

TRANSIT UPDATES

Major MTA route changes, effective June 26:

Metro Red, Green and Gold Line trains will stop running an hour earlier at night.

Weekday #110 buses will be extended to Jefferson and Lincoln

#115 will be straightlined in the Westchester area (buses will stay on Manchester, except for school trippers)

#119 will be rerouted from 108th to Century Bl (due to traffic light reconfiguration)

#154 will no longer serve Tampa (see #242/243) but will continue to Reseda/Ventura.

Midday service on #168, #202, #211 and #215 will be cancelled; remaining service on #211 and #215 will run every 30 minutes.

Two "loop" routes will run in the West Valley: #242/243 will serve Tampa and Winneka Aves, while #244/#245 will operate on De Soto and Topanga Cyn. However, #242 will not serve Northridge Metrolink but stay on Tampa. The portion of #245 south of Ventura will be handled by new (weekday-only) #654.

#270 will be rerouted in the Whittier area

#305 will run every 30 minutes during weekday peak hours, 45-60 minutes other times,

#418 will be renumbered #353 and routed off Laurel Cyn and onto Lankershim. #426 will be renumbered #363, but will not have its route changed (yet?)

#450 is a new peak hour express service

operating between Artesia Station and Downtown LA. It will only make one intermediate stop: at the I-110/Green Line station.

#611 will be rerouted via Compton Blvd, Vernon Ave, and Florence Ave.

New Rapid Lines: #714 Beverly Bl. Rapid (Peak Hour Only) and #717 Fairfax Rapid

Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus will also start a Rapid bus service on June 27. Dubbed "Rapid 3", this service will make limited stops along the Lincoln Blvd corridor between Downtown Santa Monica and the LAX/Aviation Station area. Service will be provided during weekday peak hours only. Fare will be the same as regular Big Blue Bus service.

LADOT will reroute Downtown DASH "A" away from Flower/Figueroa south of 7th St. (This portion of the route would still be served by DASH "F"). Instead, DASH "A" would follow the route of DASH "E" into City West, looping via via 7th, Witmer and Wilshire.

The City of Los Angeles is considering moving the Spring Street bus contraflow lane on to Main St (one block east).

Long Beach Transit has approved a fare increase, effective July 1. Cash fares remain the same (except no more student cash fares). Local transfers (to other Long Beach Transit buses) have been replaced with Day Passes (\$2.50 reg/\$1.50 senior/disabled). Interagency transfers are now \$.50. Monthly passes are now \$50 (\$31 student, \$19 senior/disabled) and the Aqualink boat now costs \$3 per ride.

Metrolink fares will also go up 4.5% as of July 1 (1% above the planned 3.5% increase due to higher fuel costs).

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BULLETIN BOARD

Our thanks to Nancy Michali for her illuminating presentation (and numerous hand-outs) on Metro Connections at our May 14 meeting. Also at that meeting we adopted a position of being opposed to MTA's plans to cut back some late night rail service and subsequently communicated our stance in a letter sent to MTA Board Chair Frank Roberts. We will discuss the MTA's proposed service changes for Dec. 2005 at our June 11 meeting.

A proposal has been made to amend the bylaws to specify "All work products of the Secretary and Treasurer are property of SOCATA and shall be turned over at the end of each person's term". Also it has been suggested regarding Committees the bylaws specify "The work products of Committees are property of SOCATA; upon dissolution all Committee work products shall be turned over". Just who they should be turned over to needs to be clarified.

Lastly member Joseph Dunn asks we consider revoking section 6.1.2 of the bylaws which currently states "The Executive Committee shall have the authority to waive regular membership dues for one year on a case by case basis with documentation of special circumstances." Dunn dubbed it a demeaning process that should be discontinued.

To accommodate the July 9 opening of the San Diego Trolley Mission Valley extension our meeting that month will be held a week later, on July 16.

A preview tour of the Trolley extension is being sponsored by the San Diego Electric Railway Association on June 25. This includes a tour of the shops in downtown and a ride on the new segment. Registration

forms are available for download: <http://www.sdera.org/Excursion2005Form.pdf> Tickets will be available for pick-up at the event. Cost for SDERA members is \$35@, non-members \$40@. ERHA members can order tickets for \$35 (deadline June 18) via the ERHA website: www.erha.org

An open house for the Artesia Transit Center will be held on Wednesday, June 29, from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Further information: (310) 225-6040

The Fund Proposition 42 Coalition is a group comprised of representatives from business, labor and transportation agencies working to preserve state transportation funding which we will consider joining at our June 11 meeting. Further details: <http://fundprop42.com/>

Rick Thorpe, Executive Officer, Construction - Project Management at MTA, will be the speaker at the next Friends 4 Expo Transit semi-annual general meeting, 7:00 p.m. Thursday evening, June 16, 2005, at Hamilton High School library (second floor, main building) 2955 Robertson Boulevard.

The Train Riders' Association of California Board will have a public session from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at its Saturday July 16 meeting. This will be at the depot at the National City station for the San Diego Trolley. Event is free and open to all. California 2025: It's Your Choice summarizes a research project of the Public Policy Institute of California on the challenges California faces between now and 2025. A printed copy can be requested free via the PPIC website: <http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=600> Save the date: Mobility 21 4th Annual Transportation Summit will be held Monday Nov. 14 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Long Beach Convention Center. ■

As mentioned in the last column at the recent Foothill Transit annual meeting it was announced Cluster 3 was unsuccessful in electing someone to their seat on the Executive Board. John Fasana of Duarte (who also sits on the MTA Board) was the incumbent. From what I overheard of the Cluster meeting one Councilman brought up objections of various sorts (this fellow was one of the 2-3 councilman attending the meeting who seemed to be naysayers) and perhaps ran against Fasana and caused a tie vote (?) Another election was held before the May 27 Executive Board meeting and the summary on the Foothill website indicates this time Mr. Fasana was elected to Cluster 3's seat on the Board. As far as I can tell this received zero coverage in the media.

Also last month I noted Foothill Transit is reconsidering plans to move its headquarters to Glendora, where Foothill would have built a new building. Reporter Karen Rubin in the June 2 San Gabriel Valley Tribune article "Transit agency mulls closer facility instead of Glendora site" revealed Foothill is in talks to possibly stay in West Covina by moving its corporate headquarters to the existing Washington Mutual Bank building.

I wrote MTA Deputy CEO John Catoe inquiring why the Metro Operations Performance Report formerly distributed to the Board each month was discontinued with the Dec. 2004 report. Mr. Catoe in his response explained "As part of Metro's budgeting process to reduce our \$100 million deficit, we eliminated positions that were involved in the production and distribution of this report. The copying and distribution of this report was part of this budget reduction process. We will continue however, to provide this information every four months to the Board". This should be a wakeup call to anyone who thinks MTA is crying wolf about its current fiscal woes.

The good news is the Governor is allowing

the Prop 42 funds this year go to fund transportation projects (and our members at the May 14 SO.CA.TA meeting signed a letter of thanks to Governor Schwarzenegger). Meanwhile Federal reauthorization is a mixed bag: California is well represented on the conference committee that will try to hash out differences between the Senate and House bills. But the impasse continues between the Senate and White House over whether the total spending should be \$283.9 billion or \$295 billion with the President threatening a veto of any bill larger than the lower amount. And a 7th extension of TEA21 has been passed in the interim.

When Howard Fine of the Los Angeles Business Journal for the May 30 article "Santa Ana Freeway Widening May Move Into Fast Lane" contacted me for a quote on the plans to widen I-5 in southern L.A. County, I inwardly groaned. I have long lamented this billion dollar project motivated in part by a bottleneck created when the segment of the freeway widened in Orange County shrinks down at the L.A. County boundary. But I tried to moderate my tone in making comments given the project appears a done deal: "There is a bottleneck there and I understand that. But we shouldn't fool ourselves though. The new lanes will fill up just as soon as they open and it will be just as congested". I went out of my way to urge Fine contact boosters of the project and I was gratified he included a paragraph by Steve Finnegan of the Auto Club. Why would I make an effort to make sure supporters were represented regarding a project I am unenthused about? Because I believe a dialogue from various points of view is important if we can ever hope to seriously grapple with the challenges we face.

I was delighted at the clever Ted Rall cartoon in the May 12 L.A. CityBeat mocking the Anaheim to Vegas Maglev proposal. And was even more delighted to have my letter lauding the cartoon while bashing Ve-

gas maglev and SCAGLEV plus a closing swipe at monorail and personal rapid transit appeared in the May 19 L.A. CityBeat ("Runaway Train").

On a more somber note, my comments on the unexpected recent death of Torrance Transit Director Thomas Whittle appeared in the Ups & Downs column in the May 20 Daily Breeze. As I noted, Whittle will be much missed.

The May 27 L.A. Alternative Press interview with Center Theatre Group's founding director Gordon Davidson ("Curtain Call") on the occasion of his retirement includes some interesting comments by Davidson on how changes in transportation have shaped the cultural landscape:

"[In the early 1960s] people didn't complain about traveling, it was 15, 20 minutes from the Westside. I used to go home after a days' work here, in the beginning days, leave at 6, have dinner with my kids, read them a story and come back in time for an 8 o'clock curtain. Now I'm lucky if I go one way. I know it's deterring people [from coming downtown] The city has to solve it. They've not been forward-thinking. I know the subway, there's an attempt, and buses, but it's deeper than that."

At the April 6 meeting of the South Coast Area Transit Board of Directors SCAT General Manager Deborah Linehan made an observation in the aftermath of the recent natural gas disruption: the SCAT Board took the Compressed Natural Gas fuel path in the mid 1990s on the assurance that there would be a reliable supply of high quality gas (high methane, low propane). On that basis a CNG fleet was purchased and CNG fueling station built. The minutes have GM Linehan conclude "Now, ten years down the road the Gas Company indicates that SCAT bus engines should be able to use low methane, high propane gas".

At the May 23 Access Services Board of Directors meeting Executive Director Alan Cantrell in item #15 reiterated the appropriate role of ASI's Community Advisory

Committee, an issue I have mentioned in previous columns: "After several contentious meetings, where discussions were not focused on the CAC agenda topics, but on personal ridership experiences or general displeasure with the paratransit plan proceedings, as well as discourteous statements made at workshops or CAC subcommittee meetings to or about Access Services staff members, I felt that the CAC had lost its focus and needed to be reminded in person of its official role and responsibilities ... Service complaints are not the purpose of the CAC, and should not become the main focus of every meeting. Following my presentation to the group, I heard from four members of the CAC who thanked me for addressing these issues ... [At past CAC meetings] some discussions were dominated by more vocal members to the point that other members' viewpoints were not heard. Of particular concern is when the CAC votes to recommend a course of action at one meeting, only to be challenged by CAC members at subsequent meetings who were not present at the initial meeting where the vote took place. Staff and the Chair of the CAC will not permit revisiting of issues unless the item has been properly agendaized for reconsideration."

Randy Rentschler, spokesman for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, in the article "Bay Transit Headed Wrong Way" (SF Chronicle June 3) observes "The real problem isn't that transit is being made less accessible to people ... Society is growing in a way that transit can't support. If we want transit to succeed, we have to live in a different way."

I'll conclude by noting I had a good laugh at the reaction John Chalker of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce had when asked in the May Metro Investment Report in comparison to San Diego how does he think Los Angeles is handling its airport expansion process: "Well I don't know that L.A. is handling their situation any better than we are handling ours". Brother, Mr. Chalker, you hit the nail right on the head!

MEMBERS IN ACTION

addendums to the column last month: Ken Ruben also attended the L.A. County City Selection Committee meeting held May 5 in Culver City; James and Marilyn Gusky were also among the members who attended Fullerton Railroad Days.

Joseph Dunn attended the April 19 Big Blue Bus meeting held at UCLA along with the May meetings of the San Fernando Valley and Westside/Central Sector Councils.

Nate Zablen spoke at the June 1st Metro San Fernando Valley Service Sector Governance Council meeting. He advocated the implementation of Rapid Express bus service connecting the North Hollywood terminus of the Orange Line busway with Burbank and Glendale. He also called for a di-

rect transit link between the North Hollywood station and Bob Hope airport.

Armando Avalos, Ken Ruben, Dave Snowden and Chaffee Yiu attended the June 4 Torrance City Yard Open House.

Ken Ruben, Lionel Jones and Dana Gabbard attended the May 23 Annual Meet and Confer of the Service Sector Governance Councils. Gabbard presented a brief statement while Jones distributed copies of it to attendees.

Among those at the May 21 South Bay Sector Council meeting which was followed by Division 18's Open House were Dave Snowden, Paul Castillo, Carlos Oscuna, Ken Ruben, J.K. Drummond, Lionel Jones, Chaffee Yiu, Andy Novak, Armando Avalos and Craig Barnes. ■

(Transit Updates, from page 2)

The fare system is also being changed: the current zone-based system will be replaced by a system based on the driving distance between stations. The midday off-peak discount fare is being discontinued (it remains in effect for weekend services)

Santa Clarita Transit will start operating a new service (Line #8) between McBean Transfer station and Sylmar Metrolink. More information as it becomes available...

The VVTA board voted to end the commuter service (Victor Valley-San Bernardino and Victor Valley-Rancho Cucamonga) effective July 1.

Parklink is a new shuttle service for the Santa Monica Mountains. On weekends and holidays, 30 minute-headways are provided on a loop serving Malibu Canyon Road, Mullholland Highway, Kanan Dune Road, and PCH. Stops are made at various state parks and trailheads along the way. Fare is \$5; Metro day passes also accepted. For more information: further information: (805) 370-2301 or <http://www.nps.gov/samo/shuttle/> ■