TRANSIT UPDATES

Federal funding for the Gold Line to East LA has been approved. Preliminary construction (mostly utility relocations) has started; the project should be completed by 2009.

A new sidewalk is being built at the termporary Cal Poly bus stop South Campus/ Temple. (The original one was closed due to construction on campus). This stop is served by Foothill Transit, as well as MTA #484, 490 (and #684 when that service starts later this month) To promote this flagging service, a \$1 fare will be charged on RTA #202 between Temecula and Oceanside. This also includes all transfers and passes. This promotional fare will be in effect until December 31, 2004.

Also, effective July 4th: #43 will be cancelled #41 will be extended to Riverside City College Moreno Valley #36 will be rerouted out of Yucaipa and into Redlands.

BULLETIN BOARD

Our thanks to Tom Hines for sharing his vision of a regional Personal Rapid Transit network with us at our May 8 meeting.

At our June 12 meeting we will discuss plans for our annual summer late night/owl study tour and the process by which our holiday banquet location for this year will be selected.

Foothill Extension News is a quarterly newsletter on the proposed extension of the Gold Line from Pasadena to Montclair. To be added to the mailing list call 800-770-7144. There are also between mid-May and mid-June public hearings on the Gold Line Foothill Extension's recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report. The schedule of meetings is posted at http://www.metrogoldline.org/ PDF/Abstract%20English%20-%20042304. pdf or call the 800 # above for details.

Reminder: Sunday June 13 a public grand opening will be held of the renovated Santa Fe depot in San Bernardino between 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Historic steam train 3751 will be on display. Tours and food will be available at the free event.

During June and July the Los Angeles Railroad Heritage Foundation will hold a number of events dealing with public rail transportation in Los Angeles. For details contact LARHF at (323) 931-6757 or http://www.larhf.org

The California High Speed Rail Authority is holding an additional public hearing Wednesday, June 23, 2004 from 1:00-3:00 PM at the MTA Building (near Union Station) on its draft environmental documents. ■

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

WEYMOUTH CORNERS Joe Drummond

MTA's South Bay Planner met with three bus riders and the Executive Director of the San Pedro Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. Two riders and a 6 year old boy walked the Weymouth Corners business area with the Chamber director and the planner.

This area, a transit node, has been under attack from NIMBYs who have gotten layover zones changed to the bottom of a steep hill, and one vital bus stop across from the hospital eliminated. They got the planner to ride around the area with them, submitted a petition, and showed up at the South Bay hearing misrepresenting the number of buses and mendaciously claiming the area was "residential". I corrected them on that.

Weymouth Corners is several blocks up a steep hill from San Pedro's hospital where MTA routes 550 (San Pedro - W. Hollywood via Transitway) and 447 (San Pedro - Union Station via Wilmington and Carson) now layover. Their former Weymouth Corners layover was changed due to NIMBYs. This has impacted access to the business district and transfers to the 225/226, 205, and MAX3.

Weymouth Corners is bounded by 7th and 9th St. and by Weymouth Ave. and Averill Sts. But there is a gas station, church, and many medical/dental offices on the north side of 7th St. as well as many, many medical and dental offices plus various care facilities, a pharmancy and labratory on 6th St. Weymouth Corners is in the City of Los Angeles, but 7th and 6th Sts. are in the unincorported county jurisdiction.

Routes 225/226 (Palos Verdes Peninsula Loop), 205 (San Pedro - Imperial Blue-Green Line Station via almost everywhere), and MAX 3 serve the area.

Walking the area showed the planner what the area really was like. Of course the Chamber director knew and he said he would talk to some businesses in the area about bus service. The chamber is basically pro transit. The planner did not have time to ride the 550 but will do so with us later. One rider has already gotten a county transportation staff person out to ride from San Pedro to County-UCLA Harbor Medical Center at Vermont Ave. and Carson St.

Due to NIMBY complaints MTA is now planning to terminate alternate 550s southbound at Carson St. and Vermont Ave., halving service both north and southbound south of there. This will impact Weymouth Corners as well as the DMV, employment office, landscape contractor, Kaiser Harbor City, a continuation school and grammar school as well as a parochial high school.■

PUBLIC AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS Dana Gabbard

Well, we won the fight to preserve the MTA Service Sector Council monthly meetings. But in the process I had to suffer through watching the mindless antics of Supervisors Yaroslavsky and Burke at the May 19 MTA Board Executive Management and Audit Committee. I left reminded all over again why I shun attending MTA Board meetings whenever possible. Hopefully the strong stand taken by the activist community, the appointing authorities and the Sector Councils will make the Board leery of ever again trying to undermine the Councils. Or am I being naive?

Perhaps naive is also the word for believing the claims of Caltrans that the Bay Bridge east span project in the Bay Area had finally been brought under fiscal control. Instead bids building the main span came in a billion over the estimated cost. That is no typo--ONE BILLION DOLLARS. Obviously we agree with MTA that all cost overruns beyond those allowed under current legislation should be absorbed by the folks in the Bay Area.

May 12 Bart Reed and I attended the L.A. City Council Transportation Committee meeting which had an item (file 03-1066) regarding whether the city of Los Angeles should join the maglev Joint Powers Authority SCAG is promoting. What I found interesting is SCAG desperately wants L.A. to participate in the JPA to give it legitimacy. Meanwhile L.A. made it clear their involvement is predicated on the SCAG consultants preparing an alternatives analysis comparing maglev and other technologies that will be in-depth and not

simply pro-forma. And a few weeks later at the June 5 RailPAC annual meeting guest speaker Metrolink CEO David Solow essentially expressed an identical desire for a "real" alternatives analysis. It'll be interesting to see how all this plays out.

MTA staff are undertaking a study of alternatives to the current debit/credit Congesition Management Program. It says something about how difficult the situation is getting on local roadways that many mitigation proposals formerly DOA (like impact fees) are starting to be given serious consideration.

I am crossing my fingers that the scenarios in the staff report that moved money around to keep the planning of the Expo project moving forward isn't an exercise in futility (item #17, May 27 MTA Board meeting). A lot hangs on the Gold Line eastern extension rehabilitating MTA's image by being done on budget and on schedule. Plus hopefully the San Gabriel folks will eventually understand that on a technical basis Expo has a much better shot at winning the fight for federal funds than the Phase II project. Good lord, I may be having a repeat attack of naivete.

Foothill Transit board member John Fasana inquired of Foothill staff at the April 23 meeting whether an inquiry could be made regarding Foothill acquiring MTA line 270. I'm curious if the intention is taking the entire route (which operates from Monrovia to Cerritos) or just the portion in the Foothill zone (a la half of MTA line 177 being taken over by Glendale Beeline). I was gratified to learn at the same Foothill Transit Board meeting it was announced ATC, the management contractor for Foothill Transit, has agreed to add one staff member to the El Monte Transit Store due to the significant volume of activity this store experiences.

Faithful Reader pointed out something interesting buried in agenda item 42 approved at the May MTA Board meeting regarding MTA's contract with the L.A. County Sheriff for security: for the remainder of FY 2004 two 24-hour, 7-day per week deputies are being put in place as a special security detail for the USG Complex At the the March 9 joint meeting of Access (aka Union Station) at a cost of \$300,000. The justification given is the recent commuter train bombings in Madrid. While this may sound prudent Faithful Reader reminded me Union Station is privately owned (by Catellus) which is getting the benefit of this enhanced level of security for free.

The Future isn't what it used to be Dept: the Las Vegas Monorail may not open until mid-summer, 6 months behind schedule. A drive shaft fell off a train during testing in January. Soon after that a problem was discovered in the software for the computer control system. Meanwhile the Shanghai maglev is reputed to suffer low ridership, as the locals complain tickets are too costly and it often doesn't take them where they need to go.

The April issue of Metro Investment Report briefly notes the Pasadena City Council has thus far refused to join the Gold Line Phase II Authority out of concern about possible liability. Attempts are being made to include language in the JPA agreement that addresses these concerns.

Surprise of the month: the May issue of Wheel Clicks notes that Siemens' light rail vehicle bodyshell fabricating plant in Carson used for MTA's P2000 cars and several other orders closed Jan. 15, 2004.

Services' Community Advisory Committee and MTA's Metro Accessibility Advisory Committee James Hogan of the ASI Committee complained that he often has a difficult time getting to bus stops. He felt this should be remedied by MTA using eminent domain to take all public rights of way. Chip Hazen, MTA's ADA compliance officer, (I imagine being careful with his words) responded that MTA lacks the legislative authority to request cities make changes pertaining to their jurisdiction.

I'll conclude by noting what a strange new world this truly is: my new work shoes had a tag attached to them stating they are "security friendly" underneath a graphic of an airplane. Excuse me?

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MEMBERS IN ACTION

Ken Ruben attended the May 14 South Bay Sector Governance Council hearing.

Woody Rosner, Bart Reed, Dana Gabbard and Ken Ruben attended the annual meeting of RailPAC held June 5 in San Juan Capistrano.

Dana Gabbard and Kevin Devlin attended Coast Area Transit in the May 27 MTA Westside/Central Service public comments, he Sector Council Meeting. requested that the bo

Attending the May 19 MTA Board Executive Management and Audit Committee meeting were Dana Gabbard, Ken Ruben and Kevin Devlin. Attending the May 27 MTA Board meeting were Dana Gabbard, Roger Christensen, Bart Reed, Kevin Devlin and Ken Ruben.

Dave Snowden attended the May South Bay Council of Governments meeting. Paul Castillo attended the May 11 San Gabriel valley Sector Council meeting and May 28 Foothill Transit Board meeting.

Members attending the May 27 Friends 4 Expo Transit meeting were Ken Ruben, Lionel Jones, Jerome Weymouth, Chaffee Yiu, Robert Meinert and Anthony Loui. Michael Divindo attended the June 2 meeting of the Board of South Coast Area Transit in Ventura County. In public comments, he requested that the board look into implementing improved express and/or limited-stop service between Oxnard/Port Hueneme and Ventura.

Reminder: if you attend a meeting, have a letter published in a newspapaper, are quoted in the media or otherwise engage in active advocacy please inform the Executive Secretary (dgabbard@hotmail. com) so he can be sure it is noted in the next edition of this column. Thank you!