

TRANSIT UPDATES

OCTA

Service Change Proposals for September 2006. Among Changes to be considered at OCTA's board meeting on August 14th:

- ☐ Route 82 – Extend route west to Foothill Ranch via Santa Margarita, and south to Saddleback College via Antonio and Crown Valley Pkways.
- ☐ Route 686 – make permanent new week-end-only shuttle between Irvine Transportation Center and Irvine Spectrum
- ☐ Route 693 – new shuttle connecting Route 193 with the Talega neighborhood in San Clemente
- ☐ Route 757 – make permanent changes to Route 757, including extension to Fairplex Park-n-ride in Pomona, and re-route via Main and La Veta Aves.
- ☐ Route 758 – make permanent new inter-county express route between Chino Transit Ctr. and Irvine Transportation Ctr
- ☐ Route 794 – new intercounty express route between Riverside Tyler Mall, Corona, and the South Coast Metro area ☐

BULLETIN BOARD

A big thank you to Jeff Boberg of MTA for his excellent presentation on customer surveying at our July 8th meeting. And our appreciation to Director Ken Ruben for arranging Mr. Boberg's appearance.

Among the topics to be discussed at our August 12 meeting are:

- ☐ Nov. infrastructure bond package
- ☐ a blog for the website
- ☐ updating/upgrading the website
- ☐ Santa Clarita exploration Sept. 16
- ☐ Day after Thanksgiving trip
- ☐ holiday banquet [see separate article for more on this]

We recently received correspondence from Sustainable Environment and Economy for California (SEE California) [<http://seeca.org/>], a business oriented coalition on climate change urging we sign on to various of their positions. After a discussion at our July 8th meeting we felt that we would defer action at this time.

The California Air Resources Board Draft Rail

Yard Emissions Inventory Methodology and Health Risk Assessment Guidelines will be discussed at a meeting on Wednesday, August 30, 2006 from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the City of Commerce, 2535 Commerce Way. Further information: Harold Holmes at (916) 324-8029 or hholmes@arb.ca.gov

Assemblyman Lloyd Levine is forming a work group to advocate mixed use development along the Orange Line. Those interested in participating can contact Graciela Castillo of Levin's staff at (916) 319-2303 or graciela.castillo@asm.ca.gov

Save the date: Nov. 5-8 Rail~Volution 2006 in Chicago.

Monday Oct. 30 Mobility 21 will hold the 4th Annual Countywide Transportation Summit at the Sheraton Universal Hotel from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Details at <http://www.mobility21.com>

Jobs Available is a listing of employment opportunities in the public sector, published 26 times a year with an annual subscription

rate of \$29.95. Jobs Available, P.O. Box 1040, Modesto CA 95353-1040--credit card orders are taken at (209) 571-2120 or via the website <http://www.jobsavailable.net>

digEplayer is a video and music on demand system being rolled out at Union Station for use on Amtrak services. Further details at <http://railwaymedia.com/> or (866) digE-player.

The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation has launched an OUR Backyard campaign on the impact of NIM-BYism on the future of our region. This includes a program airing twice daily on KABC TalkRadio. More information: <http://www.backyardweb.org/>

BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) is recruiting rail fans to help keep BNSF properties safe by reporting suspicious activities and to help prevent possible security breaches. Rail fans can register for the program by going to the Citizens United for Rail Security (CRS) Web site (<http://newdomino.bnsf.com/website/crs.nsf/request?open>). CRS participants will receive an official identification card along with access to news and information on the

BNSF CRS Web site. To report suspicious activity, CRS members and the public can call (800) 832-5452. The information will be taken by a BNSF representative and routed for appropriate response.

The South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) board meeting for September has been re-scheduled for Sept. 13th, at the regular time and place.

The next South Coast Air Quality Management District Air Quality Management Plan Advisory Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 9th at 9:00 a.m., at the South Coast Air Quality Management District Diamond Bar Office, located at 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765. Meeting dates for the remainder of the year are as follows:

- ① September 13, 2006
- ① October 11, 2006
- ① November 8, 2006
- ① December 13, 2006

Please visit the AQMD website for agenda postings at http://www.aqmd.gov/gb_comit/aqmpadvgrp/aqmpadvgrp.html 🚗

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Paul Castillo is now a bus operator, driving DASH's route in El Sereno/City Terrace. Way to go, Paul!

Robert Meinert's report on a recent meeting he attended on the proposed I-710 tunnel under South Pasadena has been posted on the front page of our website.

Bart Reed and Ken Ruben attended the July 28th Metrolink Board Meeting. Both were

thanked by Ann Louise Rice, Metrolink Government Affairs Officer, for their efforts in opposing the Frommer bill (which would end push-pulls on commuter operations in California).

Mark Strickert spoke at the July MTA Gateway Sector Council meeting.

Mike Baron, Lionel Jones, and Woody Rosner were at the MTA's San Fernando Valley Sector's Service Change hearing August 2nd. 🚗

I'll start with a correction in re my comments on hybrids last month since John Ulloth has pointed out in fact they do have tailpipes. My mistake. Also I'll note John is quite taken with a locomotive built by the Svensk Biogas company of Sweden that is fueled by cows (byproducts and the whole cow converted into organic sludge) as pictured on p.18 of the May issue of *Discover Magazine*.

Recent polling is favorable toward the infrastructure bond package on the November ballot but makes clear a campaign is needed to ensure passage. I am hoping the Aug. 18 Westside Urban Forum event on the bonds will reveal more about the status of the campaign. There is a nascent campaign against the bonds among elements of the environmental justice movement. But I am not sure whether they have the finances or organization to influence a statewide ballot.

The statewide bullet train proposal while not robust certainly shows signs of increasing vigor. The Governor included \$14 million in the new budget to continue studies, identify critical rights-of-way that need to be acquired and other project implementation activities. Meanwhile wending thru the legislature is SCR 123 (introduced by Senator Dean Florez) which would establish a Joint Legislative Committee on High-Speed Trains that would hold public hearings around the state. This could provide the long-needed platform for advocates to rally support. Within two years we will know if a bullet train is part of the future of the current generation or not.

provision of the UTU collective bargaining agreement will become inactive for the remainder of the agreement (i.e. until June 30, 2009) All existing BDOF Operators will transition to part-time. I bet that made the rank and file happy.

Daily News columnist Mariel Garza spent a month riding the bus and afterward wailed about the experience [http://www.dailynews.com/marielgarza/ci_4002940]. My letter of response published July 6 noted, "This just confirms my suspicion that not everyone is cut out to be a bus rider. We are a hardy breed with thick skins and a Zen-like attitude to cope with our transit lifestyle. That Garza didn't have the right stuff to be a true transit user is no personal failure on her part. Heck, some of my best friends are car owners."

Meanwhile over in the *Daily Breeze* Tom Elias in his commentary "Governor, L.A. mayor doing power-inspired duet" referred dismissively to Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's "pipe dream of a subway from downtown L.A. to the beach." My rejoinder published July 13 began "Pipe dream? I think "brilliant vision" is a more accurate description." I then related how SO.CA.TA founder Pat Moser told me how he once heard an official from the Reagan administration refer to Wilshire Boulevard as the most traveled urban corridor in the United States not served by mass transit. I concluded "If a conservative technocrat knew a subway to the sea made sense 20-plus years ago, then it certainly makes sense now."

Effective with the Dec. shake-up, the BDOF

Less fun was being contacted by the L.A.

Times for comments on the elimination of the Spring Street bus-only contra-flow lane ("Spring Street Shops Try to Survive Without Bus Stops" July 1, 2006). It felt like beating a dead horse. But I dutifully served up the observation. "Pressure to free up the lane for parking will hurt bus service." Sometimes you fight the good fight but eventually must accept that you got your teeth kicked in by the other side, re-gather yourself, and trudge on.

Well, I spoke too soon in re the tangled web of the San Gabriel Valley Transit Authority. Richard Winton of the *L.A. Times* in the July 17 article "Transit Agency Tied to Ferrari Crash Closes" revealed Authority founder Yosuf Maiwandi was arrested in June after using agency credentials to attempt recovery of his paratransit vehicles that had been seized. Also the investigation of the tiny agency that for some reason felt the need to have its own police force is almost complete with the results to be sent on to the district attorney's office. Incredibly despite all the controversy Maiwandi vowed to reopen his bus service: "We'll get some donations and be up and running again in a week or two". Is he kidding?

When interviewed in the July issue of the *Southern Sierran* (monthly newspaper of the local Sierra Club chapter) Congressman Brad Sherman states the key environmental challenge is "Locally, a public transit system is number one".

Should I be surprised the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District is considering a mixed-use development on a city owned lot and the adjacent MTD Transit Center? New Urbanism is popping up everywhere.

Revelation of the month: MTA's Inspector General found the agency did not have an agency-wide Employee Suggestion Program (Executive Management & Audit Committee meeting of July 20, agenda item 22).

New Los Angeles Dept. of Transportation General Manager Gloria Jeff when asked in the July Metro Investment Report how the city can cope with future projected growth gives an interesting response "We have the capacity to plan for it and to try to put infrastructure in place. But success is more than just physical infrastructure. We're also going to have to look at ways to help change how people live, what they do, when and where. We must look to a future in when Angelenos have "front door" choices. As they exit their homes, they can choose to drive, ride the bus or their bikes, or walk to their next destination. Choice is the key to managing the growth that is projected."

Can someone explain why MTA awarded a contract for general liability claims administration services to a company that it admits has an antiquated computer system that causes loads of problems? And why is the solution MTA giving the vendor \$2.7 million over 10 years so they can upgrade their computer? Am I the only one who sees this as a damned odd way to do business? (MTA Board July 27 meeting, agenda item 11).

Reading between the lines it is clear the Immediate Needs Transportation Program is troubled. The two most recent reports on the program (June 15 MTA Executive Management and Audit Committee, agenda items 20 and 21) include a report on a report, which is a passing strange thing to contemplate, and an audit replete with references to prob

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2006 HOLIDAY BANQUET

At our September meeting, we will be selecting the venue for our annual holiday banquet in December. Members who are interested in proposing a location should contact the restaurant management, and then actually visit the site so you can gather key information that is needed so members can make an informed choice when voting.

We need to know about the seating arrangement — would it be in a separate room, or just a part of a general dining area? How many can be seated? What capacities are there for sound, power outlets, etc. in case we want to have an audio or visual presentation as part of the event?

What entree choices are available? Do they offer a vegan alternative for those who don't eat meat? Does the meal include potato/rice and vegetable? Are options for the latter offered (e.g. peas or corn/mashed or baked potato)? Does the meal include soup or salad? Rolls with butter? What choices of beverage? What will dessert be, and is that included or extra, or can we bring our own?

Is a deposit required? How much and how far in advance of the event? What is the cost per person, and when is that due? Does that include gratuity?

Is the location transit friendly? What bus lines or rail line serves it? How late does the transit serve this location? For those arriving by car, what are the parking arrangements?

At what time will the facility available (e.g. 5 PM)? How many hours can we reserve for? How late can we stay? Will we have our own dedicated wait-person?

Please have the courtesy to do your research in advance to suggest a locale. Making impromptu suggestions at the meeting without being

able to answer these questions is of no value, and the nomination will not be accepted.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS *Cont'd from Pg. 5*

lems and future actions needing to be taken. Maybe this remnant of the 1992 riots (which dispenses \$5 million a year of bus tokens and taxi vouchers to the down and out) faces serious questions about its viability I find it revealing although one of the vendors (First AME Church) is an close ally of L.A. County Supervisor Yvonne Burke that has availed nothing to diminish the scrutiny being brought to bear on the pro-

gram.

I'll conclude by noting quietly the Planning and Conservation League has pulled the plug on its Better California Campaign. This coalition effort was the successor of the California Futures Network, whose initial high hopes eventually fizzled as it faded into oblivion. Which sounds similar to the storyline followed by the Better California Campaign. Oh, well... 