

TRANSIT UPDATES

As of Nov. 15 the \$1 inter-county zone charge for MTA line 460 will be discontinued.

Starting January 1, 2005, the new Beach Cities Transit (serving Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, and Manhattan Beach) will start with lines 102 and 104. Route 102 will replace the MTA's route 215 and route 104 will replace Torrance Transit's route 4 service west of Hawthorne Blvd.

Route 102 will run every 20 to 45 minutes 6 days a week until 8 pm with later Friday and Saturday night service and route 104 will run every 70 minutes with no weekend service.

As funding becomes available, Beach Cities Transit will start up to five additional routes.

Foothill changes, effective Mar 2005:

#699 will no longer stop at either the Lakes park/ride in Covina or the Via Verde park/ride lot, but will run express to Fairplex and Montclair.

#497 will no longer stop in Diamond Bar, instead, it will continue eastward to a new transit center in Chino.

A new parking structure is being built at the Via Verde park/ride lot. It should open late next year.

VVTA commuter buses are now back on their regular schedule, except that the last evening trip to and from San Bernardino now runs a few minutes later.

Riverside Transit Agency is holding several public hearings regarding a fare increase. If approved, regular fares would be \$1.25 (from \$1) and day passes would go up to \$3.75 (from \$2.50). Senior fares would go up from \$.50 to \$.60. More details at http://www.riversidetransit.com/PromoPages/promo_2005fares.html

The City of Brea (Orange County) is now operating a lunchtime shuttle service in the downtown area. Stops are also made in the industrial area along Valencia Bl, and at the Brea Mall. For more information, (714) 990-7175

Amtrak will begin strictly enforcing its two carry-on, three checked baggage limit beginning November 1, 2004. Details on the Amtrak website: <http://www.Amtrak.com>

Pacific Surfliner trains once again this year will require advance reservations during the Thanksgiving travel period.

Beginning November 17 a 2nd Surfliner round trip between San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles will be added to the schedule (with bus connections to the Bay Area). Also starting the 17th some Surfliner trains will stop at the Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo or Orange Metrolink stations.

Starting in January 2005, Metrolink riders in Orange County can use any Amtrak train with a 10-trip ticket. Further details: <http://www.octa.net/news/late/102504a.asp> .■

BULLETIN BOARD

Nominations for 2005 officers and directors will be taken at our Nov. 13 meeting. This is your chance to be directly involved with the governance of your club. President Strickert has asked Woody Rosner to again chair the Election Committee

Due to health issues our speaker on the Angelino Heights trolley proposal has had to postpone his presentation to a future meeting.

Reservations and advance payments [\$16] for the annual banquet will be taken at our Nov. 13 meeting. This year we will be going to Shakers Restaurant in Pasadena. A minimum of 20 attendees are needed or the event will be cancelled. Please note no alternative event will be held if we fall short of the necessary 20 for this venue.

At our Nov. 13 meeting we will be trying out a new forum for members to express their concerns. Details are on Page 7.

Tuesday Dec. 14 Mobility 21 is holding a Coalition Meeting at the Pacific Palms resort, One Industry Hills Parkway in Industry Hills, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. RSVP to the free meeting by calling (213) 580-7579 or e-mail mobility21coalition@lachamber.org

The Transit Cooperative Research Program has released the second edition of its encyclopedia of transit facts and figures, titled Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual. For those who register on the TCRP website [<http://www.tcrponline.org/index.cgi>], the manual is available online as a PDF. The full manual is also available free of charge and can be ordered online.

The City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency is overseeing an Alvarado Corridor Transit Improvement Project in the Westlake and Pico/Union areas. Further information contact Maxine Chavez of the CRA at (213) 385-6421.

Rail Users' Network is a national organization representing the interests of all rail passengers and potential passengers. Annual membership of \$35 includes a newsletter: P.O. Box 9373, St. Louis MO 63117 or railusersnetwork@eudoramail.com

Go-21 aka Growth Options for the 21st Century [<http://www.go21.org/>] advocates increased use of freight rail. California representative Phillip Denny can be reached at 800-955-0018 or pdenny@go21.org
SAVE THE DATE: 2005 Congress for New Urbanism Annual Congress June 9-12 in Pasadena. ■

Want a good laugh? Read the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Inquiry into the Board Structure and Financial Management of the Valley Transportation Authority posted at <http://www.sccsuperiorcourt.org/jury/GJ.html>. It concludes the VTA Board is "too large, too political, too dependent on staff, too inexperienced in some cases, and too removed from the financial and operational performance of VTA". Sound familiar? (a hint--spelled M-T-A B-O-A-R-D of D-I-R-E-C-T-O-R-S). I would laugh but it is too true to be funny...

At the Oct. 27 MTA Citizen Advisory Council meeting Mark Maloney, Director of Transportation Contract Services for the agency, an interesting presentation on Access Services and Purchased Transportation. Maloney stated much progress has been made in the past year to improve the quality of MTA contact operated service (which heretofore has been notoriously unreliable). I am glad to hear things are getting better, but am puzzled why the Metro Operations Report for August shows contacted services as having essentially 25% more complaints per 100,000 boardings versus the UTU Divisions during June-August (with the exception of a spike for Division 8 in July).

Curious how much the anti-Orange Line NIMBYs (Citizens Organized for Smart Transit) are costing MTA? The estimate is the recent construction delay cost \$8-\$10 million and a recovery plan to allow the project to, open as originally scheduled in August 2005 would cost anywhere from \$5.9 to \$7.9 million. Since MTA doesn't have extra funds likely these overages will be funded by reductions in some of the

amenities of the project, like landscaping (cost estimate source: MTA Chief Capital Management Officer report to the Oct. 2004 Construction Committee meeting).

The November issue of Wheel Clicks notes the new Palmdale Metrolink station should be finished by January, although it may not open until Metrolink's spring schedule changes go into effect.

I'm quoted in a Oct. 25 L.A. Business Journal article on the Wilshire Bus Lane controversy ("Wilshire Bus Lane Blocked by Opponents Across City Limits") that it is hard to promote the concept when the initial study reveals a 30 second improvement over a mile of street running. That just isn't enough to convince people of the benefits. Hopefully some of the subsequent tests will be over greater distances and produce more substantial results that prove out the concept.

Reading the Oct. issue of Transit Times published by the Action Committee for Transit in Montgomery County, Maryland I was struck by an article that summarizes a report on the chronic funding problems of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. We often don't appreciate how relatively lucky we are in this state in re funding thanks to TDA and the local sales taxes. By the way, I was dumbstruck that the sales tax renewal effort in San Bernardino County got an 80% yes vote. Way to go SANBAG! (on the downside the Ventura tax lost and the San Diego Transnet renewal is a cliffhanger).

BRU tidbit of the month: Bus Riders Union

spokesperson Manuel Criollo in the Sept. 2 Downey Herald American ("Bus Riders Union Wants MTA to Pay for Violating Court Order") states in their view MTA continues violating court orders "... We will ask the court to charge and arrest several members of the [MTA] Board and officials of MTA". Words fail me...

Evidently MTA is seriously mulling changes to the Formula Allocation Process by which funds are divided among the local included/eligible transit operators. If true this could generate a true firestorm of controversy with political fireworks galore. Golly, gee!

political double-talk of the month: Congressman Henry Waxman in the Oct. 21 L.A. CityBeat on whether the Red Line will ever be extended to the westside: "I hope so. The big hold-up is the poor planning by the people involved and the lack of money as a result. We need to have a system that will allow people to travel long distances, not just the most expensive subway system in the history of the world, which won't really cover that much ground. There has been a legislative barrier to tunneling through the Wilshire area, because of the methane gas risks, and that may be lifted if they can show that the tunneling can be safe. The biggest problem is that the system had too many cost overruns, and the taxpayers and the city didn't want to pay those extra taxes for a system they didn't think was going to work."

South Pasadena councilman David Margrave, one of the most vociferous critics of the Gold Line, is reported by the Pasadena Star-News as having shown up at the recent accident involving the Gold Line and

demanded to inspect the train's emergency brakes. Needless to say he wasn't allowed near the accident scene and eventually was threatened with arrest if he didn't leave. I have also been told Margrave seemed to be inciting the crowd at the recent PUC hearing on the noise complaints. It should be noted the main issue Margrave campaigned on to win his council seat was alleged concerns about Gold Line noise and safety. Certainly an incentive for him to try and keep the issue overheated.

Faithful Reader recently queried why I have never mentioned the often stinky elevators in the MTA rail stations. What is there to say? The often reek for reasons I'd rather not contemplate. I have noticed in some cases the rubber mat flooring has been replaced with steel plate, which I would guess is easier to clean and non-absorbent. Overall, yuk!

Also Faithful Reader noted how quickly Mr. Villaraigosa vanished from the MTA website and that presently the list of Board members doesn't even note a vacancy exists as if 12 members is a full compliment. P.S. - no one seems knows how long it will be before Mayor Hahn selects a new appointee.

The minutes of the Sept. 27 Antelope Valley Transit Authority meeting have members of the Senior Advisory Committee complain about an AVTA staffer telling them not to air "dirty laundry" by making comments at Board meetings without following protocols. SAC member Althea Hogue dramatically announced she was resigning so she could do and say what she wanted to. The staffer responded by noting the recent upheavals at the (to p.6)

(Public & Legislative, from pg. 5)

agency and suggested having a SAC report added to the Board agenda. This assuaged Ms. Hogue sufficiently to withdraw her resignation. Stay tuned for any further developments...

More fun in the San Gabriel Valley: leaders in Baldwin Park and West Covina are contemplating withdrawal from the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, citing various "fair share" issues and complaining the COG should use weighted voting (i.e. that larger cities should have a greater say in COG affairs than smaller cities such as Bradbury or Duarte). West Covina hasn't even paid its COG dues for 2004/2005. We'll be keeping an eye on this intra-regional skirmish.

In other San Gabriel Valley funnies, Citrus College trustee Edward Ortell in a op-ed titled "With half a Gold Line, it's still Valley's turn at bat" in the Sept. 16 San Gabriel Valley Tribune touts the cost savings the Gold Line foothill extension has due to being along an existing right-of-way while claiming the Expo Line "requires displacement of many homes and businesses". Excuse me? Last I looked Expo has a dedicated right-of-way for most of its length and I am mystified where Ortell got the impression Expo would involve significant relocation of structures.

A rare victory for reason happened this month. At the Nov. 3 **San Fernando Valley Service Sector Council Meeting** MTA staff presented the Metro Transit Policy Update. As before this included the infamous dictum that buses unable to sustain 30 minute service during peak hours on their trunk shall be discontinued or handed off to another

operator. Council member (and ex-SO.CA. TA President) Kymberliegh Richards questioned why this clause as worded gave Sector no flexibility in the exercise of their oversight of service. After other members of the Council expressed similar concerns staff promised to rework the wording and by the next day the new version was in place providing the needed flexibility. It took about 18 months but finally this wrong-headed policy has been given an escape clause. On behalf of the all MTA customers, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Ms. Richards for making this happen.

Amidst the nonsense going on in the San Pedro area I am gratified resident Jean Tucker had a letter published in the Sept. 22 Daily Breeze giving accolades to the bus system.

I'll conclude by noting according to MTA Deputy CEO John Catoe's presentation to the Sept. 16 MTA Operations Committee meeting 91.9% of active ASI riders using the service at least once during April 2004-June 2004 filed no complaints while the top five complaint filers submitted an average of 6.5 complaints per month and between April and June one rider filed 24 service complaints. ■

MEMBER FORUM Hank Fung

At our Nov. 13 meeting we will be trying out a new forum for members to express their concerns. This is designed to streamline the meeting.

- In lieu of statements and announcements a member forum will be held as the last item on the meeting agenda.
- Members who wish to speak shall have two minutes to speak about any transit-related issue.
- Names will be placed on the white board and no member will be permitted to speak unless they have the floor.
- Members will be permitted to give the balance of their time to someone else so long as it is done within the two minute period originally assigned.
- No member shall be added to the list again unless all members who have not spoken have had the opportunity to speak.
- The member forum will continue for 60 minutes, until all names on the board have been called, or at the discretion of the Chair.

The Executive Board appreciates your cooperation as we attempt to facilitate thoughtful discussion. ■

DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING EXCURSION Armando Avalos

For our annual Day after Thanksgiving Trip we will be exploring San Diego Suburban service and service in Poway. We will rendezvous 10:30am at the America Plaza Station of the San Diego Trolley, right next to the Santa Fe Depot. It is recommended that members purchase a 1 Day Tripper pass at a Trolley ticket vending machine or at The Transit Store on Broadway in downtown San Diego. Also, bring a little extra cash for lunch and to board one route that does not honor the day tripper (explained in the plan).

Trip plan:

MTS San Diego Trolley, Orange Line
Leave America Plaza Station - 1039a
Arrive Euclid Station - 1101a

MTS 916
Lv. Euclid Station - 1122a
Ar. Massachusetts Station - 1142a

MTS 975
Lv. Massachusetts Station - 1152a
Ar. Lemon Grove Depot Station - 1206p

San Diego Trolley, Orange Line
Lv. Lemon Grove Depot Station - approximately 1213p
Ar. Civic Center Station - approx. 1246p

Lunch at Wendy's, 101 Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101 (corner of Brodway and 1st Av) - 1246p to 140p.

MTS 980
Lv. 1st Ave. & C St. - 155p
Ar. Rancho Bernardo & Promerado - 241p

MTS 845
Lv. Rancho Bernardo & Promerado - 257p
Ar. Promerado & Poway - 352p

IF we're lucky (ie. the 845 is early), we can probably catch:

MTS 844A
Lv. Promerado & Poway - 350p
Ar. Kirkham & Stowie - 355p

Then:
MTS 830*
Lv. Kirkham & Stowie - 400p

This is, IF we're lucky. If not then we wait at Poway & Promerado for about a half hour for our last bus:

MTS 830*
Lv. Poway & Promerado - 420p
Ar. Brodway & Kettner (near Santa Fe Depot) - 519p

*NOTE: You will have to pay full fare on this route. All MTS 800-series Commuter Express routes do not honor the day tripper. Regular Fare - \$2.50
Senior/Disabled - \$1.00.



PASS TRANSIT SYSTEM Charles P. Hobbs

For several years, Banning and Beaumont (two cities on I-10 between San Bernardino and Palm Springs) have both operated bus service. Each city had its own bus routes, and travelling from one city to the other required a transfer at the city limits/

But as of October 2004, this all changed with the formation of "Pass Transit".

This is a "pseudomerger" of Banning Bus and Beaumont Transit, the agencies are still separate but the bus liveries are now the same across the system, and there are now overlapping lines serving both cities, as well as Cherry Valley and Cabazon.

Line #1 (Green) starts at the Highland Springs K-mart transfer point (all lines stop here, and this is also the transfer point for the RTA buses). #1 runs east along Ramsey, then at the city's edge, hops on I-10 for a trip to Cabazon (serving the Outlet Mall, Southeast Cabazon, and the Morongo Casino). Then #1 returns westbound on Ramsey, continuing into Beaumont (6th St) and looping around City Hall before returning to the K-Mart.

#2 (Purple) starts near Beaumont City Hall, and does a one way loop in Beaumont via Elm, Oak Valley, and Palm before following Route #1 via 6th/Ramsey. It also goes to Cabazon, although only the Outlets, the Community Center, and Casino Morongo are served on this route. (Route #1 serves more of Southeast Cabazon as well).

#1 and #2 each run every 120-minutes, providing 60-minute service along the combined portion of these two lines. But 6th/Ramsey is also served by other routes .

#3 (Gray) is a big one-way loop in Beaumont/Cherry Valley via 6th, Highland Springs, Cherry Valley Blvd and various nearby streets, Cherry, 16th, and Beaumont Ave. Service runs every 56 minutes....

#4 (Orange) is another one-way loop running within the city of Beaumont. 60-minute headway

#5 (Yellow) is the old Banning "Northern Route" (eastbound on Ramsey, westbound on Nicolet)

#6 (Pink) is the old Banning "Southern Route"; it returns to K-mart westbound on Ramsey.

These buses run Mo-Fri roughly between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m, and on Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The fare is 50 cents; a 25 cent zone fare is charged for trips to/from Cabazon. Free transfers are available between routes; transfers to/from RTA are also available (a 50-cent upgrade fee is paid when transferring *to* an RTA bus, though)

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MEMBERS IN ACTION

Addenda to last month's column: Dave Snowden also attended the RailPAC Oct. 2 meeting in Fullerton.

Tom Ruben was quoted in the Sept. 23 City-Beat article "State of the Union" regarding security at Union Station.

Dana Gabbard, Juanita Dellomes and Bart Reed attended the Access L.A. City Hall 2004 event presented by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce Oct. 7. Ken Ruben on our behalf greeted Amtrak CEO David Gunn when he arrived at L.A. Union Station on Oct. 13 and bid Gunn farewell when he departed the next day. Mr. Gunn's railcar (the Beech Grove) arrived with the Coast Starlight and left with the Southwest Chief.

Oct. 13 there was an Open House for the Union Station Run Thru Project. Members who attended included Bart Reed, Dana Gabbard, Woody Rosner, Ken Ruben, Kevin Devlin, Roger Christensen, Bart Reed and Robert Meinert.

Attending the Oct. 23 meeting of the Rail Users' Network was Ken Ruben, Dave Snowden, Dana Gabbard, Lionel Jones, Barry Christensen, Roger Christensen, Michael Milroy, Robert Meinert and Bart Reed. Ken Ruben and Kevin Devlin were the only members of the public who attended the Nov. 4 MTA Westside/Central Sector Governance Council meeting. Ruben, Devlin and Dana Gabbard attended the Oct. 27 MTA Citizen Advisory Council meeting (of which Roger Christensen is Vice Chair).

Mr. Ruben attended the dedication of the construction offices for the Gold Line Eastern Extension Oct. 29. He also was an in-

vited guest for an Oct. 16 tour of the Gold Line sponsored by the city of Culver City; the tour resulted in an article in the Oct. 21 issue of the Culver City Observer in which Ruben was quoted favorably regarding the Gold Line and eventual Expo Line.

In addition Ruben attended the Oct. 19 meeting of the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee plus Big Blue Bus community meetings held Oct. 25 in downtown Los Angeles and Oct. 28 in Venice. Also he attended the Oct. 21 Culver City Homeowners Association meeting at which MTA CEO Roger Snoble spoke on the Expo light rail project.

Dave Snowden and Bart Reed attended the Nov. 4 South Bay Council of Governments Transit Working Group meeting. Reed on behalf of the Transit Coalition gave a presentation on use of the Harbor Subdivision rail right of way to connect the South Bay to the Southern California rail network.

Nov. 6-7 Mr. Ruben attended the San Pedro Red Car event at which the 3571 Steam Locomotive was on display.

The Oct. 13 L.A. Downtown News Sam Hall Kaplan commentary "State of the Union" regarding the encroachment of Union Station by various buildings being constructed nearby was prompted by John Ulloth bringing the situation to Mr. Kaplan's attention. Way to go, John!

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! ■