA will implement "smart card" technology ASAP to speed boardings.

57 DETOUR, WEEKDAYS ONLY

Construction on Bristol Ave. will re-route the OCTA 57 on weekdays from now until at least September. Buses will instead run on 17th, Fairview and Garden Grove Blvd. to The City Drive.

DETOUR DEBACLE

California Police and Fire Games scheduled a series of bike races on Father's Day, June 16th, in downtown Santa Ana. Many streets were closed, which caused the main bus terminal to close, as well. This was a major interruption to our core transit population, inconveniencing thousands of bus riders. Information on reroutes was not easily available. We later found out that a total of less than 40 bicyclists participated in the races, so OCTA will now more closely follow proposed major service interruptions.

IRVINE ANTI-CENTERLINE INITIATIVE

We have initiated a strategy for dealing with the anti-CenterLine initiative, but are waiting to see if anything comes up soon with OCTA or the City of Irvine. Come to our next Irvine meeting to learn more. Also, let us know if you can volunteer.

Date: July 17, 6-8 pm (Third Wednesdays) Spectrumotion office at the Irvine Transportation Center, Suite 200 (closest train station office to taxi area)

NEW: FREE LAGUNA SHUTTLES

Member Jay Laessi of Auto-Free Orange County (www.auto-free.net) informs us that for the first time ever, the Laguna

Beach summer shuttles will be free to the public. There are no printed schedules, as they run on "continuous service" from 9:30 am to 11:30 pm daily, through September 1. The north and south PCH routes run every 30 minutes, and the Laguna Canyon route runs every 20 minutes. All shuttles transfer at the

downtown Laguna Transit Center/ Bus Depot, which also serves regular Laguna buses, OCTA 1 and 89, and the Amtrak Thruway bus. The city council decided to cover the cost of running the shuttles this year, in order to encourage more people to use the system.

SO.CA.TA T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE--ACT NOW!

SO.CA.T.A.'s new aqua-on-white cotton T-shirts, incorporating our logo in the design chosen by members, will arrive in August. You must bring \$15 with you to the July 2002 meeting to reserve for delivery at the August meeting.

*Unable to attend? 1) Print your name & delivery address, 2) state quantity & sizes wanted (Small thru 4X), 3) make a check payable to SO.CA.T.A. for \$15 per shirt + \$2.25 per order for shipping/ handling, 4) mail to SO.CA.T.A. (use the return address on this newsletter); **your check must arrive and clear our bank before July 15th, 2002.** At the discretion of the regalia committee and the board, an extra-cost option for a subsequent order for those who want a shirt with a pocket may be discussed at the July meeting.*

(Unlike the 3-color "member shirt", this T-shirt was meant to be simple and a fundraiser).

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Woody Rosner, Dana Gabbard, Charles Powell and Lionel Jones attended the June 12 Foothill Transit fare restructuring meeting at the Pomona Regional Transportation Depot.

Charles Hobbs on June 20th attended the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments unmet transit needs meeting. His comments concerned how intercity service could satisfy the 20% farebox recovery requirement.

Dana Gabbard and Ken Ruben attended the Opening Ceremony at the June 22 Street Party on the Promenade celebrating the opening of the Santa Monica Transit Mall. Afterward they availed

themselves of the free rides Big Blue Bus was offering that day to ride a parking shuttle (the latest buses with contour seats) plus lines 4, 13 and 12. John Ulloth and Robert Meinert also came to the Party.

Gabbard and Ruben plus Bart Reed participated in Caltrans' scoping meeting on the Union Station Run-Through Track Project June 24.

Reed, Jane Reifer and Mark Strickert spoke at the June 28 Metrolink Board meeting in support of the proposed Santa Ana Second Main Track Project.

Chris Flescher is quoted in the June Western Rail Passenger Review regarding the status of trolley construction at San Diego State University. ■

AMTRAK COMMENTS

This month we solicited comments from members regarding the situation at Amtrak, especially implications for regional and inter-city transportation

Yes I'm very concerned as to the fate of Amtrak not just because I'm planning a trip to Grand Canyon in September (on Amtrak of course). I feel Amtrak is getting shafted by the government -they don't seem to realize that Rail travel is an excellent way to travel.. and the government doesn't seem to know that in a lot of cities Amtrak is the contacting carrier for the local commuter train service .. this would of course affect commuter train travelers.. I also feel that Congress made a very bad mistake when said Amtrak must make a profit by the year 2002 -this is a impossible task..and not ask for subside from the Government now every other transportation company does get subsidized by the

Government yet not Amtrak? Now come on!

--Mark Panitz

General George S. Patton said "Always have a plan B" and this is exactly my thoughts on the possible shut-down of Metro-link, The agency in charge should get the ball rolling and make these Amtrak employee's full time Metro-link employees until the time that a new contractor can take over and or the contract can be put up for bid. A while back I read that Herzog Construction Co. not only builds rail lines but that they also operate rail systems. If this is the case Metro-link should hook up right away and get something going and not to wait for "an act of congress" Another thing that Patton said was " To command an army well a general must think of nothing else." This is what the C.E.O.'s at Metro-link must do!

--Jerome H. Weymouth ■

WILSHIRE BLVD RAIL

I was reviewing the Wilshire corridor as I rode the rapid recently and outlined some key points:

The Orange line was planned to run to Santa Monica after the fairfax plan was cut, however when the red line began running past the Vermont juncture point, it was not called the Orange line. The newly formed coalition for the red line should be Friends for the Orange Line.

A less expensive alternative should be explored, an el for example. Having visited Chicago, I noted that els didn't have significant impact to the environment, however, they won't fly politically in a dense urban environment such as LA. Hahn hasn't expressed interest in them.

The environment in the free flowing sections of Wilshire include wide empty sidewalks aided by auto only entrances to most businesses, known as the "Mundane Mile". The 720 transports people through with few boarding or alighting in the region, mass packed, justifying mass transit to move people through this popular corridor.

MTA identified mass rapid transit for this corridor in its long range plan in 2001, after the amendment prohibiting subway construction. Given this information, we can also look at ways to mitigate areas that don't want MRT, such as Beverly Hills. Pico can be utilized as an el, as ridership justifies it, if necessary to avoid costly delays. We should push now for funding , and to change policy for MRT where ridership demands it.

--Robert Meinert ■