

TRANSIT UPDATES

Late-night service on the three Metro Rail lines will be extended as follows:

- Metro Blue Line: service both north- and southbound will be extended for one hour (e.g. last through train leaves LA at about 11:20, rather than 10:20).
- Metro Red Line: service leaving North Hollywood to LA will be extended for one hour. Service along the Wilshire/Western segment will be extended for 40 minutes
- Metro Green Line: Eastbound service (from Redondo Beach) will run 20 minutes later, while westbound service (from Norwalk) will run 10 minutes later.

In December 2002, look for two new Rapid Bus routes, serving Vermont and South Broadway.....

Effective Oct 28, the Montalvo Metrolink station (near Ventura) will open; the two round trips that currently serve Oxnard will be extended to Montalvo. Also, the North Main Corona station will open on the Inland Empire-Orange County and 91 Lines. This station is closer to Downtown Corona than

the existing West Corona station.

New schedules will be issued for all Metrolink trains effective Oct 28. No new trains, but lots of little schedule changes to accommodate new stations, etc. Your train may leave up to 10 minutes early, so get a schedule!

Effective Sept 22, there are new schedules for Montebello #10 (more late night service) and #50 (Saturday service)

Also, minor changes to Riverside Transit Authority routes #1,16,18,21,22,24,27, 33,36,42,49,99,100,149 and the Jefferson St. Shuttle

The Nextbus system has been implemented in Ventura County. This system lets passengers waiting at stops know when their bus is about to arrive. The bus times can also be viewed at <http://www.nextbus.com>

bulletin board, from page 3)

The Southern California Association of Governments' Regional Transit Task Force is requesting input as it works on a recommendation for a transit growth plan as part of the Regional Transportation Plan revision. Its next meeting will be on Tuesday Oct. 15 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 818 W. 7th St. (15th floor) in downtown Los Angeles. Further information: (213) 236-1926 or mierrick@scag.ca.gov

Member Ken Ruben informs us the Los Angeles Museum of Railroading [<http://www.lamor.org>] the evening of October 31st is having a dinner at Philippe's (near Union Station) beginning at 5:00 a.m. followed by a lecture on Metrolink's 10th Anniversary. For an invitation contact Josef K. Lesser of LAMOR: jlatsf@earthlink.net or (323) 931-6757.

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. ■

BULLETIN BOARD

At our Sept. 14 meeting Rex Gephart of MTA gave an informative presentation on the Metro Rapid program and its status. The November 9 meeting will feature Bob Huddy speaking on community based transit.

Items on the agenda for our Oct. 12 meeting include consideration of advocating for transit service to the Cascade Business Park in Sylmar and having bus service between Santa Clarita and the San Fernando Valley. Also we will discuss a invitation to SO.CA.TA made by the American Public Transit Association to join a coalition APTA is organizing of transit advocacy groups from around the country who support increasing federal investment in public transportation.

At our November meeting nominations will be accepted for 2003 officers and directors. All candidates will be offered the opportunity of submitting a 50 word statement which will be disseminated to our members prior to the December meeting at which the elections will be held. In this mailing will also be included a copy of the current bylaws.

We have submitted to MTA and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce our nomination of Congressman Adam Schiff to be the recipient of the first Julian C. Dixon Award for reviving the Pasadena light rail project via the creation of a joint powers authority. This award will be given at the Nov. 18 transportation summit in downtown Los Angeles.

Details for the aforementioned summit are still being finalized - as soon as they are available we will post them on our website. Among other issues we have raised is the possibility of scholarships to help fund attendance by advocates.

Palm Springs has been picked as the destination of our annual day after

Thanksgiving trip. Lionel Jones is handling the trip planning and an itinerary will be in the November newsletter.

Save the date: Saturday Dec. 14 will be our annual holiday dinner at Colonial Buffet in Long Beach. For \$15 participants enjoy a feast, share camaraderie with their fellow transit advocates plus score a bounty of giveaways: trinkets, transit schedules from around the nation and door prizes!

In obtaining schedules for the Dec. event in some cases properties sent bulk copies of timetables or system booklets. These will be made available on a first come basis at our Oct. 12 meeting.

T-shirts are still available for \$20 each. Available sizes include Medium, Large, Xtra-Large, 3XL and 4XL. Quantities are limited so order today or pick one up at our Oct. 12 meeting.

At our April meeting the following motion was passed regarding action items at our monthly meetings: "That if any member wishes to bring an item to the attention of the membership meeting, they must do so by contacting an officer with[in] a time-frame or before a deadline set by the board to lock down the agenda for that meeting". Also unless an item is urgent general practice is to have it tabled until the following meeting to facilitate careful consideration, research, etc. by members in deciding how to vote.

As it grapples with financial challenges Access Services, Inc. (Los Angeles County's regional ADA paratransit service coordinator/provider) is holding public meetings to seek input. Further details: (213) 270-6104 or <http://www.asila.org>

Dedication of Foothill Transit's new Operations and Maintenance facility will be held Friday Oct. 11 at 10 a.m. at the facility, 5640 Peck Road in Irwindale.
(continued on pg. 2)

PUBLIC & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Dan Gabbard
(dgabbard@hotmail.com)

I was bemused at the near hysteria (especially in coverage of the Daily News) that greeted the MTA Board passing Supervisor Yvonne Burke's motion regarding extending the Red Line west under Wilshire. One might have thought the tunnel boring machine was poised at Western Avenue awaiting merely the signal to be given before its drill plates begun rotating. Sadly nowhere in the coverage was any attention given to what Supervisor Burke's motives were in making the motion. I've heard unsurprising murmurings: the hope is this maneuvering results in the Wilshire and Expo projects stymieing each other's funding, providing an opening for Burke's often thwarted Crenshaw light rail ambitions.

Sadly the most important action taken at the September MTA Board meeting received no media coverage. Vice President Kymberleigh Richards on our behalf made public comments that consideration be given to include transit users among the members of the Sector Governance Councils. To her great credit Supervisor Gloria Molina took up the cause and made a motion that half of the Council members be transit users. Board chair Hal Bernson in eloquent comments noted that since the purpose of the councils is to provide input on service quality the logical candidates for membership are transit users, who are the most familiar with the service and therefore best able to provide useful input.

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky showed his

true colors by trying to limit participation by transit users in the councils to 1/3, arguing instead for local elected officials to constitute the majority of the councils. To their credit this attempt to politicize the councils was rebuffed by the other board members and the Molina motion easily passed.

I have already submitted to MTA CEO Roger Snoble a letter suggesting a possible procedure by which transit users can seek nomination to the Sector Councils (essentially by a process similar to that used to select members of the currently moribund Passenger Advisory Councils). We will keep our L.A. County members apprised of how they can seek to serve on the Council in their sector as this information becomes available.

consent decree facts of the month: MTA has paid to date \$4.7 million for the legal expenses of the Bus Riders Union. Decree critic Frank Bettger in a Sept. 30 letter to the Daily News states this includes the attorneys for the Bus Riders Union receiving \$350 per hour, and further that Special Master Donald Bliss now has under review their request for an increase to \$425 per hour (retroactive to January 2001).

Oct. 2 the Public Utilities Commission by a 3-2 vote rejected the appeal of NOBLAG and the Mt. Washington Association of its previous approval of all Gold Line grade crossings. With the July 2003 opening impending it appears this closes the final chapter of their long NIMBY campaign.

Jerry Meral and his Proposition 51 seems to be the new favorite whipping boy of our representatives in Sacramento. Frankly I see this as a reaction against Meral outing the legislature as ineffective in dealing with the infrastructure crisis. And unsurprisingly the reaction has been to shoot the messenger instead of admitting Meral merely took advantage of a policy gap whose cause can be laid at the feet of the Legislature.

scare of the month! Tom Rubin gave me a fright by posing the question whether MTA wasn't due soon to commence the process of drafting a new Long Range Plan. Even on Halloween I would restrain myself from making such a terrifying comment. Be afraid! Be very afraid!

Access Services, its clients and the MTA continue their whirl of activity in seeming hope to avoid fiscal reality. But even if service changes can be staved off for this current fiscal year trends portend that sooner rather than later service changes will have to be instituted. The situation is untenable.

Metro Investment Report in its September issue interviews Roger Cohen of the Air Transport Association about Mayor Hahn's LAX proposal. Much as Dan Garcia had in the previous issue Cohen heavily criticizes the proposal, which I think leaves its status very much (no pun

intended) up in the air. The interview can be read online: <http://www.ablinc.net/mir/archive/sep2002d.html>

Change Links [<http://www.change-links.org/>] in its October issue lists several appearances by Eric Mann regarding his attendance at various international conferences on sustainability and racism. Wonder if this sort of junketing is what his donors had in mind when they gave?

I'll conclude by noting AAA has joined the discussion of the future of transportation with a report titled "The Quiet Crisis - Transportation and Mobility in Southern California". A copy is being sent to me and I'll evaluate it in this column next month. Those with net access can read it also (in Acrobat format): <http://www.aaa-calif.org/members/corpinfo/qc/quietcrisis.asp> ■

MEMBERS IN ACTION

J.K. Drummond, Bart Reed and Juanita Dellomes attended the Sept. 9 Transportation Summit in Carson sponsored by Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald.

Kymberleigh Richards' op-ed "MTA's sectors plan puts people first" appeared in the Oct. 3 Daily News.

Jane Reifer was quoted in the Los Angeles Times Sept. 13 article "Night Owls Catch a Break as OCTA Extends Bus Service". Reifer and Mark Strickert both were quoted in a Sept. 27 Cal State

Fullerton Daily Titan article on the OCTA's new Night Owl service.

Bart Reed and Charles Powell attended a Sept. 2 meeting on the San Fernando Valley North-South Transit Corridor proposal.

Dan Gabbard, Lionel Jones and Isa Meksins attended a Sept. 18 Open House on the US 101 Freeway Corridor Improvement Study in Hollywood.

Dana Gabbard, J.K. Drummond, Mark Strickert and John Carpenter attended the transportation academy training put on by Odyssey Sept. 20-21.. ■

When I first moved to Los Angeles in March of 1986, as I began my tenure of work in the Los Angeles area, I could not visualize how a city the size and magnitude of Los Angeles could have its people commute without a rail system. I thought I was dreaming at first. There was no So.Ca.T.A. at that time, however, after attending a meeting of T.R.A.C. (Train Rider's Association of California) about a year-and-a-half later, there was hot talk at the meeting of a state-wide rail initiative that would bring commuter rail to Los Angeles.

T.R.A.C. finally had its petition drive activated in April of 1989, and I took a modest approach about helping out on my own by securing signatures for

it from friends and neighbors in the immediate area where I lived in Van Nuys in the early going. I then went to Van Nuys' Amtrak station a few times and found support overwhelming! Since that was the case, I knew a gold mine of support had to be waiting at Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal downtown.

I spent many weekends there during the petition drive getting support from not just Los Angeles residents, but the whole state! Friday of Labor Day Weekend was my busiest day as I signed up close to 400 supporters that day. This was about the same time I met our founder, Pat Moser, and had a discussion with him on forming an advocacy group for better public transit in Los Angeles, and he told

METROLINK - THE NEXT 10 YEARS

October 26, 2002 is Metrolink's 10th anniversary. We've all seen it grow from nothing, then just a few round trips a day on three relatively short lines, to a 507-mile rail system carrying 33,000 weekday boardings ... and rising.

How will Metrolink be like in 2012? We asked a few local transit enthusiasts their opinion, and here are some of their replies:

Metrolink has been very successful in getting the Southern Californian out of their car, particularly the suburban Southern Californian. Metrolink has come a long way in many years, in many respects. Perhaps its most miraculous moment was its call to duty in the aftermath of the 1994 Northridge

earthquake, especially how a line that wasn't even *planned* to exist for more than a decade came on-line in a matter of days.

Though as an urbanite, I haven't had the opportunity or the need to ride Metrolink, it's already an accepted mode of transportation; I've heard many a suburbanite mention nonchalantly about "catching the train to work." 10 years ago such a statement was totally unheard of in this part of the world.

In the next 10 years? Metrolink seems to go where it needs to go, although there have been more suburban locales it is slated to expand to (Perris, Victorville, etc).

(continued on Page 10)

me he had a few people in a small unchartered organization known as Los Angeles Transit League. Despite criticisms of the Red Line Metrorail subway, the proposed commuter service was the main thrust of support. At T.R.A.C.'s annual November 1989 meeting, I was informed that I came in first place of all the volunteers in the state to help collect the petition signatures to qualify it for the state ballot in June 1990, as Proposition 116, The California Clean Air and Better Transportation Act.

California voters said "Yes" to Proposition 116, as well as Propositions 108 and 111 that were placed on the ballot by the legislature and Governor George Deukmejian in June of 1990. Three billion dollars worth of bonds were approved, as well as a nine-cent gas tax increase to fund rail projects statewide. The Metrolink commuter service for Los Angeles was the biggest project for southern California in Proposition 116. Within a few months, right-of-ways were acquired, and construction began on stations, signalling systems, and track upgrades. Some track on the San Bernardino line had rails on it dating back to the late part of the 19th century on an old Pacific Electric line. Motive power and equipment were ordered, and a maintenance facility was built just north of downtown near the old Taylor yard.

Finally, at precisely 5:06 AM, on October 26, 1992, train number 100 departed Moorpark for Los Angeles, for the first-ever departure of Metrolink, as it began its regular service operation. Charles Hobbs and I rode on that first

run and founder Pat Moser joined us at Glendale. Charles took a picture of me standing next to my proud accomplishment to improve transportation in Los Angeles. I am glad that I was able to live long enough in Los Angeles to see commuter rail go from nothing to reality, as I moved away in December 1992.

This period in time also marks the 10th Anniversary of the founding of Southern California Transit Advocates. Metrolink's 10th Anniversary goes hand-in-hand with our accomplishments. This is no time to drop our guard though. We have proven the critics were wrong about Metrolink from the start and they will always find excuses to say it won't work. The numbers speak for themselves. I credit the trains for improving the air quality in Los Angeles, I have noticed a bluer sky the last few times I have been there on my visits, and even some traffic relief on the highways that usually becomes outstripped by growth. There is plenty of room for improvements and expansion and a lot more that was on the original plan that still has not been fulfilled. I regret that I cannot be here for this celebration, but I just want to say how proud I am of all our accomplishments of support of better transportation in Los Angeles, and we, at So.Ca.T.A. should take pride in Metrolink's 10th Anniversary. If Pat and I did not help with Proposition 116 and had not found So.Ca.T.A., where would we be for transportation? ■



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

ALL SHOOK UP

The OCTA September service changes brought with them not only the usual confusion but also a crisis in on-time performance. They somehow wound up with many more runs than they had drivers. Several routes, including the 43, 57, 59, 62, and 71, could not keep up with their new schedules.

New and Improved schedules for the 59 and 62 will go into effect on October 14th. Since the schedule tailors had to make so many alterations, OCTA, originally expecting the current Bus Book to last until March, will instead issue a new book in December. The routing changes in downtown Fullerton led to many people standing at former major bus stops that now had little or no service, or which were now served by a 43 now going the opposite direction from before. Both TAOC and OCTA posted directional signs on five of the busiest stops along Chapman Ave.

Adding to the woes, OCTA continues to have trouble with the fueling systems on many of their NABI buses. On some days, as many as 45 of these coaches are down, and some semi-retired old diesel Gilligs and RTSs are getting unexpected extra work. All was not lost...despite too tight a schedule, the new route 62, a "tweener" filling the gap between route 64 on 1st Street and the 60 on 17th, is already proving successful, and the four Night Owl routes are slowly but surely

building a following.

For future considerations, the OCTA March service change hearings will take place on Monday, October 28th, 9:00am, at the Orange County Hall of Administration, across from the Santa Ana Transit Terminal. A few routes will be expanded, including a deviation of the 75 into Tustin Metrolink, and the 82 continuing south to Saddleback College via Antonio and Crown Valley Pkwy. Routes 80 and 173 will be combined into one route from Huntington Beach to South Coast Plaza via Triangle Square in Costa Mesa (no more service on Orange Ave. south of 17th St.). A new StationLink shuttle, the 490, will run west from Laguna Niguel Metrolink into Aliso Viejo and Laguna Niguel...unfortunately, as of yet there is no route map or description to comment upon. The commute-hour 216 and 461 will be discontinued. There will be frequency and span improvements to a number of routes, especially on weekends.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE...OR RIDE?

Transit Advocates of Orange County recently staged a major membership drive, handing out our new brochures at the "Fiesta of the Americas" event in Santa Ana, and at transit centers in Brea, Fullerton, Laguna Hills and Santa Ana. Customers were also surveyed on their concerns. Many riders also needed routings and schedule information, leading us to suggest that OCTA will post knowledgeable ambassadors at major transit centers and seriously affected bus stops before and after service changes. Big thanks to Odyssey and Allison Drucker for help with our project. Also thanks to the organizers of the fiesta, and the very helpful cleaning staff and the Orange County sheriffs at Santa Ana Transit Terminal.

WIN SOME, LOSE SOME

The Amtrak Thruway coaches serving Newport Beach and Laguna Beach are being cancelled, but the current late-night

runs running north from Santa Ana to Bakersfield will now stop in Fullerton.

RAIL ADVOCATES OF ORANGE COUNTY NEWS - Barry Christensen, Mark Strickert
Due to continuing negotiations with the City of Santa Ana, the Metrolink Board will not consider voting on the Santa Ana-Orange double-track project for at least another month. You may keep up to date on this slow-moving story by signing up for the Rail Advocates of Orange County e-mail newsletters at info@railadvocates.org. This is also the place to keep up with the CenterLine changes.

Costa Mesa city councilwoman Libby Cowan announced that their City Council is scheduled to discuss the CenterLine proposal at its meeting on Monday evening, November 18th. City leaders will be gathering input from residents and business owners on a number of proposed scenarios, including a below grade alignment in Costa Mesa. Please contact Rail Advocates to let us know if you can attend this meeting with our group, listen to the public opinion, and respond.

RAOC expects to see two ballot measures put before Irvine voters in 2003 concerning the CenterLine proposal, one from the Irvine City Council and one from anti-CenterLine people, the inappropriately-named "FAIR Transit". Rail Advocates who live, work or study in Irvine can be especially vital participants in our strategy. Please set aside the third Wednesday of October (10/16 from 6 to 8 pm) to attend a meeting at the Irvine Transportation Center, Suite 200, on this crucial topic.

The most recent RAOC meeting featured guest John Byrd, the Director of Rail Operations at OCTA. With federal funding tougher to come by, they are looking more at street running, something most RAOC people disapprove of, not for safety reasons but because of slower, less efficient operations. We also discussed the placement of the proposed Buena Park Metrolink station. We would prefer the station to be at Beach Blvd., a major corridor and a bus-connection-friendly location. It was obvious that Mr. Byrd is extremely knowledgeable about rail systems across the country, and takes his job seriously. We enjoyed his visit!

Come see our booth at Irvine Harvest Festival, October 11-13.

SAD SATT

One more route just got booted out of Santa Ana Transit Terminal, with the 51/Flower joining the 53/Main out on the street. Rumor has it the 53 may come back in, pending tests of re-opening the gate on the 5th St. side of SATT, closed years ago because of pedestrian safety issues.

The information boards at SATT could use some work. The company that replaces them did just that...but used the old schedules! They were unaware that they were to use the current schedules, those found in their other OCTA product, the Bus Book. Thanks to OCTA staffer Mike Greenwood who noticed the schedule discrepancy.

(Metrolink, from page 6)

I also think eventually Metrolink will serve as far as Santa Barbara and San Diego, providing "local" stops in between areas served by Amtrak high speed trains.

More service is inevitable, though adding more stops will slow down train speed somewhat. The word "electrification" has been tossed around many times, though it's realistically a luxury item more than a necessity. Perhaps the busier lines like the San Bernardino Line will be solely electrified, with other lines gradually joining the fray. But for the foreseeable future I don't see Metrolink being totally electrified. Such a task is very expensive and nearly defeats the purpose of Metrolink being a way to provide mass rapid transit for a low capital cost.

-Elson Trinidad

1. More lines, especially the Huntington Beach - Fullerton line that was previously suggested.
2. Service 24 hours a day, seven days a week on all lines, in both directions, with frequencies between 15 minutes and one hour, depending on the time of day. Build more track if necessary.
3. More stations on existing lines.
4. Southern California "Super Pass", good on all forms of transit in the entire L.A. metropolitan area. I would like to see this sell for no more than \$100 per month, \$30 per week and \$5 per day, 50% off for seniors and disabled.
5. Restrooms should be installed at all transit stations whenever possible.
6. Rent space to food vendors (Star Bucks, etc.)

-William Cousert

Since I live in Ridgecrest, I would like to

see the Antelope Valley line extended north from Lancaster to Mojave, with a bus connection to the Eastern Sierra cities (SR14/US395). This could be an Amtrak California line as well.

Once the run-through tracks are built at LA Union Station, there could be continuous run-through service from Oceanside to Mojave.

-Merritt Mullen

I have yet to ride Metrolink. I live in Oxnard, where on weekdays we have only 2 trains outbound in the morning (both leave before 6:30) and 2 in the evening. I have no reason to ride it, not even to attend SO.CA.TA meetings (no service to Ventura County on Saturdays). And because I go to college at Cal Lutheran Univ. in Thousand Oaks, VISTA buses are more direct from Oxnard. I would hope that with the new Ventura-Montalvo station open soon, we'll get more trains out here. Nevertheless, I have a somewhat favorable view of the agency.

-Michael Divindo

