

# TRANSIT UPDATES

## North County Transit District

NCTD is proposing a number of service changes, to be effective 8/13/06. They are also proposing fare increases, to be effective on a to-be-determined date in "fiscal year 2007".

A sampling of the changes:

**COASTER** - for October through March, would not run the Friday-only late trains, due to low ridership

**Route 303** - improve weekday headways to 15 minutes both directions middays; improve headways to 30 minutes nights eastbound, to midnight weekdays and 11:30 PM weekends

**Route 349** - to re renumbered 349A. Will alternate service with new 349B, to run same route but counter-clockwise. Current route is hourly; no increase in frequency, so each will run every two hours

**Route 350** - improve frequency to every 10 minutes 6 AM-4-PM weekdays

**Route 395** - All trips to serve Camp Del Mar, to replace Route 394 service [*Does this include those late-night express runs? - ed*]; Headway increased to every 3 hours weekdays, until 4 PM Mon-Thurs and 1 PM Friday; Headway decreased to 90-minutes after 4 PM Mon-Thurs, and to hourly after 3 PM Friday; last Friday trip to leave Oceanside 12:20 AM

**Routes 316, 394, 419, and Del Mar race shuttle:** all to be discontinued

Among the fare proposals, day passes and single-trip fares for buses and trains would increase by 25¢, except for no increase when transferring from bus to Coaster, and senior/disabled day passes would go up by 50¢.

Public workshops are planned for Plaza

Camino Real in Carlsbad Weds. 5/10 from 7-10 AM, and at Oceanside Transit Center on Fri. 5/12 from 2-6 PM. Public hearing will be Thurs. 5/18 at NCTD board room, 810 Mission Ave. in Oceanside. Information is available on most NCTD buses, at NCTD transit centers, or online at <http://www.gonctd.com>

## Orange County Transportation Authority

OCTA Service Change highlights, effective June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006 unless noted:

**29** - add 1 later trip northbound nightly, and 1 later southbound trip Sat-Sun

**35** - add earlier trips Sat-Sun

**37** - add 1 later trip each way M-F

**50** - Sun/Hol. schedule to match Saturday

**54** - headways improved to 15-minute peak weekday, and 30-minute midday Sunday

**57** - north end of shorts extended to State College/Via Burton

**89** - three later round trips Sat-Sun between Laguna Hills and Laguna Beach, June to September only

**205** - later trips Sat-Sun, June-Sept. only

**633, 670, and 691** - express buses serving Orange County Fair from Fullerton Park n Ride, Goldenwest Transportation Center, and Junipero Serra Park n Ride, all weekends in July

**686** - new weekend service connecting Metrolink at Irvine Transportation Center with Irvine Spectrum

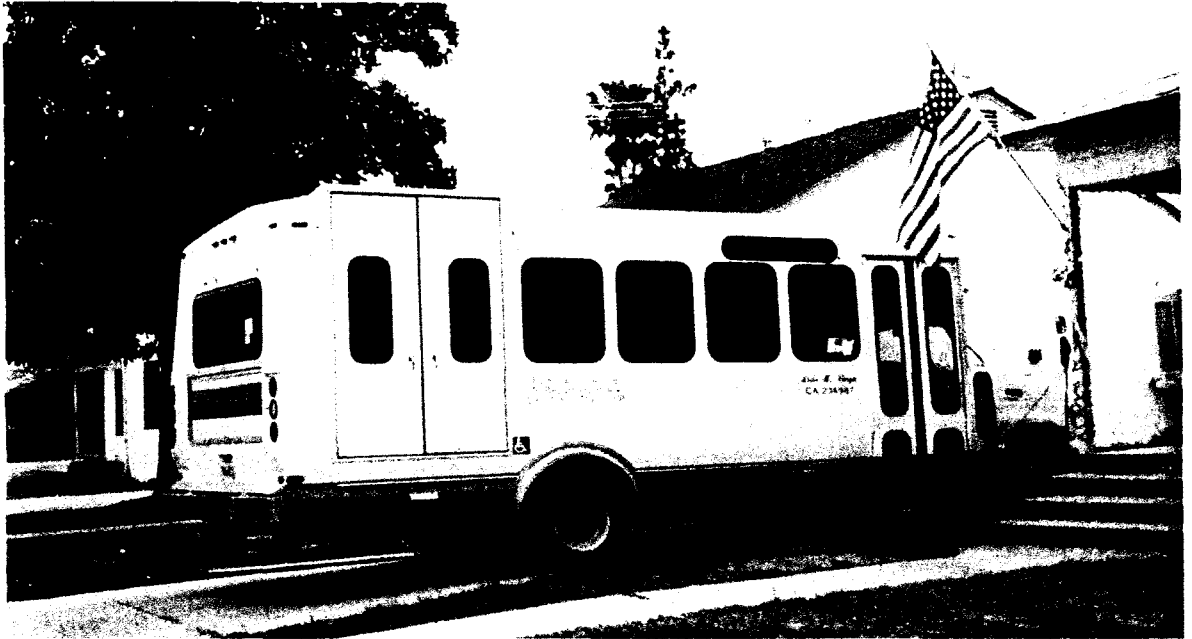
**721** - officially remove stop at Rosecrans on Harbor Transitway (already in effect as a detour)

**757** - extend to Pomona Fairplex Park & Ride, re-route to serve Main/LaVeta, and timed-transfer at Diamond Bar Park & Ride with new 758; Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 757 becomes a contract line

**758** - new contract route, from Chino Transit Center to Irvine Spectrum via Diamond Bar and Brea

OCTA's contract buses, including paratransit, will be operated by Veolia Transportation starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>, taking over from Laidlaw. Veolia, which most people still know as Connex, will use the former OCTA Base 7 in Irvine.

Metrolink Orange County Line Saturday service begins on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Sunday service starts up July 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Inland Empire- Orange County line will offer three round trips on Saturday and two round trips on Sunday beginning July 15<sup>th</sup>. 🚌



*Former OCTA cutaway van, now a farm labor shuttle in Reedley, CA - Mark Strickert photo*

## **MEMBERS IN ACTION**

Russ Jones attended the Spring Motor Bus Society convention, held this year in Miami.

A correction to April newsletter: Russ Jones also participated in the day after Thanksgiving tour; he met up with the group at Warner Center, arriving there via Commuter Express line 422.

Members at the APTA 2006 Bus & Paratransit Conference: Craig Barnes (Roadeo, Bus

Expo), Andrew Novak (Bus Expo), Carlos Oscuna (Roadeo), and Mark Strickert (Bus Stop Safety panel).

Sam James, Margaret Hudson and Juanita Dellomes attended the SCAG Regional Housing Summit held April 20 in Torrance.

Eric Griswold, Ken Ruben, and Dave Snowden attended the Airport Master Plan workshop at the LAX Flight Plan Learning Center on March 18. 🚌

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

Less than one month after he retired from the MTA after 72 years of service to the agency and its predecessors, "Employee of the Century" Arthur Winston passed away April 13 in his sleep. Our condolences to his friends and loved ones at their loss. Local media coverage: <http://www.transit-insider.org/mediawatch/0417.htm>

### **SO.CA.TA Events**

Members interested in distributing flyers publicizing SO.CA.TA can contact the Executive Secretary at (213) 388-2364 or [dgabbar@hotmail.com](mailto:dgabbar@hotmail.com).

Save the dates for the following upcoming group activities (details to appear in future newsletters):

A tour of the Pacific Railroad Society Museum in San Dimas on Saturday, June 17. Director Ken Ruben is coordinating this.

Our annual Night Owl exploration will be Friday July 14-Saturday July 15 and includes Line 622 (Green Line emulator) and the 1st Orange Line trip of the morning from Warner Center via Union Station Fly-Away and lines 156 and 150 from downtown LA.

A study tour of Santa Clarita Transit (including new route 8) is set for Saturday Sept. 16; Public Affairs co-chair Kymberleigh Richards is the planner for this trip.

**BONUS:** the unofficial "X" Tour trip on MTA express buses (lines 450x, 577X) on an upcoming Friday night. Contact Dana Gabbar me if you want to be part of this, at (213) 388-2364 or [dgabbar@hotmail.com](mailto:dgabbar@hotmail.com)

We are looking at the 4th Friday of May -- May 26 -- for the informal tour of MTA X service. How does that look for those who might want to participate?

### **Other Meetings and Events**

#### *Bike To Work Week*

The annual bike week is May 15-19.

Among the transit agency activities:

- ⌘ OCTA and Metrolink – pins to people who sign up and participate at least one day, and a prize drawing. Register at <http://www.octa.net/biketowork>, or call 714-560-5573
- ⌘ Free rides for people with bikes and/or bike helmets Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup> on the following agencies: Beach Cities Transit (BCT), Commerce, Commuter Express, Gardena, MTA/Metro, Montebello, and Norwalk. Do note that BCT, Commerce, and Gardena buses may not have bike racks, there are restrictions as to when and how bikes ride on Metro Rail, and that everyone rides free on Commerce Municipal Bus Lines anyway. Registered participants receive a tire patch kit, and are eligible for prize drawings. Register at <http://www.metro.net/xxx???>, or call 213-922-2811

The Westside/Central governance council meetings have been moved to the second Wednesday of the month from 5:00pm to 7:00pm

May 17 at 6:30 p.m. the San Fernando Valley Service Sector is holding a Metro Connections Workshop at the Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd.

The Exposition Light Rail Construction Authority is holding Community Meetings to update the public about the status of the project.

Wednesday, May 17, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Culver City, 4117 Overland Ave. This location is served by Commuter Express 437 and Culver City-Bus route 3.

Tuesday, May 23, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. at Los Angeles Trade Technical College, 400 W. Washington Blvd. This meeting will be held in the Cafeteria (Building H on campus map). The campus is easily accessible from the Metro Blue Line.

These meetings are the second and third in a series of three along the project alignment. The first meeting was held at Dorsey High School on May 4. If you have questions about these meetings, please call 323-669-7655. For more detailed information about the Exposition Light Rail project, visit <http://www.buildexpo.org>

Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative Community Forum will be held Thursday May 18 at the USC Davidson Conference Center (Jefferson/Figueroa) from 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The event is free and includes a breakfast buffet. Registration information at <http://www.lani.org/forum.htm> or (213) 627-1822.

Built Environment and Transportation: Impacts on Public Health is a UCLA extension conference being held Tuesday May 23 from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the MTA headquarters building. Cost is \$100. For further details: (310) 825-7885.

Mobility 21 Coalition meeting - Friday, June 2, 9 a.m.-11 a.m., at Luminarias Restau-

rant, 3500 W. Ramona Blvd., Monterey Park. Further information: (213) 922-7423

The annual Torrance's City Yard Open House will be on Saturday, June 3, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. The yard is located at 20500 Madrona Avenue.

OCTA Customer Relations will host a Bus Customer Service Roundtable discussion on Wednesday, June 14, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. at the OCTA Administration Building, 600 S . The roundtable will be conducted in Spanish and will focus on marketing, customer service and bus scheduling. If you know any Spanish-speaking bus riders over the age of 18 who would like to participate, please forward their contact information to Adam Raley at (714) 560-5510. Participants will receive \$25 and a free 30-day bus pass.

A Transportations Solutions Summit for L.A. and surrounding areas will be held Sept. 13-14 at the Biltmore in downtown Los Angeles. Cost ranges from \$795 to \$1695. Further details: (866) 298-9343.

A Regional Infrastructure Summit will be held September 24-25 in San Francisco, CA. Registration is \$275. More information: 415-445-8975 x100.

The next Faster Freight-Cleaner Air Summit will be held Feb. 26-28, 2007 in Long Beach. For more information call (310) 314-1934 or [info@ffca2007.com](mailto:info@ffca2007.com)

Citizens United to Save South Pasadena is dedicated to stopping the 710 freeway extension. Annual membership is \$10 to 1502 Fremont Av., S. Pasadena CA 91030. Further information: (626) 799-2876 or [NO710@sbcglobal.net](mailto:NO710@sbcglobal.net) ☐

They did it! The leaders of the legislature finally pulled together an infrastructure bond package that reached the Governor's desk for the November ballot. And just in time as waiting in the wings was an alternative measure if a deal wasn't forthcoming championed by a coalition called Californians to Improve Traffic Now [<http://www.close42loophole.com>]. This would have prevented the diversion of the sales tax on gasoline to fix budget deficits as has happened in past years. The bond deal included provisions closing this "loophole" in Proposition 42 but allowing some leeway for "borrowing" the sales tax during lean years. This to satisfy concerns of the California Teachers Association. CTA (a key Democratic interest group) worried a hard closure of the loophole might endanger guaranteed state education spending mandated under Proposition 98. Yes, this is somewhat arcane but is just the sort of stuff that often shapes how business is done in Sacramento.

One little noticed aspect of the deal is the \$10 billion bond for high speed rail slated for the November 2006 ballot is now to be delayed until 2008. But at least the bond wasn't cancelled, which it is rumored was discussed at one point by the deal makers.

You could have knocked me over with a feather. There was no hint in the agendas I religiously read online of the Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority that turmoil was roiling the agency (which serves Big Bear and Crestline). Yet articles from the Big Bear Grizzly posted on our member board by Charles Hobbs revealed that earlier this year MARTA received an unsatisfactory carrier inspection report from the CHP and was cited for nine drug and alcohol related viola-

tions. Shortly thereafter General Manager Jerry Davis announced his resignation effective July 9. Obviously this is an organization undergoing some trying times.

Here is another oddball item straight out of the Twilight Zone: Remember the strange saga of the San Gabriel Valley Transit Authority I discussed last month? I recently via Google discovered that Yosuf "Yo" Maiwandi, the auto repair shop owner behind SGVTA gave his side of the story in a series of e-mails he exchanged w/blogger Ron Larson, an ex-LA resident who now lives in Australia. I tipped local blog L.A. Observed about this and according to Larson its story with links caused a spike in traffic for his site. Meanwhile the Los Angeles Times reports Monrovia and Sierra Madre have now rescinded their agreements with SGVTA. This is just plain a weird story. Read the e-mails here:

[http://ron\\_larson.blogspot.com/2006/03/san-gabriel-valley-transit-authority.html](http://ron_larson.blogspot.com/2006/03/san-gabriel-valley-transit-authority.html)

And how is this for bizarre: three water agencies create an agency called the Riverside Orange Corridor Authority in the hopes of landing millions in transportation funds to help pay for studies of the proposed tunnel between Riverside and Orange counties. This created a backlash from residents of Southern Orange County reacting to the prospect of traffic from the tunnel pouring onto their streets and alarmed at talk the new agency might circumvent local input by having the authority to hire staff, borrow money and possibly build the tunnel, which would cost at least \$2 billion. Eventually two local Congressman stepped in and worked out a deal with the studies going forward via cooperative agreements be-

tween existing agencies (including OCTA, RCTC and MWD).

From the weird to the mundane: what is the significance of Glendale city council member Ara Najarian being named to the MTA Board? He is the third member that formerly was a Metro Sector Governance Council member (after Bonnie Lowenthal and David Fleming).

The Los Angeles City Council Legislative Analyst office recently issued an assessment of the federal transportation trust funds. I had a chance to quiz Congressman Henry Waxman at Westside Urban Forum's April 11 event whether he agreed with the Analyst's bleak conclusions: that the trust funds will soon have significant shortfalls. Waxman gave his assent to the report's conclusions and said he saw no sign the Congressional leadership has a strategy to deal with the situation. This portends dire prospects of any federal funding of the Red Line extension in the Wilshire corridor.

Other tidbits gleaned at the event: Zev Yaroslavsky now speaks about the need to reconsider the diversion of the Exposition line around Cheviot Hills. Also that L.A. during the past state transportation bond negotiations was pushing it include 3/4 of a billion for extending the subway to Fairfax. No wonder there were squawks as the initial round of bond talks broke down that one deal killer was L.A. wanting too big of a share of the proceeds.

I am glad my letter describing our opposition to the MTA Board bill (SB 1507) appeared in the April 30 Daily News. And also our denunciation of the bill was quoted by the Senate Office of Floor Analysis in their analysis of the bill: [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/bill/sen/sb\\_1501-1550/sb\\_1507\\_cfa\\_2006\\_0503\\_114301\\_sen\\_floor.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/bill/sen/sb_1501-1550/sb_1507_cfa_2006_0503_114301_sen_floor.html)

One puzzle regarding this bill is why Los Angeles was caught flat footed (they neglected to send a spokesperson when it had its first Committee hearing). This is especially odd as the Chief Lobbyist for the city is Andrew Antwih, who until recently was a consultant to the Assembly Transportation Committee. Thankfully the city (if belatedly) has gotten its act together and the latest word is proponent Senator Margett in the face of this opposition has asked the bill be placed in the inactive file.

Another consultant to the Assembly Transportation Committee has left to become a lobbyist. This time it is Gus Khouri who is the new Legislative Advocate for the California Transit Association. Is this the latest example of the brain drain among legislative staff with transportation expertise I lamented previously?

Rick Bishop, Executive Director of the Western Riverside Council of Governments, I think hits the nail on the head in his April Metro Investment Report interview when stating "If planners wish to effectively change public opinion regarding the benefits of higher-density housing, we must address the underlying fear of change." Amen! The interview can be read at [http://www.metroinvestmentreport.com/mir/?module=display\\_story&story\\_id=347&format=html](http://www.metroinvestmentreport.com/mir/?module=display_story&story_id=347&format=html)

When Kymberleigh Richards told me Larry Zarian, former Glendale councilman who also formerly sat on the MTA and Metrolink Boards, had been appointed by the Governor to the California Transportation Commission I was surprised but in retrospect it makes sense. I mean just how many politicians in this area have experience in transportation governance? Answer: darn few.

According to the Metro Investment Report

**Cont'd on Pg. 8** 

**Public Affairs Cont'd from Pg. 7**

L.A. County Supervisor Michael Antonovich has circulated a letter and generic draft resolution to city councils across L.A. county urging opposition to the Red Line extension down Wilshire. And as an example of the sort of project that should be done instead he cites the ludicrous Gold Line Foothill extension. Please!

Antelope Valley Transit Authority is changing contractors again. Now they have chosen Veolia (formerly Connex) to operate their buses. This is after dissatisfaction (and customer complaints) against incumbent contractor MV.

Fact of the month: El Monte station is the busiest bus only terminal west of Chicago, with over 20,000 passengers connecting with 1100 bus trip daily (source: presentation by Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector General Manager Jack Gabig at the March 24 Foothill Transit Executive Board meeting).

NIMBYism strikes again! Residents near the Via Verde Park & Ride torpedoed a proposed expansion of the facility. And with the closure of the Eastland Park & Ride this leaves Foothill in a bind.

Reading Foothill's Director of Finance explain how MTA's fare adjustment has resulted in a drop in grant revenue for his agency made me realize why the MUNIS are pressing for reform of the Formula Allocation Procedure: now that playing by the rules MTA got more funds (by lowering the base fare) has motivated them to try and change the rules (obviously to their advantage). Is that fair?

What does Ventura County Supervisor Judy

Mikels have against Port Hueneme Executive Director William Buenger? When it was proposed Buenger be given a SCAG Regional Champion Award the minutes of the April 6 SCAG Transportation and Communications Committee notes Mikels stated Buenger was neither a regional player, nor a partner before offering a motion to oppose his receiving the award; the motion passed unanimously. Poor Buenger! Whatever did he do to make Mikels have such a grudge against him?

I guess I am not surprised Access Services Executive Director Shelly Verrinder reported at the Feb. 27 ASI Board meeting that during a recent trip to Washington D.C. to meet with the legislative staff she found there was a complete lack of awareness of the requirements for ADA paratransit, and what ADA paratransit was or that it even existed. She also stated that after providing some background on Access Services and mentioning that Access Services had a \$78 million budget, jaws started to drop.

ASI is also coping with recently issued proposed regulations by the U.S. Department of Transportation that if adopted would be budget busters. I have posted on the front page of our website a report prepared by ASI staff that outlines the key issues. Hopefully our friends in Washington will realize the error of their ways and pull these proposals for reconsideration.

And I'll conclude this month with a fond farewell to Lisa Mascaro and Caitlin Liu, who until recently covered the MTA beat for (respectively) the Daily News and Los Angeles Times. Our best wishes for their future endeavors, wherever they lead... 🚗

## MTA SECTOR REPORTS

### *San Fernando Valley -- Nate Zablen*

The Metro San Fernando Valley Service Sector Governance Council voted to approve several significant recommendations for Metro's long range transportation plan at its May 3rd meeting. They recommended a direct link of the Orange Line busway to the Chatsworth Amtrak/Metrolink station utilizing the Canoga Avenue right of way. The council also recommended paving the right of way from the North Hollywood station to Vineland Avenue, utilizing this right of way for exclusive bus access to the North Hollywood Red Line station.

The Governance Council supported the establishment of a transit link between the North Hollywood station and the Pasadena Gold Line station, preferably the Fillmore Station where there would be less traffic congestion. This would not be an extension of the Orange Line but would be a bus line similar to the LA DOT 549 commuter express with stops in Burbank and Glendale. Hopefully, this will be an express bus with much fewer stops than the normal rapid bus. My view is that this link should run all day and not just during peak hours as is the case with LADOT 549. In the meantime, the LADOT commuter express will be rerouted to pick up passengers at the North Hollywood station. The new council member Todd Campbell, Mayor of Burbank, was very enthusiastic about this proposed new service and in jest, said it could be called the "Chartreuse Line".

During the public comment portion of the meeting, a bus rider complained that the Rapid bus 761 stop at the Orange Line station was several blocks from the Van Nuys Civic Center making access from that

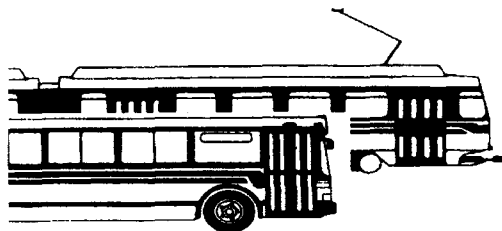
stop very difficult for the disabled passengers. To avoid the long walk they would have to transfer to a local bus to get to their destination. I commented that at the Universal City Station transferring from the subway to a bus, even a rapid bus, often involve a long wait. I wondered why the buses can't wait until the subway passengers reach the bus stop before departing and leaving passengers behind. I suggested that it would be much more convenient if the buses would be there waiting for the riders, as they are at Amtrak stations, rather than having the passengers wait for the buses.

### *Westside/Central -- Ken Ruben*

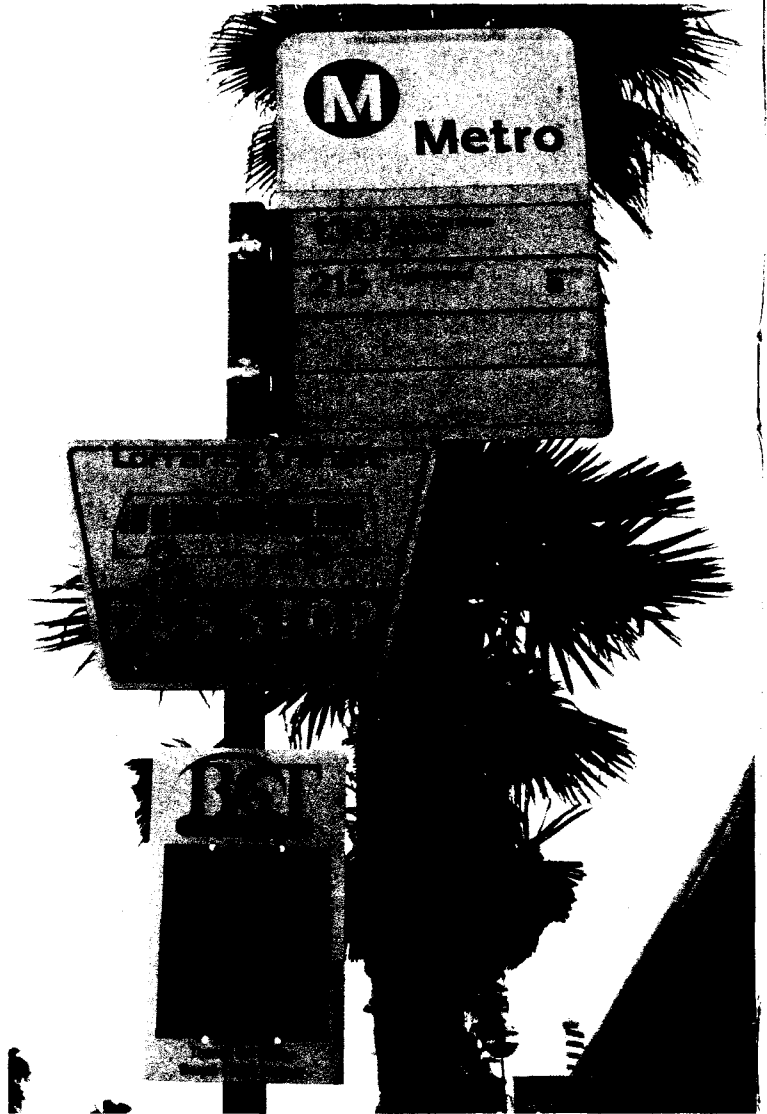
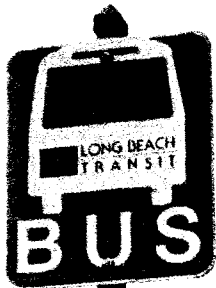
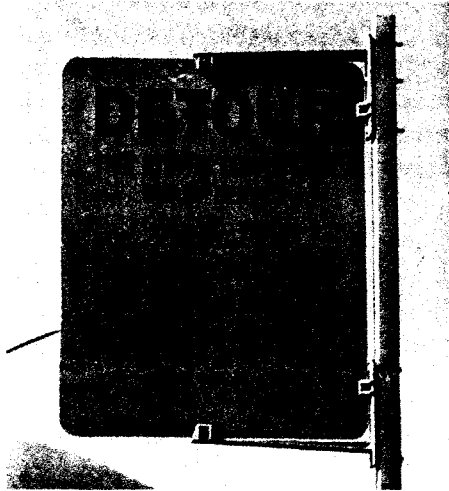
For May, the only thing that really happened was the vote to change the day and time from the first Tuesday at 6:30 PM to the second Wednesday at 5:00 PM. Also, Elde Martinez resigned (she never attended a meeting at the table although she was at one meeting in the audience).

Rod Goldman made a Metro Connections report, and Matt Raymond made a communications report. Rod said there would be a Metro Connections workshop for Westside.

I attended the All-Sectors Meeting on March 29, along with members Kymberleigh Richards and Margaret Hudson. As far as I know, I was the only public member present. 🚌







### **STOP RIGHT THERE**

*Above: Metro Connections — Andrew Novak photo*

*Left Top: Holly Trolley*

*Left Middle: Long Beach Transit Long Term Detour*

*Left Bottom: LBT Bus Speed Limit*

*— Mark Strickert photos*