

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

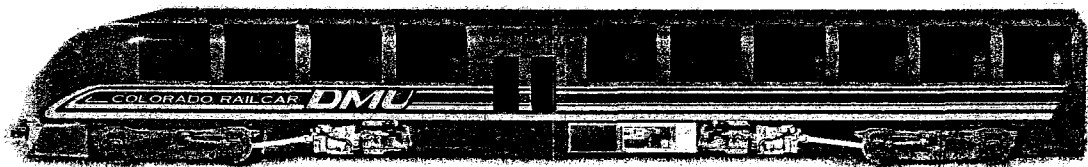
Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates

November 2002

MTA LIBRARY

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ONE GATEWAY PLAZA
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NEW F.R.A. COMPLIANT D.M.U. TOURING U.S.

Colorado Railcar's \$2.9 million, 1200 h.p. Diesel Multiple Unit (D.M.U.) is on tour; member Bart Reed boarded one at Railvolution 2002 in Washington, D.C. It's F.R.A.-compliant (approved to interline with all Mainline rail service), filling a long-vacant niche for low-budget start-ups, Branch line & feeder service like the Coaster's Escondido Line. It may tour Los Angeles, Riverside & San Diego in February. Several configurations – Aero (shown), low floor, bi-level, & seating options from leather to fiberglass are available. www.coloradorailcar.com

■ text by John Ulloth

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TRANSIT UPDATES

New bike rules for the Metro Rail (Red, Blue and Green Lines), effective November 4:

- Permits are no longer required, just bring your bike on board
- During morning rush hour (6:30-8:30 a.m., weekdays), bikes are not allowed:
 - a. on the Metro Blue Line, going northbound (toward Downtown LA)
 - b. on the Metro Green Line, going eastbound (toward the LAX Airport and Redondo Beach)
 - c. on the Metro Red Line, between Union Station and Wilshire/Vermont, either direction
- During evening rush hour (4:30-6:30 p.m., weekdays), bikes are not allowed:
 - a. on the Metro Blue Line, going southbound (toward Long Beach)
 - b. on the Metro Green Line, going eastbound (toward Norwalk)
 - c. on the Metro Red Line, between Union Station and Wilshire/Vermont, either direction

There are no restrictions at all on weekends and holidays. So enjoy the ride.

There have been some recent changes in LADOT DASH routes:

- DASH Northridge now operates south to Sherman Way instead of Roscoe
- DASH Chatsworth has been reduced to a peak-hour only service, with five trips leaving the Northridge Metrolink in the morning, and returning there in the evening. DASH Chatsworth no longer serves the Chatsworth Metrolink station, either.
- DASH Chesterfield Square starts at Slauson/Western, then via Slauson, Hoover and Florence to the Florence Metro Blue Line station, then loops via Gage, Pacific, and Nadeau/Broadway. Service is provided on weekdays (7 a.m.-6:30 p.m.) and Saturdays (9 a.m.-6:30 p.m.)
- DASH King/East connects the area along MLK Bl. just southeast of Downtown LA principally via 23rd, Washington (serves the San Pedro Blue Line station), Griffith, Central, MLK, and Hill, on a two-way loop routing. Service is provided on weekdays (7 a.m.-7:30 p.m.) and Saturdays (9 a.m.-6:30 p.m.)

(Bulletin Board, from pg. 3)

Alternative Fuel Vehicle Quarterly Newsletter provides news on the status of DaimlerChrysler's Fuel Cell program. To be added to the mailing list contact Angela Hirsch at (248) 944-1268.

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 Nov. 9 meeting nominations will be made for candidates wishing to run for officer or director positions during 2003. Nominees will have an opportunity to submit a 50 word statement (by Nov. 15) to the Executive Secretary for distribution to members. The election will be held at our Dec. 14 meeting. After the election members will caravan to Long Beach for our annual Holiday Buffet event at the Colonial Buffet beginning at 5 p.m.. Cost to attend is \$15 and can be paid the day of the event.

We have learned of an opportunity to apply for a grant from the American Public Transit Association to fund a campaign next year on TEA21 reauthorization. The deadline for submittal is early December. We will be convening an ad hoc planning group after our Nov. 9 meeting to work on this. To accommodate this Mr. Bob Huddy has graciously consented to reschedule his presentation on community based transit for our Jan. 2003 meeting.

Monday Nov. 18 MTA and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce are co-sponsoring a transportation summit for Los Angeles county: Mobility 21: LA County Moving Together. This will be held at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in downtown Los Angeles (adjacent to 7th/Metro Red Line/Blue Line station) from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

This event is the first step in building regional consensus among stakeholders to support advocacy efforts by a unified area Congressional delegation during the impending TEA21 reauthorization. Morning and afternoon breakout sessions will deal with key issues (funding, coalition building, etc.) while prominent officials will speak during various portions of the event.

Cost is \$99 (\$125 after 11/8) and can be

paid with Visa, Master Card or American Express. Checks should be made out to 'Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce'. Fee includes continental breakfast, lunch and evening reception.

Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Mobility 21 Registration
350 S. Bixel St.
Los Angeles CA 90017

(213) 580-7565
(213) 580-7511 [fax]

or register online:
http://www.lachamber.org/events/calendar?func=profile&event_id=506

confirmation will be via e-mail; badges will be held at the door, please have a picture ID for badge pickup.

Interested SO.CA.TA members in Los Angeles County who wish to serve on the Sector Council where they live or work should contact their city clerk's office, Council of Governments or County Supervisor regarding being nominated. I'll be glad to assist members through the process. Further information about the sectors is on the MTA website:
http://www.mta.net/board/service_sectors/

The website
<http://www.friends4theredline.com> has had a complete upgrade with many additions of interest.

The latest exclusive web only feature on our website is So.CA.TA Co-founder Steve Crosmer's opinion piece on San Fernando Valley succession:
<http://socata.lerctr.org/scstmt1002.html>

The next Eastside light rail Review Advisory Committee meeting will be held Thursday Nov. 14 from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. at Ramona High School, 231 Alma Ave. in Los Angeles. For further information:
(213) 922-3023 (to pg. 2)

PUBLIC & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Dana Gabbard
(dgabbard@hotmail.com)

In an outrageous power grab the San Gabriel Council of Governments tried to politicize the new MTA Sector Councils by pressing to have the Sector Council in their area enlarged to 14 members, all of whom would be politicians or political appointees (item #34, Oct. 24 MTA Board meeting). Thankfully MTA Boardmember John Fasana of Duarte had the foresight to pull this item. Kymberleigh Richards in her comments asked why the San Gabriel valley needed a Council with more members than the MTA Board. Kym also noted the attempt to politicize the Councils when the previous month the MTA Board firmly took a stand against doing so. To his great credit Chairman Bernson declared he was standing by his prior commitment that half the sector councils would be composed of transit users.

I found the Auto Club of Southern California's report "The Quiet Crisis: Transportation and Mobility in Southern California" a bit schizophrenic. Many of its recommendations seem half-hearted, built on vague summaries of transportation research and policy developments occurring during the past decade. One often searches in vain for specifics or examples of new initiatives that would carry forward their recommendations. Why in discussing new roads is no mention made of the innovative Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process in Riverside County?
[<http://www.rcip.org/transportation.htm> or

877 735-RCIP] It could be a model for dealing with the pressure to build new roads in north L.A. county. How can one seriously take the assertion on page 19 that we should consider in urban environments "...additional freeway levels below-grade and urban vehicle tunnels" on the thin justification "[They] are likely to be expensive, but not providing additional capacity will be more so". Also troubling is the mantra that 'performance measures' comparing potential investments across modes should prioritize spending (pages 12, 36). Determining cost/benefit for the automobile is problematic. Even the report stumbles over the negatives of car use (traffic deaths, social equity) and often prescribes simplistic solutions to gloss over their seriousness. I am struck how more than once the primacy of the auto in the hierarchy of transportation is reasserted ("...the backbone of mobility" p.10). Perhaps this reflects the current diminished state of the Auto Club. AAA once wielded vast influence over transportation policy, working hand in hand with Highway Departments and politicians in its pursuit of massive road construction/expansion. Now phrases like "bottlenecks" and "road management" are its stock in trade. Cassandra-like it speaks of a crisis and predicts "Southern California must have additional road capacity" (p.11). Yet it seems often clueless, offering politically untenable recommendations such as privatization of public transit (p.32) and road design (p.37). One ends with sense of AAA being a helpless giant, pitiful amidst its crumbling kingdom. I do agree with the report that pavement maintenance should be a priority. And some of the funding proposals in the final chapter are intriguing. But the overall sense one has of this key player in the dialogue regarding the future of our transportation system is disturbing. The report is on the Auto Club's website: <http://www.aaa-calif.com/members/corpinfo/qc/quietcrisis.asp> or request a copy by calling (714) 885-2300.

Hank Dittmar is expanding his Great American Stations Foundation into a transit oriented development clearinghouse. This includes information gleaned from the study of past TOD projects and their perceived success or failings: <http://www.transittown.org/>

Quote of the month: "Fully funding federal education reforms enacted in January, grade separations for the Alameda Corridor-East project and the extension of the Gold Line light rail to Claremont" Congressman Adam Schiff on his top priorities, Oct. 23 Pasadena Star News.

Ho hum, the BRU is holding yet another rally Nov. 14 at L.A. City Hall. This entails activating the phone bank at BRU Central entreating anyone whose phone number they have collected over the years to come and join the historic struggle of the underclass. The sad thing is Mann's perpetual protest strategy has been getting diminished returns - his last few rallies have garnered spare if any media coverage. About all they are achieving is recommitting the troops to the cause. And I wonder whether the number of true believers who respond to the call to action isn't also dwindling over time.

Chris Flescher has brought to my attention that the University of Akron Press is about to release "Transport of Delight: The Mythical Conception of Rail Transit in Los Angeles" by Jonathan E. D. Richmond. I am hoping to obtain a copy and review it in a future newsletter.

The El Monte Station and adjacent MTA Division 9 Bus yard is the focus of a master-planning effort among key stakeholders: MTA, Foothill, Caltrans, L.A. County Sheriff, and Greyhound. This dovetails with plans the city of El Monte has for its nearby Civic Center. As the proposal will take several years to implement in the interim Foothill will be

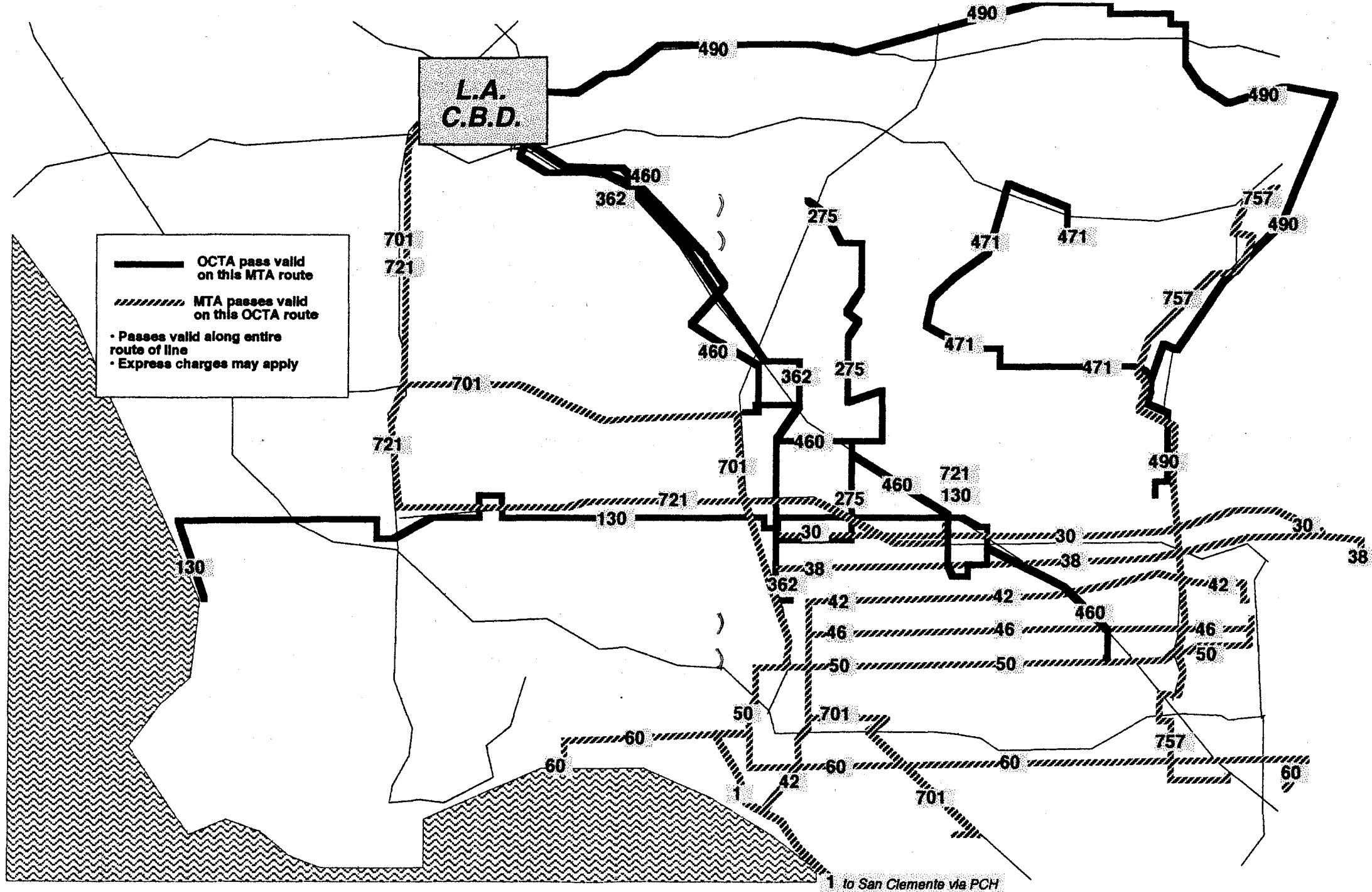
proceeding with a downscaled version of its original plans to rehabilitate the station. This will include remodeling/reopening the transit store, improving the public restrooms and installing electronic arrival signs.

While Norm King of the San Bernardino Associated Governments just about bursts a blood vessel in denouncing Prop 51 and Jerry Meral in the Oct. Metro Investment Report, California Secretary of Resources Mary Nichols in the same issue in a few sentences deflates the ire aimed at Meral by outraged bureaucrats and legislators: "[Meral] probably spent more time vetting this proposition with all of the stakeholder groups and received more input than most measures passed by the Legislature". Amen!

simplistic transportation solution of the month: "By transferring just 25 percent of cargo shipments from highway trucks to freight rail, the savings for commuters will be measured not only in dollars but also in time, money and frustration" -- Wendell Cox ("Putting Freight on Trains Can Ease L.A. Drive", Daily News Oct. 14).

MTA will be holding three planning workshops during Nov. and Dec. to discuss station design and planning for the Exposition Light Rail project. When specific location, dates and times are announced we will place the information on the front page of our website and send a cyber-bulletin to members.

I'll conclude by offering congratulations to Howard Silver, a board member of the Golden Empire Transit District in Bakersfield, on being re-elected to a second one year term as Vice Chair representing transit board members on the American Public Transit Association Executive Committee. Also GET can take pride in the 3rd place finish of operator Felix Teston at APTA's 27th International Bus Rodeo in the 35 foot bus category. Way to go, Howard and Felix! ■





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

WHAT'S FARE IS FAIR

As of November 1st, OCTA and Los Angeles MTA allow use of each other's monthly-type passes, though for now only to get on specific routes. An OCTA 30-day pass can be used as payment of fare on MTA lines 130, 275, 362, and 471, and for a \$1 discount on MTA lines 460 and 490. In turn, MTA monthly pass-holders can now use OCTA routes 1, 30, 38, 42, 46, 50, 60, and 757 for free, and on the 701 and 721 for a \$1.35 discount. (See pg. 6-7 for a map) There is no limitation on which OCTA routes you would use to reach one of the above-mentioned MTA lines, which is good as several obvious OCTA routes were left out of the agreement. For instance, you could use an OCTA 30-Day pass to ride the OCTA 29 to connect with the MTA 130 or 460, but an MTA monthly pass would not be good for taking the MTA 130 and then the OCTA 29. Would be the same for MTA customers for, say, the MTA 60 to the OCTA 60. This all also shows just how wimpy MTA service has gotten in cities bordering Orange County.

The agreement is specific to MTA monthly passes...the weeklies are not involved. And yes, no separate agreement has yet been announced regarding Los Angeles County's EZ Pass. OCTA may eventually become a part of either EZ Pass, or maybe some regional smart card debit system, but differences in funding sources alone will make the negotiations

long and, uh, interesting.

MARCH 2003 PUBLIC HEARING

About 10 members of the public attended and gave input. Many of the comments pertained to service improvements needed in areas that weren't addressed in the public hearing notice. OCTA announced it would review their decisions to cancel the 216 and 461. Although not announced at the hearing, they will most likely retain one 216 run in each direction, and replace the 461 with an extension of the 463.

OCTA 490

We requested a map of the proposed new StationLink (OCTA Metrolink shuttle) #490 (There was no map or route description in the public hearing notice where it was debuted.) When it starts in approved for March 2003, there will finally be some bus service to and from the Laguna Niguel-Mission Viejo Metrolink station. The 490 was designed to serve the federal building in Laguna Niguel, and a business park off the 73 Tollway in Aliso Viejo, via Crown Valley, Moulton Parkway, Avila Rd., Alicia Pkwy., and Aliso Creek Rd. No word on if/when Saddleback College, Mission Hospital or other Mission Viejo destinations will get service to/from their Metrolink station.

DECEMBER 2002 ADJUSTMENTS

One reason so many March proposals are getting put off is because so many September schedules required tweaking. Routes requiring work to stay on schedule included the 55, 59, 62, 66, 71, and 172, among others. Thanks to so many, including the extensions of Routes 50 and 57 to true night owl service, there will be a December 2002 Bus Book after all. There is quite a scramble to get this one out, as no new Bus Book had been planned until March, when there will be a substantial redesign.

TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

We are almost through crafting our Transit Improvement Proposal for 2003.

There is heavy emphasis on improving on-time performance and reducing pass-bys, as well as instituting better methods to inform passengers of detours. Last year our proposal was only for OCTA, but this year we will also be working with MTA, Norwalk, and Anaheim. We invite suggestions on policy and specific route issues for our final version.

KEEPING TRACK OF RAIL - the Rail Advocates of OC Section

COSTA MESA ASKS FOR INPUT ON CENTERLINE

Costa Mesa city councilwoman Libby Cowan announced that the CenterLine proposal will be discussed at their City Council 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 (info@railadvocates.org) to let us know you can attend this

meeting with our group, listen to the public opinion, and respond.

SEND ANTI-CENTERLINERS PAC'ING
Rail Advocates expects to see two CenterLine ballot measures put before Irvine voters in 2003, one from the Irvine City Council and one from the inappropriately-named "FAIR Transit" (<http://www.nocenterline.com>).

There is interest in forming a Political Action Committee to support CenterLine. Rail Advocates who live, work or study in Irvine can be especially vital participants in our strategy. Please set aside the third Wednesdays of November (11/20) and December (12/18) from 6 to 8 pm to attend a meeting at the Irvine Transportation Center (train station), suite 200, on this crucial topic.

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Bart Reed, Lionel Jones, Craig Weingarten and Ken Ruben attended the Oct. 9 community open house for the Los Angeles Union Station Run-Through Tracks project.

Lionel Jones, Chaffee Yiu, Robert Meinert and Charles Hobbs attended the San Gabriel Valley sector community meeting held Oct. 10 in El Monte.

Isa Meksin gave public comment at the Oct. 15 meeting of the Southern California Association of Governments' Regional Transit Task Force.

The Oct. 25 L.A. Times article "MTA to Take Safety Campaign on the Road" quoted Kymberleigh Richards and Roger Christensen.

Chaffee Yiu and Ken Ruben attended the Oct. 31 Los Angeles Museum of Railroading event unveiling its exhibition entitled "Metrolink - 10th Anniversary and Before".

Belatedly we wish to acknowledge Steve Crosmer's funding of the blue paper for our Oct. newsletter cover commemorating Metrolink's 10th.

■

Friday Nov. 29 we will undertake our annual day after Thanksgiving transit system exploration. This year members have chosen Sunline Transit in the Coachella Valley. Here is the itinerary prepared by trip planner Lionel Jones:

- catch Metrolink train #702:
Union Station - 6:25 a.m.
Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs - 6:48 a.m.
Fullerton - 7:01 a.m.
West Corona - 7:24 a.m. (train may leave up to 5 minutes early)
Riverside/La Sierra - 7:35 a.m. (train may leave up to 5 minutes early)
arrives at Riverside - 8:03 a.m.
- Sunlink departs Riverside Metrolink station 8:30 a.m.; arrives Palm Springs Mall 10:05 a.m.
- catch Sunline rt.14 at Farrell/Baristo at 10:44 a.m.; arrive Palm/8th St at 11:26 a.m.
- stay on rt.14 departing 11:34 a.m. deboard at Palm Canyon/Baristo at 12:25 p.m.
- catch Sunline rt.111 at Palm Canyon/Baristo 12:37 p.m. deboard at Westfield Mall 1:24 p.m.
- LUNCH BREAK
- re-board Sunline rt.111 at Westfield Mall 2:14 p.m; arrive in Indio (Highway 111 and Flower) at 2:53 p.m.
- catch Sunline rt.91 at Highway 111/Flower 3:25 p.m; arrive Mecca (Ave. 66 and 2nd St.) 4:10 p.m.
- stay on rt.91 departing 4:10 p.m. arrive in Indio (Highway 111 and Flower) at 5:15 p.m.
- catch Sunline rt.111 in Indio (Highway 111 and Flower) at 5:40 p.m; arrive Palm Springs (Palm Canyon and Stevens) 7:22 p.m.
- catch Greyhound #6363 Palm Springs [311 N. Indian Canyon Dr.] at 7:45 p.m.; intermediate stops in Moreno Valley, Riverside, San Bernardino, Fontana arrive at El Monte Bus Station at 10:20 p.m.; arrive in downtown Los Angeles [1716 E. 7th St] at 10:50 p.m.

- also can transfer to Santa Ana bound bus #6027 in San Bernardino, arrive at Santa Ana at 10:50 p.m.
- MTA rt. 484 westbound stops in El Monte Bus Station at 10:39 p.m. MTA rt.60 northbound passes Greyhound station circa 11:20 p.m.

FARES

- Metrolink
L.A. to Riverside \$8.50, senior/disabled \$4.25
Norwalk to Riverside \$7.25, senior/disabled \$3.75
Fullerton to Riverside \$6.25, senior/disabled \$3.25
West Corona to Riverside \$5.25, senior/disabled \$2.75
Riverside/La Sierra \$4.25, senior/disabled \$2.25
- Sunlink
\$8 (\$5 - senior/disabled)
- Sunline
\$1 (senior/disabled - \$.50)
transfer - \$.25 [can use twice in two hours to transfer between routes]
Note: Sunline has a \$3 day pass but they are not sold by bus operators; per agency can be purchased in advance via mail and validated by driver when first used.
- Greyhound
Palm Springs to L.A., El Monte or Santa Ana - \$20.25; senior disabled \$19.35
NOTE: Palm Spring Greyhound station closes at 6 p.m.; fare can be paid driver in cash (exact amount) or purchased in advance via Greyhound's information line [(800) 229-9424], website {www.Greyhound.com} or at local station ticket window.
REMINDER: we'll need your \$3 in advance to pay for the Sunline day pass; it is advisable to purchase the Greyhound ticket in advance. Contact Executive Secretary with any questions you have - (213) 388-2364, dgabbard@hotmail.com