

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

### **SO.CA.TA MEETING NOTES**

Southern California Transit Advocates will be actively participating in the Alternative Transportation Expo, to be held in Santa Monica [at Barker Hangar in the Santa Monica airport, 3021 Airport Avenue] the second week-end of Dec. (Dec. 9-10).

SO.CA.TA of course normally holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Saturday of each month. However, to devote full attention to our booth at the the Alternative Transportation Expo, the December SO.CA.TA meeting and banquet have been rescheduled for Saturday Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>, starting at 1:00 PM.

At the meeting, Officers and Directors for 2007 will be elected. The complete list of nominees on the ballot, and candidate statements that arrived by the time this issue of the newsletter was put to bed on Monday, Nov. 27th, are on page 3.

Following the meeting, we will caravan to our holiday banquet, this year being held at the HomeTown Buffet, 7868 Van Nuys Blvd., in Van Nuys, starting approximately 4:30 PM.

At the November meeting new dues were adopted: regular \$25, and low income \$10, to be pro-rated quarterly rather than monthly.

Pete Serdienis, Metro's Stops & Zones Manager, will make a presentation at our Janu-




ary 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007 meeting, followed by Q&A. Our thanks to Kymberleigh Richards for arranging this.

### **IN OTHER NEWS**

The Detour Committee notes Dana Gabbard has recently posted on the front page of the SOCATA web site include a list of eight different southern California transit agencies that provide electronic notification of service information (detours, etc.).

Revitalized Friends of the Green Line new website: <http://www.fogl.us/>

Transcripts of Civic dialogues held at recent meetings around the state addressing regional issues: <http://calregions.org/regcivic/growthdialogues/2006/index.html>.

Access Services is currently conducting an inventory of specialized transportation resources in Los Angeles County. Survey forms are posted at <http://asila.org/accessparatransit/newsletter/index.cfm> 

# SO.CA.TA ELECTIONS

The annual elections of Officers and Directors for the SO.CA.TA Executive Board will take place at our general meeting on December 2nd. Anyone can attend our meetings, though only members in good standing can vote.

Nominations were made by members at the November meeting. Nominees not present at the meeting had a chance to accept or decline, and eligibility was checked based on length of continuous membership and on 2006 meeting attendance. After the smoke cleared, these names were placed on the ballot:

## PRESIDENT

Lionel Jones

## VICE PRESIDENT

Lionel Jones

Ken Ruben

Mark Strickert

## EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Dana Gabbard

## RECORDING SECRETARY

Edmund Buckley

## TREASURER

Hank Fung

## DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE (for 3 openings)

Armando Avalos

Hank Fung

Samuel James

Kymberleigh Richards

Ken Ruben

Also at the November meeting, the Election Committee was appointed, from active members not on the ballot:

Woody Rosner (Chair), Nate Zablen, Dave Snowden, and Craig Weingarten

(alternate).

## CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

### HANK FUNG

I have been a SO.CA.TA member for many years and am running for Treasurer in place of Craig Barnes. However, I plan to have Mr. Barnes continue to conduct the duties as Treasurer if I were to be elected. As the director from the Inland Empire, I attend most San Gabriel Valley sector meetings and monitor what is happening in the Inland Empire. I would appreciate your consideration.

### KYMBERLEIGH RICHARDS


2007 will be a very important year for us as a public transportation advocacy organization as we strengthen our image as a rational voice for developing reasonable transit solutions. I believe I can be most effective working for So.CA.TA as a Director-At-Large, and I ask for your support.

### KEN RUBEN

Dear SO.CA.TA Member:

This year, I am running for Vice-President and Director-at-Large. During my past two years as a member of the Board of Directors, I have gained additional experience and insights. I bring loyalty, perseverance and dedication to SO.CA.TA interests and objectives. Your vote for me will be appreciated.

### MARK STRICKERT

I felt it was time for SO.CA.TA to have a new President. However, I eagerly look forward to remaining an active part of your Executive Board, especially with our busy year ahead. I will continue to do more than just show up at meetings, handing out business cards. 

## **PUBLIC AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**

**Dana Gabbard**

Wow! Both the transportation bonds (1B) and the Prop 42 fix (1A) passed in the recent election, as did the renewal of Measure M in Orange County. The one electoral disappointment is that Santa Barbara County's Measure D, a proposed  $\frac{3}{4}\%$  sales tax for transportation, fell short.

Roger Christensen in an e-mail mused regarding another election result "So with Democrats taking over the House, doesn't that diminish the powers of Dreier and rail into Republican East San Gabriel Valley vs. rail into densely Democratic West LA?" I suspect he is right that the shift favors Expo light rail versus the Gold Line extension to Montclair; also that the ongoing attempts by the administration to kill Amtrak are now DOA.

At the Jesse M. Unruh Institute Election Post-Mortem (held at USC) one of the panelists asked Phil Angelides campaign manager Cathy Calfo why Phil's allies in the legislature "stabbed him in the back" by campaigning with Schwarzenegger for the bonds. She claimed they hadn't betrayed him and then quickly jumped to some other topic. During Q&A from the audience I asked if my impression was correct the bond campaign had bumps in the road due to being composed of elements drawn from both parties. After a moment the panel vaguely allowed as how yeah, that did turn out to be a challenge. As I follow-up, I asserted that due to the  $\frac{3}{8}$  requirement for bonds to be placed on the ballot that the legislative leaders had cut the deal because they judged Schwarzenegger would be able to deliver the votes needed whereas a Governor Angelides would have had little suc-

cess getting votes from across the aisle. Things got very quiet. The panel pointedly didn't want to comment on my interpretation.

With the bonds passed now comes implementation--the transportation bond will be divvied up via various mechanisms, formulas and the prioritization led by the California Transportation Commission. There is a desire to get things moving PDQ so voters see results. Especially as the bonds are just a first step and in the future further investments will be needed to bring our infrastructure to a state of good repair/efficiency. Bill Bradley Nov. 21 on his blog *New West Notes* confirms Governor Schwarzenegger's "... new moves next year [on infrastructure] are likely to focus on public/private partnerships, leveraging private enterprise and governmental sources ... according to a high-ranking administration source."

I'll be curious what happens to the hard Prop 42 fix that accidentally got on the ballot for the 2008 primary; if I was a big shot in the transportation lobby I'd probably view it as a useful bargaining chip in dealings in the coming year with competing interests, especially the education lobby.

Dept. of good ideas: The Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District Board of Directors at their Oct. 24 meeting stated their intent "that all shelters provide adequate shade and shelter from rain."

In discussing the end of the consent decree Oct. 26 on the KPCC talk show *Air Talk*, Constance Rice (lawyer for the Bus Riders Union) made comments that were downright embarrassing. I am especially baffled

at her clueless comments on bus routes. But I guess she is stuck with repeating BRU rhetoric. And she even mis-stated the decree as being why the CNG buses were purchased by MTA. Brave talk, but sad. You can listen online at [http://www.scp.org/programs/airtalk/listings/2006/10/airtalk\\_20061023.shtml](http://www.scp.org/programs/airtalk/listings/2006/10/airtalk_20061023.shtml)

As a follow-up on to last month's column, here is the scoop on what is happening at Metro's Labor Relations Dept.: Brenda Diedrichs is leaving Metro for the private sector in the aftermath of a reorganizing of Labor Relations reflecting certain contract provisions agreed to by the Unions in the recent bargaining. This as some appeal processes are now being handled by a unit headed by John Catoe, Deputy CEO.

Whoops, John Catoe is leaving MTA to head WMATA, the bus/rail agency in Washington DC (and environs). The foregoing just highlights how challenging it will be to find a successor for Catoe. So far there is no hint who might be in the running.

Joel Kotkin again proved how uninformed he is with an op-ed ranting against the transportation bonds ("Road plan is a dead end; Bond underfunded, wasted on inefficient projects") published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* the Sunday before the election. He asserts if the bonds fund the Red Line Wilshire extension that "the largest beneficiaries ... are likely to be the lawyers battling community opposition..." In fact at the Beverly Hills Mass Transit Committee town hall I attended Nov. 2 while some small concerns were voiced overall the Committee (and attendees) were supportive. The consultant hired by Beverly Hills did an excellent job of outlining why running straight along Wilshire was the best option. The comments

were even more supportive at the Nov. 10 Westside Urban Forum event on How can Los Angeles learn to stop worrying and love congestion. And Nov. 17 at the Current Affairs Forum L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, whose Prop A some years ago prohibited local funds being used for subway constriction, as reported in the blog *L.A. Observed* stated "passage of Prop. 1B this month makes the Red Line subway to Fairfax Avenue — and perhaps to Westwood "in our lifetimes" — and the Expo Line to Santa Monica realistic possibilities." All this bodes well for the Wilshire corridor meetings we will be holding next year thanks to the recently award of an APTA grant.

We are told meetings on proposed tweaks to the Downtown DASH system will be held early next year. Also LADOT is looking at eventual DASH service on weekends to the Griffith Observatory, once the initial re-opening crowds thin.

During the discussion at the focus group I attended on transit bus and pedestrian collisions held Nov. 7 for the Transit Research Board, I learned something interesting in the way of unintended consequences. Because Metro is under heavy pressure to maximize income to avoid fare increases requests for prominent safety messages being put on the bus have been rejected. Maybe once the fare situation is resolved this can be revisited?

Agenda item #18 at the Oct. 26 MTA Board meeting on financial stability policy states among the items to analyze cost recovery of could include "regional operating services such as customer information". Are they going to start charging if you call for bus information?


**Cont'd on Pg. 6** 

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS cont'd from Pg 5**

Did you know plans for restoration of the Lankershim Depot (across from the N. Hollywood Red Line station) include stabilization and rehabilitation of vintage railroad tracks adjacent to the Depot? (Agenda item #9, Oct. 26 MTA Board meeting). Councilmember LaBonge intends to try to secure a locomotive for placement and display (perhaps borrowed from Travel Town in Griffith Park). Some of us wonder if a suitable PE car could be located (and restored) wouldn't that also be appropriate since the Depot was used by the Red Cars?

Save the date: Feb. 21, 2007 the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission is holding a field hearing in Los Angeles. This is a victory for local leaders who lobbied hard to have one of the meetings in our area. The Commission is to make recommendations to resolve the impending shortfall in the federal transportation trust funds. <http://www.surfacecommission.gov/commissionmeeting/schedulelisting.htm>

I'm told Supervisor Gloria Molina rushed through the Nov. 16 Metro Executive Management and Audit Committee meeting (which she chairs) so the Board could be present for the holing through of one of the Eastside tunnel boring machines. Ironically none of the newspaper coverage had pictures of the Board. The *L.A. Times* had TWO pictures of the boring machine and an article with a single sentence quote by Molina. *La Opinion* had a picture of the boring machine and caption, no article. The *Daily News* carried an AP report with no picture. Oh, well...

I conclude by noting that the Advanced Technology Transit Bus (aka the Stealth Bus), which one local politician was sure would result in a manufacturing plant in her district, wasted millions of public funds in pursuit of a concept that was never commercially viable. It is now obsolete and the remaining prototypes will be offered gratis to academic institutions for research use. What an inglorious end of a bad idea: [www.mta.net/board/Items/2006/11\\_November/20061106OtherATVCIItem5.pdf](http://www.mta.net/board/Items/2006/11_November/20061106OtherATVCIItem5.pdf) 

## **MEMBERS IN ACTION**

Oops! Forgot to mention the Western Stops & Transit Amenities conference, in San Jose in October, was also attended by John Andoh.


Attending the Nov. 2 Beverly Hills Mass Transit Committee meeting were Dana Gabbard, Michael Milroy, and Bart Reed.

Kymerleigh Richards was extensively quoted in the L.A. Daily News Nov. 15 article, "Catoe, the MTA's No. 2, to head up D.C. transit agency". Richards also was instrumental in having Metro re-start posting bus route detour notices on its website:

[http://www.metro.net/riding\\_metro/system\\_detours/default.htm](http://www.metro.net/riding_metro/system_detours/default.htm)

And kudos to Chris Flescher who has attended the monthly meetings of the Rail Policy Committee of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County every month for the last 3 years. Thanks, Chris!

SO.CA.TA members at MTA sector council meetings in November:

Gateway Cities – Mark Strickert  
San Gabriel Valley – Hank Fung, Ken Ruben  
South Bay – JK Drummond, Lionel Jones, Ken Ruben  
Westside/Central – Ken Ruben 

# Fullerton Transportation Center Bus Terminal Relocation

**Jane Reifer**

*Note: See the Oct. '06 Transit Advocate for the first article on the proposal — Ed.*

Recently, the City of Fullerton and the City's Redevelopment Agency signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OCTA including an agreement to relocate the bus terminal at the Fullerton Transportation Center.

To review, City Redevelopment Agency members had been heard to say that the bus terminal is using up prime development space, and should be relocated, perhaps to the other side of Lemon St., while City Redevelopment staff have indicated that new locations for the terminal will be as close to the train station as it is currently, and there will be every attempt to improve the facility. The City has held 2 out of 3 community planning workshops to discuss the master planning of the entire transportation center, including the terminal.

At the second meeting the consultants submitted a proposed relocation site directly in front of the train station. Most of the focus groups seemed to be OK with it, despite the fact that they also wanted to be sure that the view of the front of the historic station would be unobstructed. It was not explained that the bus station includes shelters

and fairly tall buses, so this built-in conflict was not addressed. I'm worried that people will be upset when they realize the visual impact a bus terminal will have on the station, and a revised proposal may not be as convenient as the current site or this one.

I propose that we write a letter thanking the City for a proposal that keeps the bus station in a convenient location, but expresses several concerns about specifics, and the need to consider the effects of future service improvements such as BRT. Maybe someone will have a better idea for the location or the bus traffic flow. I will submit a sample letter to the SOCATA board for discussion. Now is the time to make a wish list for the Fullerton Transportation Center!

The last planning workshop has been rescheduled from December to January and will be announced when the date is set. You can get in touch with me for the latest at [cluttercontrol@earthlink.net](mailto:cluttercontrol@earthlink.net) 🚌

*Fullerton Trans. Ctr.—Andrew Novak photo*



# THE WORLD OF SUBWAY: A MUSEUM UNDERGROUND

Alexander Friedman

When we think about a subway, we typically visualize a quite dirty, sometimes suspicious, but efficient underground train service, with rough concrete walls, poles and other not-too-attractive structures, and loud trains whistling by at high speeds. But - as long as it's efficient, we're willing to use it, usually not paying much attention to the stations' design and their looks.

What most of us do not realize is that some cities in this world have a subway system that is not only some of the most efficient in the world, but it can also be architecturally rich and astonishingly beautiful. I'm talking about Moscow, the capital of Russia (former U.S.S.R.)

Moscow was the first city in the former Soviet Union to build a well-developed subway system, that's in addition to the city's great network with above-ground commuter trains and long-distant trains (with 9 terminal stations), buses, trolleybuses, street-cars, light-rail, and monorail.

Whereas Moscow is not much mentioned (for unknown reasons) during discussions about public transit systems, the city has one of the best mass transit systems in the world, having the subway the most beautiful in the world.

A few words of history. Being built in the 1930's, the subway was also intended for people to use as a deep, well-protected, shelter during the World War II, that's why first-time visitors of the subway are shocked with the depth of most subway stations and routes. You could ride on the escalator for quite a few minutes; and the deepest station lies 86 meters (roughly 240

feet) underneath the surface. The subway continues to be built deep underneath the ground also due to the city's geological structure; the soil is much steadier at greater depths, and does not have those water pockets or natural gas pockets that can occasionally be seen on the shallow depth and which present a major obstacle during subway construction.

Moscow subway is open daily from 5:30 a.m. to 1:00 o'clock at night. Trains run every 2-3 minutes during the day (outside rush-hours), and every 60-70 Seconds (!) during rush-hours, which is a strong indicator of the subway's efficiency. That is why, when visitors from Moscow (or other major cities) visit Los Angeles, they are astonished to see that Los Angeles subway runs its trains only every 10 minutes during rush-hours, and 12-20 minutes at other times... Indeed, the subway in L.A., although still a brand-new invention, has very much room for improvement.

Despite the fact that Moscow's subway trains run so frequently, they are filled to capacity, mainly because the system is highly efficient and very popular, and you can get to the destination on time and on schedule. If you walk up to a platform and just miss a train, it's no big deal - because the next one will only arrive in just a minute or so! (unlike L.A., where missing a train could cause a major waste of up to 20 minutes!).

The average distance between stations is 1800 meters (or roughly 1.1 mile), the shortest being 585 meters (roughly 0.35 mile) and the longest - 4 km (2.5 miles).

The trains go relatively fast, up to 50 kph (or 31 mph), with average speeds 41 kph (25 mph). Whereas it is generally possible to increase speeds, it would not be practical, if not dangerous, to increase speeds due to very high frequency of trains, meaning - short distances between them, also compromising trains' smooth ride (based on simpler and cheaper technology) and other factors. The signal-light system, with signal-lights placed in tunnels and stations, is fully automated and computerized, where you see not only green, yellow, red, and purple lights, but also combination of green-with-yellow and yellow-with-red. (Note: purple light in Russia's railway system in general, and subway in particular, serves as an indicator of a switch or a crossing).

Last but not least. The Moscow subway stations (as well as other former Soviet Union republics and a few other European cities) are a true work of art! When I shared some photos to my

boss at work, he thought I demonstrated the galleries of the famous Hermitage in St. Petersburg; and he was shocked to learn that those "galleries" are stations of the Moscow subway. From the very beginning of the subway construction, up to today's date, the stations are all carefully designed with distinguished artwork, and are fine-tuned to indicate the high level of artistic perfectionism; most stations' art includes marble, mosaic, tile, beautiful chan-

deliers, paintings, statues, and golden/silver station names that are elegantly laid out on the stations' walls. Perhaps, you will never see naked concrete walls or ugly dirty poles on any of the Moscow's subway stations.

The trains themselves are attractive, as well (see picture). Painted with distinguished blue color with white lines across, they make an impression to tourists from around the world. The ride isn't as smooth as our L.A. Red-line trains (since investments into sophisticated and often unnec-



essary technological advancements were limited), but - you still get a quick, worry-free ride, and soon enter a new station filled with its beautiful artwork. To anybody who has never been to Moscow, I strongly encourage to visit this city, that is so historically rich and architecturally abundant. It is truly a city of adventure, with a unique museum-like subway, being one of its main tourist attractions. 🚂

**More Photos on Pg. 10** 📷



