

TRANSIT UPDATES

Steve Crosmer informs us the new Amtrak national timetable drops local transit connections from the list of stations. He suggests retaining the old timetable to have handy this useful information.

OCTA June 2007 Changes

- 01 – summer schedule adjustments
- 25 – N/B and S/B trips to operate via Buena Park Metrolink station, when station opens
- 29 – Buena Park Metrolink to become northern terminus for short-turn trips, via Beach-Artesia-Dale-Lakeknoll, when station opens
- 89 – summer schedule adjustments
- 188 – midday service, 90-minute headway
- 205 – re-number as Route 83; Reroute: continue on Main north to LaVeta, then 22 Fwy to 5 Fwy; 633 – OC Fair/Fullerton Park n Ride, fair weekends only, July 15th-August 5th
- 662 – new line: OC Fair/Depot at Santa Ana, fair weekends only
- 670 – OC Fair/Goldenwest Trans. Center, fair weekends only
- 691 – OC Fair/Junipero Serra Park n Ride, fair weekends only
- 693 – route change – added from Camino la Pedriza: R Avd. Vista Hermosa, L Avd. La Pata, R Avd. Pico to WalMart
- 721 – 2 added trips AM S/B, and 2 PM N/B
- 794 – move Riverside park-n-ride from Galleria at Tyler to Adams Baptist Church

Other agencies' changes, affecting OCTA connections:

Long Beach Transit: 66 and 96 ZAPs will continue to operate, though under "modified schedules"

Metro: Line 577X extended to Long Beach Transit mall in June '07; Line 684 continues to 9/7/07, though only Brea to Cal Poly area...to be replaced by extension of Foot-hill 193 on 9/8/07

MTA

The Metro Gold Line will have delays on weekday middays during May and June, as they will be using only one track between Mission and Fillmore stations thanks to a soundwall construction project

Trolley Comings and Goings

LADOT

Holly Trolley will offer free rides in May, 2007 for persons showing current receipts or ticket stubs from Hollywood-area bars, restaurants, movie theatres, or the Hollywood & Highland or Arclight parking garages. MTA day passes or \$1 in cash or change are also accepted. Buses operate 6:30 PM to 2:30 PM Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, using designated stops along its route. From the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Highland Avenue, the route goes eastbound on Hollywood, south on Cahuenga Boulevard, east on Sunset Boulevard, north on Vine Street, west on Yucca Avenue, south on Ivar Avenue, west on Selma Avenue, and north on Highland. Further info at <http://www.ladottransit.com/other/trolley>.

MARTA

Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority's Big Bear Trolley has been cancelled, effective April 29th.

RTA

Riverside Transit Authority has begun a two-month experiment with its Jury Trolley Service (Route 50). In May and June, the

"Red Line" will still connect the county courthouse with parking lots on the fringes of downtown. On Friday, it will now operate as the "Green Line," a downtown circu-

lator shuttle. Fare is 25¢, free to city and county employees, jurors, and to persons holding a valid paid parking receipt. 🚌

BULLETIN BOARD

SO.CA.TA Notes

A big thank you to LADOT DASH guru deluxe Phil Aker for an outstanding presentation and informative Q&A session at our April 14 meeting.

At our May 12th meeting, Damien Goodman will discuss his regional rail proposal. Meetings starts at 1 p.m., presentation commences at 2:15 p.m.

The 2007 Transit Guide, the reference guide to public transportation throughout the region, is now available! \$10.00 at our event booths and monthly meetings, or \$12.50 (including postage) from Southern California Transit Advocates, 3010 Wilshire Ave #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010.

In Other News....

Foothill Transit's annual meeting will be held Wednesday May 30th, 5:30 PM, at 100

North Barranca Avenue, Suite 100 in West Covina.

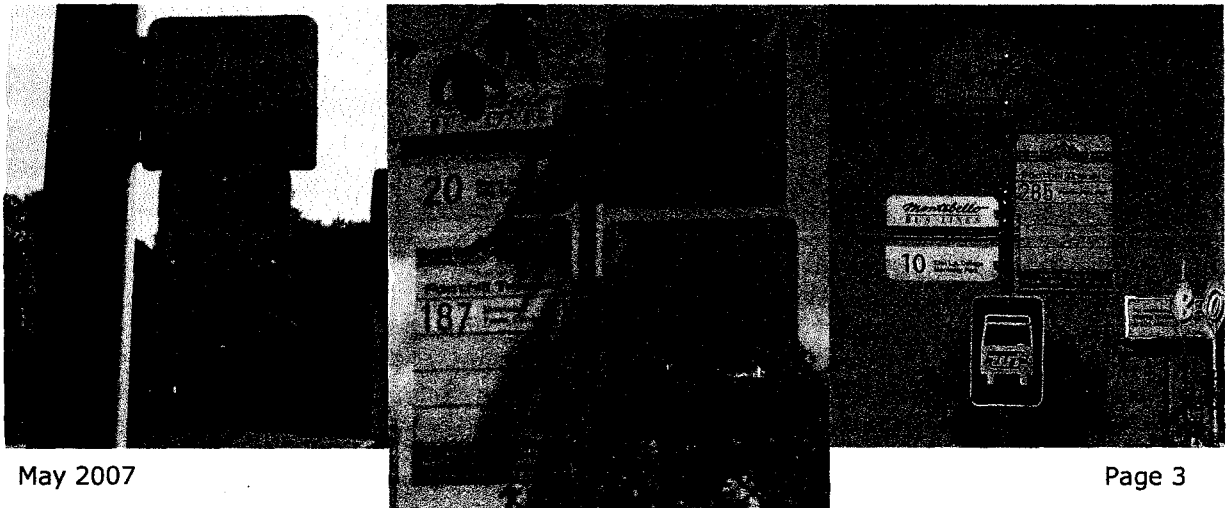
This year's annual Torrance City Yard Open House will be on Saturday, June 2 from 10am to 2pm at 20500 Madrona Avenue in Torrance.

The city of Santa Monica has added a page to the website on the Exposition light rail project:

<http://www.smgov.net/Expo/index.htm>

At the suggestion of Chris Flescher, we recently contacted the Straphanger's Campaign in New York to have them add us to the list of advocacy groups on their website: <http://www.straphangers.org/links.html>

In a special episode of "Jimmy Kimmel Live" airing Tuesday, May 15, Kimmel hosts the entire show aboard a Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, picking up guests along the bus route. 🚌



SUBWAY SCOUTING STUDY TOUR

Robert Meinert, with input from Dana Gabbard, Kymberleigh Richards, and Mark Strickert

Several SO.CA.TA members, including Hank Fung, Dana Gabbard, Lionel Jones, Robert Meinert, Kymberleigh Richards, Alex Schaffer, Mark Strickert, and Craig Weingarten, conducted an informal exploration of the Wilshire corridor exploration on March 31st.

Beginning our trip from Wilshire/Western station, where some transit-oriented development is commencing, we headed west with the plan to explore various subway portals, getting on and off the bus to examine multiple sites with closer scrutiny.

Crenshaw station has a parking lot that suitable on the southwest corner of Wilshire and Crenshaw. The parking lot is owned by Metro, and was planned as the site for the station in the 1990 subway analysis.

At La Brea Blvd., the station would be in the parking lot adjacent to the existing Metro Customer Service Center on the northwest corner.

Fairfax station has multiple opportunities. We were focused on the Johnnie's property on the northwest corner, which adjoins a parking lot used mainly for the 99¢ Only store. The Johnnie's site is used exclusively for filming, and being of an early 60's vintage, we weren't sure if the coffee shop deserved protected status, or perhaps it could be used for the portal. Or, I suggested that some sort of arrangement could be made with the county museum people regarding incorporating a portal in new construction that is going up east of Fairfax. Additional sites were scouted include the alley adjacent to said property, which could be partially converted to a narrow portal,

per the example at the Normandie station, which already had density. One building on the west side of the alley was nondescript, and was considered for a portal.

We looked around the La Cienega Blvd. intersection, but did not examine specific locations. [Grand plaza-type portals, while highly visible, are not necessary for a subway. They also eat up valuable real estate. I talked with some of the group at La Cienega about a Chicago or New York-style approach here, with some combination of stairs, escalators, and elevators directly down from sidewalk to mezzanine level. This is possible where the sidewalk is wide enough, and no off-sidewalk space is available. They could also build the entrance into a new or existing building, much like Metro did at 7th/Figueroa. —Mark]

Beverly Station has an auto use a block away on the north side that a few members scouted, provided land could be acquired. Also, a minimalist approach could be used incorporating some landscaping easement that a small portal could accommodate. [The City of Beverly Hills envisions a portal that will take up a very small footprint, similar to the existing station at Normandie. —Kym]

The subway alignment shifts southwest at Santa Monica Blvd. with the next station at Ave. of the Stars/Century City West. A grand shopping mall covers the south side of Santa Monica Blvd. between these streets, and members looked at potential sites within that locale for dual portals.

The subway alignment shifts again back to Wilshire Blvd., under private land. Next stop, a major traffic generator, is at West-

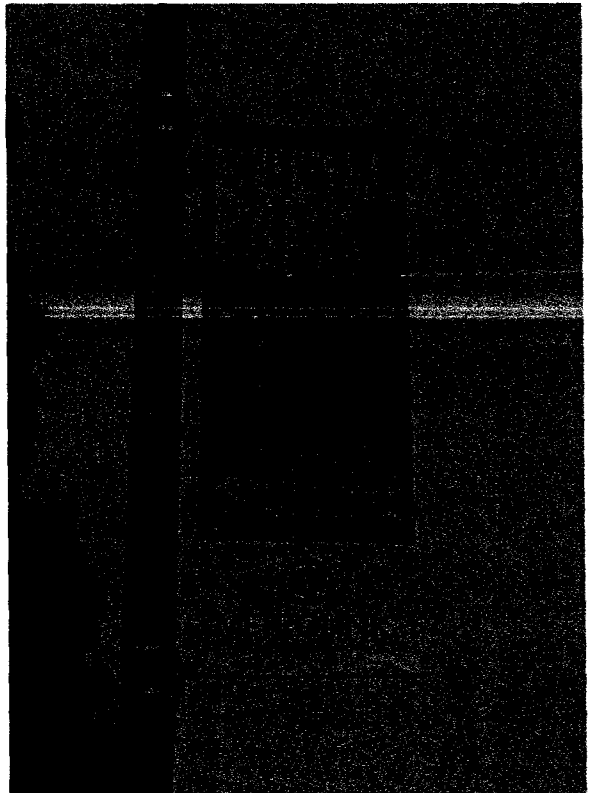
wood Station. UCLA owns a large parcel of land on the north side of Wilshire west of the intersection that members thought would be an excellent portal. Another potential station could be at Bundy, another traffic generator.

The final terminal: Santa Monica/4th and Colorado Station could be joint use with the Exposition Line adjacent to the Sears property by Colorado and 4th. Once the land is secured for the Expo station, the subway station could be built under that. MTA issued a subway alternative 1990 west extension analysis to Century City. [The 1990 analysis was all the way to Westwood, and called for using the UCLA-owned parcel on Wilshire between Veteran and Gayley for the then-planned terminal. Using that as the terminal also solves the existing layover problem for bus service in that area. — Kym]

In the next several months, SO.CA.TA will be holding a series of meetings in key areas along the intended route. Dana Gabbard explains:

"Our first venue is Westwood Presbyterian Church (10822 Wilshire Boulevard, 2 blocks east of Westwood Blvd.). We await the contract but are assured they have penciled us in on their calendar. This meeting will be 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 22. Yes, that means Kymberleigh Richards and I (along with the members who have volunteered to help) are going to soon be working at warp speed in doing publicity and preparation, especially if we also are successful in holding a press availability for electeds to herald the meetings as a separate event this month. We at least now have a healthy stock of the advocacy bro-

chure which is a key component of our campaign. iPrint did a marvelous job printing it and Kymberleigh's design work is very eye-catching. In the next week or two we'll also be selecting dates for subsequent meetings and start making reservations. So, onward to exhaustion! If you have any questions contact me at (213) 388-2364 or dgabbard@hotmail.com." 🚗



I don't want to dwell at length regarding Metro's fare restructuring proposal. They are treating us like 5 year olds (a la 1994) and playing politics (especially with the outyear numbers--what Board member would vote in favor of a \$120 monthly pass? I mean, really!) Our ad hoc working group diligently has prepared a counter-proposal to be presented at the fare hearing. And we have twice sent letters expressing process-related concerns. I did lose my temper at some verbal shenanigans MTA staff indulged in during their presentation at the March 21 Citizens' Advisory Council meeting. But generally we are doing our best to behave like adults.

While contemplating the weak *L.A. Times* article on the proposal ("MTA fare hike may not be the ticket", April 28) on our member board I made some observations that deserve repeating:

"It is interesting the BRU is getting its share of attention...but isn't dominant in the way they had been in the past. Partly it might be fatigue because their message is worn out - the fifty cent fare/20 buck pass sound bite just can't be taken serious and they seem to have no fallback. [Also] MTA clearly didn't anticipate the level of interest the fare proposal has generated. And that the social equity aspect is being given significant play in the press. Plus MTA's position is weak I think because the consent decree robs them of any accolades for past actions - they can't take credit for most anything good that has happened because it was done due to the decree. Metro Rapid generally is the one exception but so far their publicity has done a poor job high-

lighting that signature success story."

By the way, in the aforementioned April 28 article Joel Kotkin, my least favorite urbanist, is quoted as declaring "... the Gold Line at 4 in the afternoon is practically empty". Would some reporter please challenge Mr. Kotkin to join them in riding one of those "practically empty" Gold Line trains? Just be prepared to have to stand...

So at our April meeting I proposed we oppose AB 889 creating a Green Line Authority--partly because I see it as premature and also because I am not enamored of single purpose entities. We had a lengthy debate and by only a 1 vote margin decided to oppose it. Frankly so far I have been too busy to even send a letter to Sacramento about our stance. But in the meantime one proponent caught wind of our position and went ballistic, hysterically via e-mail protesting the very notion anyone could have opinions contrary to his. And this is an ally? In retrospect Damien Goodmon may have been right during our discussion in urging we consider what I call the Ulloth principle (named after member John Ulloth) and defer voting for a month so we could mull the issue further.

A bill that I think does deserve our support is AB 922 (Levine), that provides for a statistical district be established to support building a case for the Wilshire subway extension.

I was right! I predicted that the Fasana Formula Allocation Procedure proposal would have winners and losers, and that the losers would not be idle. Now an alternative

has been presented by the L.A. County Municipal Operators Association. Going to be interesting to see how this plays out.

Ever curious what are the sort of unanticipated conditions that necessitate contingency funds be expended? Well, Metrolink during the current construction of a second main line in Santa Ana determined the abandoned storm drain in the right of way for which a new drain is being constructed on the adjacent street is close enough to the proposed second main line track that the drain should be backfilled with cement slurry material. At a cost of \$254,570. And that is with staff noting "It is also highly probable that staff will return to the Board in May and June to request authorization to issue additive change orders that are beyond staff's approval authority for the relocation of water and sewer lines, and construction of a box culvert at the Lincoln Avenue location to mitigate conflict between existing underground utilities and perform modifications to grade crossings." Ouch! (Metrolink Board April 27 meeting, agenda item #18).

Remember then-Mayor Art Brown of Buena Park last year at the meeting in Fullerton I attended spoke of cooperation among the various rail services in the LOSSAN corridor along the coast between San Luis Obispo and San Diego? A report prepared by OCTA and presented at the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee meeting of April 17 speaks of the "integration" and even "consolidation" of Metrolink, the Surfliner and the Coaster for the southern end of the corridor. Looks like the long moribund SB 457 process may be reawakening.

So Mark Pisano is finally leaving the South-

ern California Association of Governments at the end of the year. I think he did as well as one could given the rather thankless task regionalism has been during the past twenty-some years. But it has long been obvious he isn't providing his organization with useful leadership. And the unfolding Maglev fiasco has eroded whatever credibility he ever had. But will SCAG now finally lead, instead of tiptoe?

I just have to say whatever Contractor MV did to have to pay RTA \$1 million to settle claims for falling short in operating para-transit, it must have been a real meltdown: <http://www.riversidetransit.com/downloads/boardDocs/board/07-0426/Item6N-MV%20settlement%20status.pdf>

At the February 26, 2007 Antelope Valley Transit Authority Board Meeting during the Operations Report (item RA 1) it was reported a recent security assessment over a few weeks resulted in over 100 citations had been issued by L.A. County Sheriff Deputies for transit-related infractions. YEOW!

I am dumbfounded at the map of "Proposed Red Car Line Expansion" for the L.A. port area J.K. Drummond brought to our April 14 meeting. He obtained it at a meeting in the San Pedro area he recently attended. I know the Port has deep pockets, but that deep? Basically for a theme park ride to amuse tourists? Amazing!

To conclude this month I'll note that now you can subscribe (via the MTA website) to have e-mail notices sent whenever the MTA Board meeting schedule has been updated. That will be useful for those of us keeping an eye on our friends at 1 Gateway Plaza....





The roving camera spent March in Santa Monica (above, with Big Blue Bus and guest Culver CityBus), Palm Springs (Hwy. 111 at Monty Hall), and Banning — Mark Strickert photos



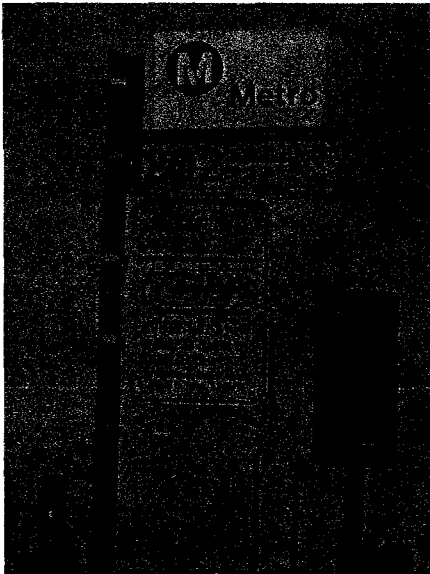
ZINE PLUGS -- Mark Strickert

["Zines" are magazines produced by individuals or a small group of volunteers. Some are general-interest, and some cover specific topics. Here are a couple devoted to public transportation - Mark]

WATCH THE CLOSING DOORS, published by Fred Argoff, Penthouse L, 1170 Ocean Pkwy., Brooklyn NY 11230. \$10/year for 4 issues. Tell me if this sounds familiar... long-time transit buff eventually seeks and finds work with his local system. One recent issue featured history and present-day comments on the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) portion of the New York City Subway. Another issue had a feature article on the Cincinnati subway. Subway, in Cincinnati? Well, in the 1920's they came up with funds to build the tunnel and several stations, but had nothing left over for tracks, rolling stock, or operating capital. Fred has many tales to tell as both a rider and as a

subway train conductor, and also has a network of story and photo contributors the world over (this reporter has so far had Chicago Loop and Angels Flight photos published there).

THE CONSTANT RIDER OMNIBUS ("Stories from the Public Transportation Front"), published by Kate Lopresti, PO Box 6753, Portland OR 97228. \$3.50. The first three issues of *The Constant Rider* now available in one convenient volume. Kate describes adventures with various personalities aboard Tri-Met vehicles, including the MAX and the 14/Hawthorne bus, and a trip home to Wisconsin on Amtrak and VIA Rail. [Small World Dep't...while reading this zine at lunch last Tuesday, someone a couple booths over exclaimed, "I threw up on the train. I threw up. On the train!" I'm sure there's a message for all of us in that statement ☺.] 🚊



MEMBERS IN ACTION

Bill Vallow is the new President of the Motor Bus Society, and expresses a desire in this capacity to work more closely with SO-CATA.

Chris Flescher is about to become vice chair of the City of Salinas Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Andy Novak has been promoted by Coach America as a Reservations Supervisor, in charge of 8 reservation agents at their main office plus 4 agents that staff the Coach tour desk at the Anaheim Fairfield Hotel.

Andy also had the concluding part of his article on RTD and the 1984 Olympics in the Feb.-March issue of *The Paddle* (newsletter of the Pacific Bus Museum). The same issue had pictures of the GM TDH 4519 (formerly Torrance Transit #341) that Paul Castillo is restoring.

Damien Goodmon and Numan Parada were subjects of the May 1st *Los Angeles Times* article "Fantasy maps re-imagine public transit".

Samuel James is our liaison with the West Covina Chamber of Commerce Government & Legislative Committee, sharing perspectives on transportation issues.

Mark Strickert attended the California High Speed Rail public event in Norwalk in April 12th. He also judged at the Montebello and Big Blue Bus/Culver CityBus rodeos in March. Carlos Osuna made an appearance at the Montebello roдео.

Roger Christensen had a letter in the May 5th *Los Angeles Times*, written in his capacity as chair of the Metro Citizens' Advisory Council.

Damien Goodmon and Ken Ruben attended the Exposition Construction Authority meeting/presentation in Culver City on April 17.

JK Drummond, Margaret Hudson, and Mark Strickert participated in the SO.CA.TA booth at the South Bay Energy Fair, May 5th in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Bart Reed spoke at the Metrolink fare hearing on April 27th.

Hank Fung had a letter on MTA's proposed fare restructuring published in the May 1st *Los Angeles Times*:

"Higher fares will ultimately lead to service cuts as riders leave Metro and find other ways of getting around. Metro requires a certain number of people in order to run a bus, and those standards will remain the same after the fare increases. Higher fares will likely lead to large cuts in night, weekend and suburban service as those routes are no longer sustainable, even at the higher fares.

"In addition, as riders who have cars get into them and cause congestion, buses will be further slowed. The solution is to implement a modest fare increase while cutting some peak-hour service that is the most expensive for the agency to operate, rather than balancing the full expense on riders who might be willing to wait a few extra minutes rather than pay a fare they can't afford." 