

TRANSIT UPDATES

Starting sometime this month thru 2006, the entrance to the Wilshire/Vermont Red Line station will be closed while various projects on the site are being constructed above the station. A temporary entrance will be located off Shatto Place, one block east of Vermont, just north of Wilshire. Also north-bound Vermont bus stops have been relocated to the south side of Wilshire during the construction.

MTA's Westside/Center Service Sector will hold a public hearing Aug. 12 at 7 p.m. Proposals include new line 787, changes to lines 2 and 302 plus possible recommendations for lines 20/21. This will be held at the La Cienega Tennis Center, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd.

The Gateway Service Sector will also have a public hearing on Aug 12, at the Gas Company Building in Downey, regarding the following proposed changes:

- Later evening service, and weekend service on #265 (Paramount Bl)
- #270 would be rerouted towards Whittier College and the Norwalk/Santa Fe Metrolink station.
- #275 would be rerouted along Broadway and Mulberry in Whittier

- #362 would also be rerouted to the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Metrolink. In addition, it would operate limited stop along most of the length of Telegraph Rd.
- #576 (South Central LA-Pac Palisades) would be cancelled

Victor Valley Transit has adjusted its commuter service, due to low ridership. Each route (San Bernardino and Rancho Cucamonga) will have one morning round trip (including reverse commutes) and two evening round trips (again, including reverse commutes). Cal State San Bernardino is also served on the reverse commute trips.

The MARTA demonstration project, linking Big Bear with Victor Valley, has also ended, due to low ridership. But, MARTA is now operating an additional local transit route in Big Bear. Dubbed the "Bear Valley Visitors' Trolley" this route provides hourly service to Big Bear Village, the Discovery Center, and the Moonridge Zoo.

BULLETIN BOARD

At our July 10 meeting members will make proposals for where to hold our annual holiday banquet. After the presentations a choice will be made so banquet arrangements can commence.

Linda Culp will present a slide show on the San Diego/L.A./San Luis Obispo rail corridor agency and its program to improve the corridor at our August 14 meeting.

The annual summer late night/owl study tour has been scheduled for Saturday August 28. We will catch the last trip from Pasadena to Montclair on Foothill Transit line 187, come back on Foothill's legendary line 480 then continue via MTA's line 111 and 251 into the wee hours. Our fall study tour (date to be announced) will be of Foothill Transit with an emphasis on evening and late night service.

Ms. Fran Zamnick of Carson sent us the following statement regarding why she did not renew her membership which she kindly has given permission for us to share with the membership: 'I am not renewing my membership because this wonderful body, and that it is, seems not to address what is a continuing and glaring problem in MTA: the drivers and their Union (and MTA) who have a bad, and mostly racist attitude (black v. white) towards me, a passenger!'

The annual Mobility 21 summit will be held Tuesday August 3 from 8:30 am - 2:00 pm at the Burbank Airport Hilton and Convention Center, 2500 Hollywood Way. We have been informed scholarships will not

be available this year. The Executive Secretary will solicit donations at our July meeting to help defray the cost of his attending.

Deadline to apply for Railvolution scholarships is July12: <http://www.railvolution.com/scholarship.html>

Friday Aug. 20 from 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at USC's Davidson Conference Center the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative will hold its 2nd annual Community Forum. Topics include fundraising, cultural tourism and redevelopment. Further information: <http://www.lani.org> or (213) 627-1822.

A hearing on a proposed settlement of Flores v. MTA and ASI regarding alleged violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act with respect to the provision of paratransit services will be held Friday Sept. 24 at 10 a.m. at the U.S. District Court, 312 N. Spring Street in downtown Los Angeles. A detailed notice of the proposed settlement is posted on ASI's website: <http://asila.org>

Member Ken Ruben informs us the weekend of July 17-18 the San Pedro Red Cars will celebrate their first anniversary with free rides. Along with regular cars 500, 501 and 1058, arrangements have been made to operate a very special guest car -- Pacific Electric 332, a single-truck "Birney" type streetcar will be visiting from the Orange Empire Railway Museum and will be available for rides. Further information: (310) 732-3473 or <http://www.railwaypreservation.com/page8.html> ■

June 9 I joined activists from various organizations around the state who had come to Sacramento to participate in the California Alliance for Transportation Choices' 2004 Lobby Day. Thankfully my lobby group targeted several So. Cal legislators, which allowed me to cite specific examples in the legislator's districts of how the bill we were advocating would benefit constituents. Which was just my way of applying the old adage all politics is local. By the end of the day I was tired but happy to have had a chance to experience the world of public policy making up close and personal.

All I'll say about the June 22 Sector Council joint meeting is I noticed Deputy CEO John Catoe winced when I touched in my remarks on the on-going problems with MTA's contacted bus lines as being one of the items the Councils might find worth taking a look-see at.

I guess I should call it the two sides of Zev—in the June Metro Investment Report L.A. County Supervisor (and until this month MTA Board Chair) Zev Yaroslavsky is interviewed. In discussing his current pet-project, Zev is in full spin: "We are under construction in the San Fernando Valley on the Orange Line, which is a high-speed busway connecting Warner Center to the Red Line terminus in North Hollywood. We think it is going to be a huge success and a harbinger for the future way in which MTA deals with some of its transit requirements in the outlying areas. This is a very inexpensive and very flexible project, which can be built in a relatively short period of time." How a project that costs a third of a billion (excluding land acquisition

costs) and will end to end substantially be no faster than the existing Ventura Blvd. Metro Rapid qualifies as 'high-speed' and 'very inexpensive' is beyond me.

But Zev redeems himself at the end of the interview with a brilliant summing up of the situation at LAX: "The big failure of the LAX plan is that they never talked to anybody. It was all very insular and very top down, in a dogmatic way. They should have engaged other stakeholders in the region—not just governments, but other stakeholders—in the development of the plan, which they did not do...The airport spent a fortune developing a plan that had no support. They are no closer to the end result than they were before they spent \$130 million. In fact, they will have to backtrack unless the Miscikowski compromise comes to pass, which appears to be happening. The issue with this plan, as well as with most long term planning issues, is communication." My only caveat is even with the compromise the Hahn alternative likely is still doomed...

The travails of the Antelope Valley Transportation Authority continue. Jeffrey O'Keefe, who had been hired as the new Executive Director, resigned before taking up his duties citing "health issues". Subsequently Planning Manager Randy Floyd was appointed Interim Executive Director at a salary of \$110,000. David Ashcraft of Gannett Fleming shifts to providing advice as a consultant on an as-needed basis. Cryptically the AVTA Boards directed the search for an Executive Director be "delayed" for the time being.

interesting idea of the month: David Yale of MTA in the June Metro Investment Report notes a proposal is being floated to split the California Transportation Commission into two bodies—one for Southern California and another for Northern California. Each would handle funds based on the historic north/south split. I have to admit the idea is intriguing.

The long await Rail Capacity Analysis for the proposed Coast Daylight train between San Francisco and L.A. has finally been released. A copy will be circulated at our July meeting. To sum up—the report finds that substantial capital improvements are necessary to allow the Daylight to operate without impacting existing freight train schedules. Given current tight finances this probably means the Daylight likely won't happen anytime soon.

For a good laugh take a look at the end of the consent decree countdown clock on the front page of ex-member Kym Richards' website: <http://www.transit-insider.org/>

quote of the month: "We must focus on 'aspiration based planning' considering what type of community we want to be rather than 'trend based planning' that is grounded largely in market and demographic analysis" Ellsworth Brown, President of Carnegie Museums (as quoted in the April-May Delaware Valley Rail Passenger newsletter).

I was surprised to learn one of the critical needs Access Service, Inc. has for staff training is Business Writing Skills. In some cases employees "that require the most basic training may benefit from having a weekly workshop that stresses the funda-

mentals of writing and grammar". Talk about an indictment of the education system...

Another ASI surprise is the admission that ASI Board member Rosalyn Esposito made at the May 24 ASI Board of Directors meeting: that due to a bad experience she had on a Metro Bus Esposito will not use MTA services until the situation is remedied. Further per the minutes "She expressed concern at the ways that the bus drivers handle peoples with disabilities".

Kudos to the MTA Board for its June 7 action which reduced ASI's budget to reflect a policy of only funding ADA mandated services. I imagine there will be the usual wailing in response to this but in my view it was the only responsible action MTA could take.

Mystery of the month: the July 7 agenda of the South Coast Area Transit System board of directors includes under information items "D. Newsletter from the Bus Riders Union of Ventura County --June/July 2004"

Member Philip Provencio brought to my attention an interesting tidbit contained in the North Coast Transit District Board Governance Committee July 7 agenda (http://www.gonctd.com/agendas/gov_07072004.pdf) : NCTD is organizing a transit coalition with extensive outreach to stakeholders, etc. To my knowledge this is the third such effort in our region (following Riverside Transit Agency's "Transit Now" and MTA's "Mobility 21"). Can other areas be far behind in undertaking similar mobilizations?
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MEMBERS IN ACTION

Dana Gabbard and Kevin Devlin attended the May 27 MTA Westside/Central Service Sector Council Meeting. Devlin and Ken Ruben attended the Council's meeting of July 1.

Attending the May 26 MTA Citizen Advisory Council meeting were Roger Christensen, Ken Ruben and Dana Gabbard. The June 23 CAC meeting was attended by the foregoing plus Lionel Jones.

Dana Gabbard, Ken Ruben and Woody Rosner attended the June 22 MTA Service Sector Governance Councils Annual Meet and Confer. Gabbard provided brief remarks plus distributed information about SO.CA.TA and a sample newsletter to the Council members in attendance.

Ken Ruben attended the June 8 LOSSAN (L.A. to San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency) Technical Advisory Committee meeting. In addition Ruben attended the June 23 California High Speed Rail Authority Board meeting and public hearing. And he attended the June 24 MTA Board meeting as our representative.

Ken Ruben and Bart Reed attended the June 25 Metrolink Board meeting.

Paul Castillo attended the June 25 Foothill Transit board meeting. On June 26 Castillo and Carlos Osuna attended the Foothill Transit bus rodeo in Irwindale.

Dana Gabbard was quoted in the following Los Angeles Business Journal articles: "No Best Way: L.A. Transit Saves Commuters Money, But Takes Too Much Time" (April 19), "Public Transportation Should Get you There From Here" (June 14), "Proposed LAX People Mover Could Finally Link Region by Rail" (June 28).

Addenda to last month's column: at the annual meeting of RailPAC held June 5 in San Juan Capistrano Bart Reed and Ken Ruben were re-elected to the RailPAC Board of Directors for another year.

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

(Public Affairs, from pg. 5)

I'll conclude by offering congratulations to the San Bernardino Associated Governments as it moves its offices into the newly restored Santa Fe Depot in San Bernardino, a project it co-funded and oversaw in partnership with the city of San Bernardino. Bravo!