

## **TRANSIT UPDATES**

The following proposed MTA route changes, if approved, would go into effect December 2004:

- #265 would get new weekend service, and later weekday service.
- #270 (Monrovia-Norwalk) would be rerouted in the Whittier area, away from Uptown Whittier, but toward Whittier College. It would also serve the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Metrolink station
- #275 would also be rerouted near Whittier, serving Mulberry, Broadway and Magnolia. (Again, away from Uptown)
- #362 (Telegraph Road) would be modified to provide limited stop service along most of its length. It would also provide service to the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Metrolink.
- #576 (South LA-Pacific Palisades Express) would be cancelled, due to duplication with other routes such as #705 Rapid along Vernon
- #378 Limited Stop service would be reinstated over the line of #78 (Huntington Bl).
- #170 (Hellman Ave) may be split into two routes at Montebello Towne Center; one serving the El Monte-South-El Monte-Rosemead portion; the other running between Monterey Park and Cal State LA. Split or not, the route(s) would be modified to remain on Hellman between New and Del Mar, and to remain on Garvey between Walnut Grove and Rosemead Bl.
- #267 would have a slight route modification near Rosemead/Huntington
- #487 (San Gabriel Bl; Express) would be extended from Sierra Madre to El Monte via the route of #491 (Santa Anita Bl). Current #491 service (including El Monte Busway service) would be cancelled.
- Service on #687 (Los Robles Bl) would be cancelled south of Glenarm St (Pasadena city limit). Instead it would be rerouted to Huntington Hospital via Glenarm (but see article on pg. 9!)
- Line #85 (Cypress-Verdugo) would be cancelled, and partially replaced with a new line #685. The portion north of Broadway (going to Glendale College) would be left unserved
- #181 (Hollywood-Glendale-Pasadena) would also be cancelled. The aforementioned #685 would serve the Yosemite Dr. portion of this route (It should be noted that the portion of Colorado Bl east of Hill St. would not be served by any MTA route)
- #380 would be cancelled and replaced by new Rapid #787.
- A new Rapid Bus line, designated #787, would operate limited stops over a combination of current routes #217 (Fairfax-Hollywood) and #180 (Hollywood-Glendale-Pasadena)
- #340 (King Bl-South Bay) would be replaced with new Rapid #740. (The days of express route #442 are numbered....)

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

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 beginning at 2:15 p.m. At the meeting we will also discuss whether to reschedule the late night/owl study tour to August 21 so planner Charles Powell can join us. Due to a family obligation the current date of Aug. 28 causes a conflict for him. Lastly we will also discuss whether SO.CA.TA should be a partner of the Watch the Road campaign (<http://www.watchtheroad.org/>)

Shaker's of Pasadena has been selected as the site for our annual holiday banquet.

Nate Zablen is handling arrangements and we will soon be distributing forms for members to make deposits and indicate entree choice.

Co-found Steve Crosmer plans to attend our monthly meeting on October 9th, and present his thoughts regarding the upcoming presidential election.

We are happy to note several members have been awarded scholarships for the Rail-Volution 2004 conference. Also we anticipate members will provide assistance to the Sept. 20 Unity Event we are co-sponsoring. Let the Executive Secretary know if you are interested in being an event volunteer. ■

- #108 (Slauson) would be straightlined to run along Slauson Bl in Huntington Park
- LAX service on #111 (Florence) would be reduced, in favor of extending #711 Rapid Bus trips there. #711 would be extended from the Inglewood Transit Center to the LAX City Bus center via La Brea and Century, with stops at La Brea/Century, La Cienega/Century, and Airport Bl/Century.
- #254 would be rerouted to serve the portion of Pacific/Miles vacated by the rerouted #108
- Shortlines of #2 and #302 (Sunset Bl) would terminate at San Vicente
- Service on #217 (Fairfax) would be reduced somewhat when Rapid Bus

#787 is implemented. Also, #217 would terminate at Hollywood/Vine.

A recent change to the #460 (LA-Disneyland Express) has the route operating directly via La Palma, rather than the former deviation via Crescent and Stanton. This means the front entrance of Knott's Berry Farm is no longer directly served, but requires a half-mile walk (or transfer to OCTA #29)

Montebello and Norwalk no longer accept MTA passes (except the EZ-pass). Also, Foothill will no longer accept MTA tokens as fare.

Is Norwalk Transit taking over the Whittier Transit routes? Stay tuned ... ■

It is interesting that more and more there is open discussion of the likelihood of user fees and tolls becoming a more prevalent transportation funding option in the future than heretofore. Norm King, Executive Director of the San Bernardino Associated Governments, speaks at length regarding this in the July Metro Investment Report [<http://www.metroinvestmentreport.com/mir/?module=display&format=html>]

Similar comments were made at the funding breakout session at the recent Mobility 21 summit. I think this is not an indication that tolls et al are any less controversial than before. Instead the weigh of the need for infrastructure investment and upkeep so outstrips current resources that once untouchable options gradually seem less odorous. But I foresee this process as being incremental and at time volatile.

This is true devotion: I dragged myself out of bed in the early morning of July 17 so I could attend the Gold Line eastside extension groundbreaking ceremony. The agenda was so overloaded with politicians making remarks (often at length but rarely inspired) that I began to wonder whether if it were possible that there was an elected official within 50 miles of where I sat who wasn't present and proclaiming what a great day this was. At least they provided a canopy to screen us from the sun and tubs full of bottled water buried in ice.

I was among the small handful after the ceremony was done who availed myself of the free bus transportation MTA offered for attendees to be transported to the associated festivities at Belvedere Park. As we

flew toward the eastside with a police escort one bonus of the trip was among the passengers was L.A. Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa. He soon stood at the front of the bus and held forth as part tour guide, part politico working the crowd. Watching this unfold made me more sure of the likelihood of Villaraigosa jumping into the Los Angeles Mayors' race and a possible rematch with James Hahn, which he subsequently did. The Mayor of L.A. has a great influence over transportation issues by virtue of being a national figure and controlling 4 seats on the MTA Board. With Hahn on the defensive things could get interesting.

I am intrigued to learn that MTA Internal Audit issued a report on transit funds allocation earlier this year (per p.2, agenda item #10, June 17 MTA Executive Management and Audit Committee. I hope to obtain a copy because the summary sounds intriguing: "We found that changes over the years have significantly alerted the formula allocation procedures and complicated the way funds are allocated. We also found that management controls over the allocation process needed improvement". L.A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina seems to have no shame in publicly exposing her vast ignorance on transportation issues. It is almost painful to read a transcript of her appearance July 18 on the Channel 11 local public affairs program Midday Sunday touting the Gold Line eastside extension. At one point she actually claims its ridership will exceed the Red Line! Then at the July 22 MTA Board meeting during a presentation of the annual report of the Service Sector Governance Councils to the MTA Board of

Directors Molina made comments to presenter Coby King, Chair of the San Fernando Valley Sector Governance Council, that clearly showed she has been utterly oblivious during the start-up of the Sector Councils and ignorant of their role in service oversight. Truly amazing!

Steve Schnaidt, staff director of the state Senate Transportation Committee, makes an interesting observation in the July 23 edition of Political Pulse regarding the delay until 2006 of the bullet train bond issue: by then the battles over routing (and associated lawsuits) could be fought to a conclusion and thus not cloud the election. Makes sense to me.

What doesn't make sense to me are comments by Councilmember Robin Lowe of Hemet as quoted in the minutes of the June 3 meeting of SCAG's Transportation and Communications Committee. Lowe is paraphrased as stating a concern that anyone who has gone to Europe assumes the high speed rail and maglev are similar projects to those in Europe which she stated is not the case. I hope to communicate with Ms. Lowe why she would state this regarding the proposed bullet train, which as far as I can see is proposed to be similar to the high speed systems in Japan and Europe.

Depressing moment of the month: the cowardly decision by the leadership of Mobility 21 to have the 2004 Julian Dixon Award be given jointly to the entire L.A. Congressional Delegation. And in a further irony not a single legislator was at the event to receive their award, thus the spectacle of a small crowd of aides acting

as stand-ins for the photo-op. The Dixon award is supposed to exemplify the bold leadership the late Congressman Dixon so often showed. How sad that this year it was instead reduced to a lowest common denominator standard utterly counter to the original intent of the award. Pitiful!

Well, I predicted last month that there would soon be wailing over the MTA Board refusal to fund ASI beyond ADA mandated services. At the June 8 ASI Community Advisory Committee meeting the minutes note that member Kathleen Perrin made comments on "the legal implications that Access Services would face by providing a service that is designed to function at the bare minimum as required by law, as each problem will result in a serious violation". How would a violation occur as long as the requirements of ADA are adhered to, even if only at a bare minimum?

Also last month I commented on the mystery of an item on the agenda of the Board of South Coast Area Transit in Ventura County--a reference to a Bus Riders Union of Ventura County. The kind folks at SCAT at my request sent the flyer that the agenda item was referring to. Turns out this is a new organization, which held its first meeting in May. They meet the 4th Wednesday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the E.P. Foster Library in Ventura. Some of the flyer's rhetoric is reminiscent of the BRU we all know, coming out against subcontracting and making social equity arguments, but the relationship (if any) between the two groups is at this time unknown. Those wishing more information can contact organizer Bev Edmon at (805) 659-7086. (cont'd on pg. 10)

## **COMPTON/CARSON TRIP REPORT** Dana Gabbard

Charles Hobbs proposed we explore the transit systems of Compton and Carson for our Fall 2003 study tour. Unfortunately the MTA strike forced us to reschedule the trip to Spring 2004. Saturday May 15 was the date set and Lionel Jones took the lead in planning.

Our initial rendezvous point was the fish tank at the Gateway Center at 8 a.m. By 8:15 a.m. we were on our way, riding Red Line vehicle #516 from Union Station to 7th/Metro. Among those in the group at this point were Ken Ruben, Woody Rosner, Lionel Jones, Carlos Osuna, Paul Castillo, Andy Novak and Dana Gabbard.

At 7th/Metro we boarded Blue Line vehicle #159A, "The City of South Gate". As we departed the car was full with some standees. Hank Fung joined us at Grand station. As is common with the Blue Line there was a great deal of people getting on and off along the way as we proceeded southward. At 9:04 a.m. we arrived at the Compton station, adjacent to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Transit Center.

Ed Buckley was already at the Transit Center and joined the group. While waiting we explored the Transit Center. Inside the Center were some chairs and tables for one to sit at, an indoor fountain to provide atmosphere and various offices off the corridors (mostly closed). There was a Metrobus information phone plus pay phones and bathrooms. A bus schedule rack unfortunately was empty. There was a police substation with a counter which at the time was unoccupied. In fact the place was

mostly empty. At the back was the Greyhound counter, mere steps from the Greyhound bus platform. Around this time a DowneyLINK bus drove by the Center with a headsign that said this vehicle was "training". We weren't surprised since the Downey and Compton systems use the same contractor.

Several Compton buses began arriving (the Transit center functions as a timed transfer for the Compton system) and we boarded Route 1, which displayed the destination Centennial Gateway. Fare for Compton's system is 50 cents, and the driver actually had a supply of the new Muni to Metro transfers for a quarter. The entire Compton bus is made up of El Dorado/National buses known as TRE-32. This bus we were on was #21370. The seats were cushioned and very comfortable--seating capacity was 31 and we departed with 4 passengers. We traveled thru commercial then residential areas, and even passed the First Transit yard. While ridership was mostly light it was noteworthy that at Aranbe & Rosecrans that we had 3 boardings. We returned to the Transit center at 9:50 a.m.

We decided next to explore route 5, the only one of the five Compton routes that takes nearly an hour to do its circuit (the other 4 routes take about 20 minutes to do their loop). The destination displayed was MLK Hospital and the vehicle was #21367. The air conditioning was much more noticeable on this bus (and appreciated!). We began with 4 passengers. Among the first places we passed was a shopping center, then for a time we were shadowing an MTA

line 60 bus. Accessing Compton College entailed going over a speed bump. By now the bus was empty except for us. At the Artesia Blue Line station we had 1 boarding, continuing thru the nearby industrial park and eventually past Cal State Univ. Dominguez Hills. It was at this time that Ken Ruben via cell phone made his weekly call to the internet program Let's Talk Trains, describing our adventures to the hosts and their listeners. We continued thru a markedly middle-class neighborhood and had 7 passengers board at the intersection of Compton and El Segundo. Further along we passed the famed Drew/MLK Medical Center and spotted one of the County contracted Hahn Trolleys. We arrived back at the Transit Center at 10:50 a.m. where Russ Jones and Armando Avalos were waiting to join us.

Now we boarded Route 3, with Job Center as the destination--vehicle #21368 and one passenger. Initially we were in a working class enclave, passing Thomas Jefferson Elementary School. 5 boardings occurred at El Segundo and Santa Fe. The rest of the trip was fairly uneventful except for passing a Fashion Center. Having ridden 3 of the 5 Compton routes we decided to have a lunch break and then start our exploration of the Carson Circuit system. Among the nearby eateries patronized were Subway, McDonald's and El Pollo Loco. At 12:22 p.m. we caught Blue Line vehicle #155A ("The City of Paramount") southward to the Del Amo station.

At 12:50 p.m. we boarded Carson Circuit route D, a Gillig Phantom vehicle #B43.

There were 8 passengers. The route traveled thru industrial parks interspersed with residential areas. Along Carson Street surroundings were commercial then industrial (indicated by a high bridge to carry us over a rail yard). We passed a few mobile home parks, Carson's City Hall and then crossed under the 405 freeway. At 1:10 p.m. we arrived at the hub of the Carson system, a stretch of curb alongside the South Bay Pavilion where the buses lay over and one can transfer between routes.

We next rode on Route E, a Ford Econoline/Champion #697. This bus lacked any exterior sign it was operating for the Carson system (i.e. it was unmarked), evidently a pull-out from the contractor's yard when one of the dedicated vehicles failed. The seats were cushioned and comfy, with enough space to seat 20 plus a wheelchair. We started with only two passengers. The route proceeded along some residential streets with names such as Brenner, Wadley and Wall. Many of the homes had satellite TV dishes on their roofs. Much to our surprise we spotted two military jets pass overhead, followed by two helicopters. We learned the nearby city of Torrance was holding a salute to the military which explains the presence of the flying vehicles.

Next we tried Route C, an El Dorado #314 with (thankfully) air conditioning and a seating capacity of 29. There were 5 passengers. There was some marked on and off boarding as we proceeded. Mostly unremarkable, landmarks passed (to pg. 8)

(Carson/Compton, from pg. 7)  
by the route included an Elementary School and Junior High School. We arrived back at South Bay Pavilion at 2:35 p.m. for a rest break. Some sought out a snack from the nearby AM/PM. Hank Fung decided to take off, catching a 205 to connect with the 254. Ed Buckley along with Carlos and Paul also decided to call it a day.

At 3:24 p.m. we took Route A, vehicle #311. This passed Cal State Dominguez Hills, took residential streets thru a new development and carried 3 passengers. Our last bus was Route F, #319 which also explored residential areas, besides passing the Carson Auto Mall and some gated communities. After going by the Carson Town Center mall and industrial area we once again passed the Auto Mall on our way back to the Pavilion.

We could sense the service day for Carson Circuit was winding down (one driver recognized us and said he was doing his last run to the Blue Line in case we wanted to ride back there). At this point we broke up—some taking MTA's 446/447 service south, other northward. While waiting for the bus one group spent some time in one of those 50's themed McDonald's which had as a decoration a classic jukebox were ironically was just for display.

And so ended our sojourn on the Compton and Carson transit systems. Lessons were few, but it was an enjoyable day had by all the participants. ■



Generic Laidlaw bus used as a spare on the Carson Circuit. A. Novak photo

At the August 10 San Gabriel Valley Sector Governance Council meeting, it appears that the complaining residents of San Marino and Pasadena along Los Robles Ave. have prevailed to kick bus service off a street that has seen bus service for several decades. In fact, it appears that the change goes even further than the original MTA proposal by kicking buses off all of Los Robles south of Del Mar, instead of Glenarm as originally proposed. 687 buses will no longer make the deviation via Marengo, but will continue south to Del Mar, west of Del Mar to Fair Oaks, and looping via California and Arroyo. This leaves a two and a half mile or so gap along Los Robles Ave.

Allegedly, buses have caused damage to houses through vibration, in addition to the usual complaints about noise and air pollution. They complain that buses carry few people (which is of course true since 260 was rerouted west, and 687 does not carry any through passengers). They claim that people can catch buses on Oak Knoll (Line 485), except that the residents of Oak Knoll, as reported by Jon Hillmer, have complained about buses on their street as well. And they claim that buses from 5a.m. to 11 p.m. are disturbing their enjoyment, when most of them weren't around when buses started running (in fact, a homeowner who just bought their house in October was one of the residents complaining).

Bus service has run along Los Robles Ave. since the GRID in the mid 70's, if not longer. The change will delay passengers by forcing them to travel along congested Huntington Dr., not to mention breaking connections with other routes at Huntington and Garfield/Atlantic.

One interesting note in the residents' complaints is that they complained for years to RTD with no results (since these are, after all, public arterial streets). So will we see more of this in the future? There's the long running Weymouth Corners debate (see June 2004 Transit Advocate) [as well as similar issues in South Orange County and elsewhere—ed.]

I could see a lot of narrow streets with major bus service in the same predicament. Say goodbye to the 210 and 710, for instance, down Rossmore. Or how about the 16 through Hancock Park? The 110 through Hyde Park? These changes set a terrible precedent for connectivity and encourage any group of a few dozen residents to whine loudly enough and not just reject new bus service on their streets, but remove existing service which has been on their streets for years entirely. ■



## **MEMBERS IN ACTION**

Chris Flescher had a letter on transportation taxes published in the June 2004 edition of the Tri-County News.

Bart Reed, Dana Gabbard, Nate Zaben, Roger Christensen and Eric Griswold attended the annual Mobility 21 Coalition Summit held Aug. 3 at the Hilton--Burbank Airport Hotel and Convention Center.

Paul Castillo, Charles Powell and Sam James attended the July 13 San Gabriel Valley Sector Governance Council meeting.

Roger Christensen, Bart Reed, Kevin Devlin and Ken Ruben attended the July 22 MTA Board meeting. Ruben as our Spokesperson during public comment welcomed new MTA Chair Frank Roberts. Ruben and Reed also attended the Metrolink Board meeting the following day.

Nate Zaben attended the Aug. 4 San Fernando Valley Sector Governance Council meeting.

Thomas Rubin was the subject of a profile in the Aug. 4 Daily News "Busway Stopper--Activist Works to Halt MTA Project" and a

August 5 Daily News editorial "Rubin's Revenge? Transit Foes Motives are a Mystery".

Ken Ruben made comments as our spokesperson at the Aug. 6 meeting of the Los Angeles Board of Public Works urging community concerns be taken into account regarding the old PE Subway Tunnel and Toluca Yard just north of downtown L.A.

John Ulloth attended a coffee with his Assemblywoman Cindy Montañez August 7.

August 4 Michael Divindo attended the monthly SCAT meeting at Oxnard City Hall. He reports the meeting lasted only a half-hour and there was little to be discussed.

Joe Drummond attended the LADOT Harbor DASH meeting on August 10.

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 and Legislative, from p. 5)  
Embarrassing slip-up of the month: the cover of the agenda for the June 22 MTA Service Sector Governance Council Annual Meet and Confer misspelled the names of several of the 40-some council members (worst example--Joan Leonard became Loan Leonard). Maybe next year someone could proof-read and double check the spelling?

I'll conclude by offering kudos to AVTA Interim Executive Director Randy Floyd who has instituted a policy that all AVTA staff are required to ride the bus at least once a month and present a report on their observations at the weekly staff meeting. Bravo! ■