

TRANSIT UPDATES

Just a reminder, the Metro Gold Line (LA-Pasadena) opens on July 26. The San Pedro "Red Car" opens on July 19.

Many mistakes have been found in the new MTA schedules dated June 29. Also in some instances MTA bus stop signs have yet to be updated. Pete Serdienis of MTA stops and zones in an e-mail to President Richards explained "[changes were made to] 7,000+ of 18,000 bus stops in order to implement the 6/29/03 shake-up & 7/26/03 Gold Line start up. (This is by far the largest one time change to MTA's bus passenger distribution network that we've ever encountered.) In order to make these changes we needed to order 79 new route, destination, & service qualification decal readings totaling 14,765 new decals. We have been in the process of making these on street changes, as well as placing passenger route change notification hoods at the affected stops, since mid May and hopefully will complete doing so by the start up of the Gold Line. "

Long Beach Transit is adding another limited stop "ZAP" route along Atlantic Blvd. This will be designated Line #66, while the existing ZAP route along 7th St. will be #96. Both ZAP services run peak-hours only. Also, both the Aquabus and Aqualink will run 7-days per week for the summer season. Finally, the special service to the Getty Center has been expanded, serving the Getty on Wednesday and Saturday, the LA County Museum on Thursday and Sunday, and a variety of destinations on Friday: visit www.lbtransit.org/events.html for details.

Effective July 1, Torrance Transit local base fare will be \$.50, but transfers will cost \$.40. (Senior/disabled fare will be \$.25). Service into Downtown LA remains at \$.75 (\$.25 senior/disabled). Also, Torrance Transit #3 will detour off PCH via Alameda, Sepulveda, Willow, and

Santa Fe, due to construction on a bridge over Alameda Corridor.

More on the Foothill route change, effective June 27: #191/193 will be interlined, as will #190/195. These will change headsign (but not layover) at Valley Bl. and Humane Wy. #289 and #486 will both layover at Valley and Temple, looping via Valley, Ridgeway and South Campus. #482 will serve Devry, but not Cal Poly. #480 will enter the freeway at the Ridgeway onramp, but not serve Devry. The transfer point for all these lines will be at Temple/South Campus. Starting fall quarter, a shuttle will run from Temple/South Campus to the rest of the campus.

This summer, LA County is again providing Beach Bus service from Altadena, Antelope Valley, Charter Oak, La Crescenta and Santa Clarita to Santa Monica. Service is also provided through Topanga Canyon. Visit <http://ladpw.org/pdd/BeachBus/index.cfm> for details.

The City of Moorpark (in Ventura County) is also offering a beach bus service: buses run to Zuma Beach on Tuesdays and San Buenaventura State Beach on Thursdays, until August 26th. 805-517-6248.

Laguna Beach Transit will be fare-free during the summer art-show season. Also, the buses will run later.

The Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority (MARTA) has reinstated the express service (Hwy 330) between San Bernardino and Big Bear (two round trips, Mon-Sat). Also, new service to Victorville operates Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays, connecting to Victor Valley Transit Authority at Victor Valley College and at St. Mary's Hospital. Fares from Big Bear to either San Bernardino or Victor Valley are \$5. 909-584-1111

BULLETIN BOARD

We are scheduled to have a booth at Union Station during the opening weekend of the Gold Line July 26-27. Kymberleigh Richards assisted by John Ulloth is overseeing our space. Volunteers to staff the booth are welcome, or just drop by and say "hi".

The Pasadena Star News/San Gabriel Valley Tribune plan a "Gold Line Magazine" to be distributed with the paper and in other places to commemorate the opening. It will be a tabloid, and display ads start at \$250 for 1/8 of a page. We will discuss placing a 1/8 page notice about our group (and maybe pass the hat to pay for it) at our August 12 meeting.

Our tour of the Gold Line on July 1st was a great success and well attended. Our thanks to MTA staff, especially Fran Curbello, for making it possible. Our table at the Train Collector's Association Nation Convention in Ontario June 27-28 had a favorable response; a hearty thanks to volunteers Lionel Jones, Andy Novak and Dana Gabbard for representing us and sharing information with attendees.

At our August meeting Rick Peterson of Amtrak Thruway services will be the speaker. We hope in coming months to have a presentation by Lt. Mike Parker of the L.A. County Sheriff's Dept. Transit Services Bureau for Red Line and Gold Line Rail Operations. Also a request has been made for MTA staff to present at a future meeting the draft transit service policy.

We anticipate doing our OCTA owl service follow-up exploration in August.

Suggestions for suitable dates will be discussed at our July 12 meeting.

Co-founder Steve Crosmer has donated \$250 toward the fund for a memorial at one of the Gold Line stations to our founder, Pat Moser. We will be working to identify the site and get a cost estimate before beginning fundraising in earnest.

Member Ray Mullin has donated several boxes of schedules (historic and recent, local and from all over the U.S.) to help SO.Ca.TA raise funds. Over the coming months President Richards, custodian of the collection, will be bringing some of the the boxes to our meetings. Top donors will be given first crack at these treasures. There will be no free giveaways - any untaken schedules will be sold via Ebay to benefit SO.CA.TA, Richards promises. So bus schedules fans better bring their wallets and be generous!

The San Pedro waterfront Red Cars will start running June 19. Opening celebration will be 10 a.m. at station 2, 6th Street across from the Maritime Museum. Free rides will be given during the first day. Further details about the opening festivities can be obtained by calling 310-732-3473.

Fast Tracks in the Gold State is a Symposium on High Speed Rail co-sponsored with Mineta Transportation Institute and Commonwealth Club of California to be held Friday July 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel, 506 South Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles. Cost: \$55. (cont'd on pg. 5)

**PUBLIC &
LEGISLATIVE
AFFAIRS**

**Dana Gabbard
(dgabbard@hotmail.com)**

Our committee recently had a chance to sit down with Laurie Newman of Senator Sheila Kuehl's staff to discuss the bill sponsored by the Senator to form a Joint-Powers-Authority for the Exposition project (SB 504). We have taken a neutral position and were seeking clarification while sharing concerns. It was a frank discussion that gave us some clarity regarding the motivation for the legislation. Our thanks to Ms. Newman for an enlightening meeting.

Ed Clifford of MTA staff has responded to our initial letter outlining concerns regarding MTA's draft transit service policy. Mr. Clifford's response has been posted on our website (<http://socata.lerctr.org/service.html>) and will be discussed at our July 12 meeting.

Access Services has a new Executive Director: Alan Cantrell, formerly Deputy Director-Transit for the City of Santa Rosa Dept. of Transit and Parking. He faces the daunting task of guiding the agency thru significant changes in the way it provides services under severe scrutiny. I was

actually surprised ASI had quite a few applicants for what in my view is a thankless (but well remunerated) job.

One person whose opinion I pay close attention to is Professor Steve Erie, of UC San Diego. The June Metro Investment Report includes an excerpt of Erie's white paper on infrastructure development in our region. I have to agree with his conclusions that daunting challenges face this region, especially regarding airport capacity. Our friends at the Southern California Association of Governments seem to have similar concerns and are rolling out a proposal for infrastructure investment as an economic stimulus strategy: Operation Jump Start. SCAG hopes to draw private funding (tolls) for truckway and regional rail expansion plus (shudder!) its high speed maglev system proposal. At least SCAG is admitting we have problems although I look askance at some of their solutions (How do we force trucks off free road-lanes and onto toll lanes?)

I am glad to learn Caltrans has assembled a committee composed of transit operators, transportation commissions and various Caltrans districts throughout the region to discuss the feasibility of a regional fare collection system for public transit.

I was quoted in the July 6 San Gabriel Valley Tribune article "Foothill Transit Official Moving on" about the imminent

departure of Foothill Transit Executive Director Julie Austin. She was always personable and weathered well a challenging period (as Foothill expanded, built bus yards, implemented a hub and spoke route system, introduced CNG equipment, etc.). It is heartening that someone well versed in the ins-and-outs of Foothill will succeed Julie: Doran Barnes, returning after a stint as head of the Tulsa transit system.

Also I was quoted in the June 30 Los Angeles Business Journal article "End of the Line for New Rail Projects". And certainly we are entering a period where the pace of expansion will slacken,

although I foresee some short extension possibilities (especially of the Green Line).

This month I'll conclude by noting another departure: I've learned Jim McLaughlin recently left the MTA. Over the years McLaughlin headed up tricky projects like transit restructuring and transit zones. For the past year or so he has been overseeing MTA's effort to bring budget discipline to Access Services and he adroitly navigated this hazardous task with assurance. My best wishes to Mr. McLaughlin, whatever his future endeavors. ■

(Bulletin Board, from page 3)
Wednesday, July 23, at 7:00 PM, a new documentary about the rise and fall of the Pacific Electric Railway will premier in the auditorium of Glendale Central Library (on the second floor). Admission is free. For more information call (818) 548-2042.

Public scoping meetings for the Gold Line Phase II project (Pasadena to Claremont) are being held this month. All run from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.:

July 15 San Dimas City Hall 245 E. Bonita Ave.

July 16 Claremont City Hall 207 Harvard Ave.

July 16 South Pasadena Public Library community rm 1115 El Centro St.

July 21 Arcadia City Hall 240 W. Huntington Dr.

Save the date: Rail-Volution in Atlanta Sept. 11-14. Further information: 800-788-7077.

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. ■

GOLD LINE PREVIEW RIDE, JULY 1

In the past, we at SO.CA.TA have always tried to get "preview rides" on the new rail lines before they open to the general public. And the Metro Gold Line would be no exception.

However, the conditions were a little more strict than before. Due to MTA testing requirements, the ride would have to be on a weekday (we picked July 1 by consensus), and because most of the stations were still unfinished, we would be limited to a simple ride from end to end and back--no getting out and exploring the stations as in past trips.

Still, members and their guests came, from all over Southern California, as far away as Ventura and San Diego, for a chance to take this "sneak peek". Many of us arrived early, and had breakfast at the MTA's cafeteria.

By 9:00am our membership assembled at Track 1, where our Metro Gold Line train waited. We were met by several other groups, including the MTA Citizens' Advisory Committee, Friends4Expo, and an engineering society. In total, the tour group numbered nearly 200 (including SO.CA.TA members). After a five-minute wait and a few words from the MTA representative, we walked up the stairs, through an opening in a heavy plastic curtain, and onto the platform.

While waiting to board, Bart Reed explained to the young engineers the dangers of NIMBYism. (We would see evidence of it in action later on the trip.)

Now, all morning we had heard jackhammers, and we were about to find out what all that noise was about. Construction workers were tearing up the surface of the platform (in order to replace the smooth concrete with brick pavers

for some reason). leaving a rough surface.

Soon a 2-car train pulled up, and we boarded. With everyone on board, the train pulled out of Union Station at around 9:15am. The train slowly climbed up the aerial structure leading through Chinatown, then crossed the bridge over the LA River.

We stopped at every station along the route, but no one was allowed to exit the train because none of the stations were finished. At almost every station, workers dashed about, placing tiles and bricks on platform surfaces. An MTA employee on board provided narration on Gold Line rolling stock, stations, and safety features. Many of the riders shared additional details among themselves.

The Southwest Museum, recently purchased by the Getty Center, is a short walk from one of the stations. A short segment in the median of Marmion Way follows.

The street-running area through Highland Park (in the median of Marmion Way) was slow, but not terribly so. Here and there, glitches in the power system made for slow running, and occasional jerky starts.

The line crosses SR-110 (Pasadena Freeway/Arroyo Parkway) several times en route to Pasadena. But the most dramatic crossing was over the Arroyo Seco bridge, one of the oldest railway bridges in LA County.

As the train entered South Pasadena, we found ourselves in the heart of NIMBY territory. At nearly every crossing were posted large yellow signs reading "NO HORNS, NO BELLS - SLOW TRAINS TO 20 MPH". Although I didn't spot any anti-Gold Line people along the route, it's obvious that some South Pasadena residents don't

want trains running through their neighborhoods. Some riders mentioned that local NIMBYs were planning protests for Gold Line's opening weekend. As for the line itself, South Pasadena has only one station and there are diagonal crossings at several intersections.

The Pasadena portion of the Gold Line is a different story. Some NIMBYs are active here too, but local opposition is not as intense as in South Pasadena. There's a rather scenic section between South Pasadena and the Fillmore Bl station, but once you're in Pasadena proper, the area around the right-of-way isn't too hot (graffiti, maintenance yards, etc). There is a transit-oriented development under construction at Del Mar Station.

The line goes under Colorado Bl, and then under the Holly Street Apartments (station right in the basement) before serving the I-210 median stops at Lake, Allen and the Sierra Madre terminus. There was a long wait and some mighty slow running as we approached Sierra Madre, where we reversed direction (without leaving the train) and headed back to LA.

SO.CA.TA member Ken Ruben, whom I sat next to, timed the trip at 40 minutes from Union Station to SMV. We arrived back at LAUS a little after 10:30am, delaying a second tour that was to depart then. (The Gold Line isn't yet in revenue service and it's already running late!)

Hopefully, MTA will get the kinks smoothed out of it before opening day, July 26! A big thanks to Dana Gabbard, for helping to secure this preview ride. ■

Charles P. Hobbs, Michael Divindo and John Ulloth contributed to this article.



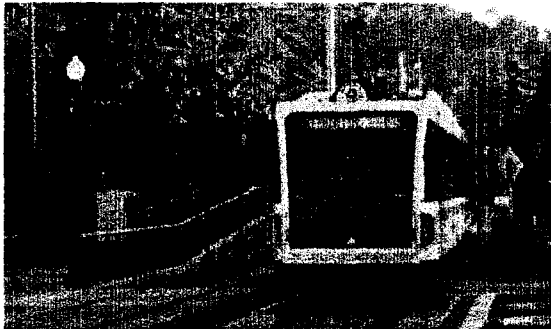
Boarding the train at Union Station. J Ulloth photo



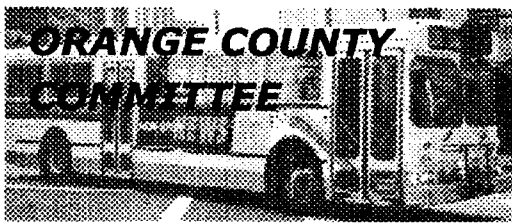
On Board the Gold Line. J Ulloth photo



The Pasadena Freeway, as seen from the Arroyo Seco Bridge
Dave Snowden photo



Mission Station, South Pasadena. C. P. Hobbs photo



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

Orange County Committee Mark Strickert (TAOC) and Barry Christensen (RAOC)

Transit Advocates of Orange County (TAOC) elected Kyle Minnis as their new chair, for the remainder of 2003. TJ Stiller was appointed to the new post of Parliamentarian.

OCTA has been working on its website, at <http://www.octa.net>. As with the redesigned Bus Book, well, it looks nicer but takes a bit of getting used to. The Riders Alerts, for instance, are now much harder to find online.

This is ironic, as they seem to be easier to find on bus :) They have begun to appear in the form of a weekly newsletter, in English and en español, and I saw them on nearly all of the OCTA buses I've taken the past couple weeks. You CAN find them online eventually, or more quickly direct to <http://www.octa.net/busrail/routes/alerts.asp>.

Speaking of information, the first of the new schedule cassette inserts are in place. They will give the departure times for the

time check prior to each stop. Look for them now along the Night Owl routes, and later this year on the rest of the system. The inserts can only hold information for one route each, so OCTA is testing "transit tubes" for multi-route stops. Already being used by Foothill and Culver CityBus, these "tubes" can hold info for up to 5 OCTA routes.

OCTA is also beginning to experiment with night-lights at bus stops. One brand has been installed at four stops along Harbor Blvd., including Westminster Blvd., with several more to be put in place by mid-July.

There were a number of changes to OCTA's September 2003 changes:

- 01 - As-is (return to "winter" schedule)
- 21 - As-is (delete last round-trip)
- 24 - Weekend last trip will NOT be deleted
- 29 - Weekends, add one earlier round-trip, one later northbound trip, and extend one southbound Brea-LaHabra trip to Huntington Beach
- 37 - Weekday, add 1 evening round trip
- 38 - Weekday, add 1 eastbound AM tripper from Brookhurst to State College, school days only
- 43 - Saturday midday headways to :12 on shorts
- 47 - Change Brea Mall stop to northbound side
- 51 - As-is (delete last weekday northbound trip)
- 66 - Weekend midday headways to :12 on shorts, :24 Tustin to Irvine
- 70 - Weekday eastbound leaving Goldenwest 6:29am will become a "long short" (to Moulton/El Toro)
- 79 - No trip deletions

89 - As-is (return to "winter" schedule)
147 - Change Brea Mall stop to southbound side
167 - Weekdays, delete all evening shorts; add 2 northbound and 1 southbound full trips, adjust time of current last full southbound trip
172 - Weekdays, increase headways to :60 east of Euclid, delete last 2 round-trips, extend last 2 westbound trips to Huntington Beach (all these moves essentially eliminates shorts on the 172); Daily, switch to mid-sized buses
175 - As-is (delete last southbound trip)
205 - Revision of new routing north of Katella/Clementine: Northbound - R Clementine-Manchester, L Harbor, R Katella, R Walnut, R Ball, L Disneyland Drive on to I-5, R Magnolia off-ramp, L Magnolia, L Fullerton P&R to Dock 12. Southbound - Fullerton P&R, R Orangethorpe, R Magnolia, L I-5 on-ramp, R Disneyland Dr off-ramp, R Ball, L Walnut, L Katella, L Harbor, R Manchester-Clementine, L Katella. This change allows the 205 to use the Harbor/East Shuttle Area stops. The mystery remains, however...0.0 additional service hours?! [I try to avoid rumors, but there's been as-yet unsubstantiated talk of putting off the 205 extension plan, as it would cost extra vehicle service hours after all? More when I know more]
206 - As-is (add later trips each way)
211 - Southbound re-route, to use new Avenue of the Arts off-ramp, then L Sunflower.
454 - As-is (switch to large buses)
470 - Slight schedule adjustment afternoons
471 - Route revision at Irvine/Newport

Beach end;
slight schedule adjustment afternoons
480 - Slight schedule adjustment afternoons
482 - Slight schedule adjustment afternoons
490 - Route revision at Aliso Viejo end
757 - No trip deletions; Change Brea Mall stop to southbound side

OCTA staff will be presenting various options to the OCTA Board concerning light rail, bus rapid transit, Metrolink and road improvements. This meeting was rescheduled for Monday, July 21st, 9 am, at the County Hall of Administration in Santa Ana. Please plan now to attend and give public comment in support of the CenterLine project. Your letter of support to the board and newspaper would also be very helpful.

The Costa Mesa city council voted 4 to 1 on June 16 to have their city enter into a cooperative agreement with OCTA on the CenterLine project. The agreement specifies roles and responsibilities during the current preliminary engineering and environmental impact report phases. For more information, ask for a debrief at <http://www.railadvocates.org>

The Irvine City Council voted unanimously on June 24 to send a letter to OCTA supporting construction of CenterLine to John Wayne Airport. This was agendized by Mayor Agran in response to a request for clarification from Tim Keenan, OCTA board chair. Councilmember Christina Shea commented that Irvine's Prop 116 funds would be eligible for this truncated alignment. (cont'd on pg. 10)

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Chris Flescher attended the display of the Colorado Railcar DMU in Salinas June 15. Anthony Loui saw it when it was on display at the Fullerton train station the weekend of June 28-29.

Harold Katz and Kymberleigh Richards had letters published in the June 14 L.A. Times responding to the June 7 profile of Gerald Silver Valley's Silver Bullet Hits Mark"

Bart Reed and Kymberleigh Richards were quoted in the June 26 Daily News article "Van Nuys Rapid buses getting ready to rumble".

William Vallow had a letter in the June 20 L.A. Times ["Green Line Should Be Extended to LAX"] responding to an article on extension of BART to San Francisco International Airport, with a zinger added as the coda: "One

additional note on the MTA: It looks like riders can expect a messy strike soon, especially since the board approved a budget with no pay raises."

Attending the June 25 MTA Citizen Advisory Council meeting: Ken Ruben, Charles Powell, Kevin Devlin, Andy Novak, Dana Gabbard, Armando Avalos, Eddie Anthony, and Lionel Jones. Plus Roger Christensen was present as a CAC member.

Juanita Dellomes and John Ulloth have been nominated to stand for the fall 2003 election to the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter ExComm (oversight of the chapter's budget).

Barry Christensen and Frank Forbath spoke at the June 16 Costa Mesa City Council meeting in favor of the city entering into a cooperative agreement with OCTA on the CenterLine project (P.S. - it passed 4-1).■

(TAOC, from pg. 9)

The Long Beach Press Telegram reported in their front page headlines of June 23rd that a joint powers authority is in formation for the LA-Orange County "Orange Line" corridor. This line would use the former Pacific Electric right of way now owned by the MTA and OCTA. Leaders quoted in the article envision a financially self-supporting 150 mph maglev operation. Check out <http://www.presstelegram.com>

An excellent powerpoint presentation was given by OnTrac director Chris Becker at the June Rail Advocates of OC meeting about the "Orangethorpe Corridor." This

included grade separation projects and related rail improvements in north Orange County. Contact info@railadvocates.org for an informative debrief of the meeting. A colorful info packet is also available on a first come first served basis.

Metrolink's newly approved budget includes several improvements in Orange County commuter rail service. One enhancement is an additional round trip on the Inland Empire-OC line beginning this fall. Check out their website at <http://www.metrolinktrains.org>. ■