

BULLETIN BOARD

SO.CA.TA NEWS

Results of the election for 2008 officers and directors:

President - Lionel Jones

Vice President - Charles Hobbs

Executive Secretary - Dana Gabbard

Recording Secretary - Kymberleigh Richards

Treasurer - Hank Fung

Directors-at-Large - Armando Avalos,

Margaret Hudson, and Ken Ruben

Our thanks to the election committee (Woody Rosner, Nate Zablen and John Ulloth) for the usual smooth handling of the polling and vote count.

After our January 12th meeting, we will convene an ad-hoc group to evaluate the Metro service change proposals for June and prepare our recommendations to be presented at the upcoming public hearings.

At the Feb. 9th meeting, staff from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) will make a presentation on the draft Regional Transportation Plan.

Our holiday banquet at Taix was a grand success, as we celebrated the season with good food and our special guests Anthony Loui, Phil Aker of LADOT and Metro Librarian Matthew Barrett. And of course we had goody bags of trinkets for attendees, gave away a pile of transit schedules from back east plus had numerous door prizes thanks to the generosity of Long Beach Transit, Omnitrans, Torrance Transit, Metrolink, Foothill, Culver CityBus, Caltrans, MTS (of San Diego), OCTA, Big Blue Bus and GET. Donations or assistance were also provided by Andy Novak, Steve Crosmer, Charles Powell, Kymberleigh Richards, Dana Gab-

bard and John Ulloth.

IN OTHER NEWS

On Saturday, Jan. 12th, Mike Jarel, Union Pacific Engineer and Past Vice President of the Southern Pacific Historical Society will give a free talk on the operations of the Saugus Train Station. This will be held from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at the station, 24107 San Fernando Rd. in Newhall (adjacent to the Metrolink station), and is presented by the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society [<http://www.scvhs.org>]. Further information at 661-254-1275.

SO.CA.TA member Roy Shahbazian recommends the *Centerlines* newsletter from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking as a good source of national information: <http://bikewalk.org/newsletter.php>

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Transit Summit happens on Thursday, March 20th from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, at the Wilshire Grand Hotel, 930 Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles. Registration fee is \$75.00, and registration deadline is March 14th. Online reservations and where to send payment via SCAG website: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/cgi/registration/transitsummit/index.cfm> For more information, contact Andre Darmanin at 213-236-1851, or by email at darmanin@scag.ca.gov

SCAG's draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), including the conformity report, are open for public review and comment. It is posted on the SCAG website [<http://scag.ca.gov/>]. There will be three RTP public hearings, all from 10:00 AM to Noon:

Tuesday, January 22nd - SCAG Riverside Office, 3600 Lime Street, Suite 216

Wednesday, January 23rd - SCAG Los Angeles Office, 818 West Seventh Street, 12th Floor

Wednesday, January 30th - Orange County Transportation Authority, 600 S. Main St., Orange 🚌

MEMBERS IN ACTION

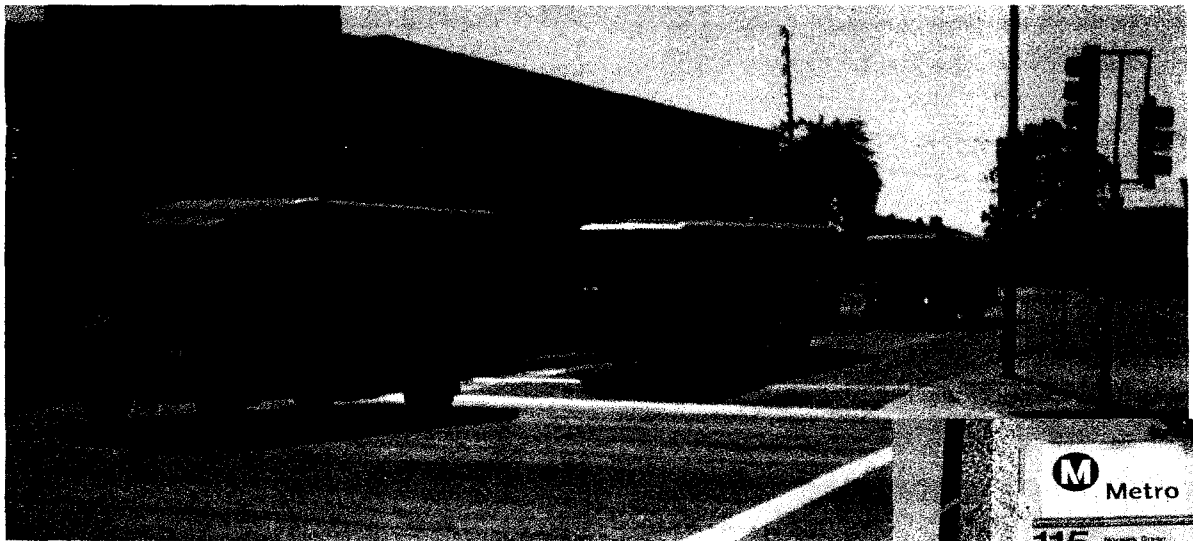
Ken Ruben represented us at Big Blue Bus' new transit store and customer service center official grand opening event, held December 5th in downtown Santa Monica.

Roger Christensen had a letter in the Nov. 12th *Los Angeles Times* on the controversy regarding the Expo Line and grade separations at Dorsey High, noting, "Traffic vol-

ume, not environmental racism, dictates that some intersections be grade separated and not others."

Mark Strickert spoke at the Dec. 13th MTA Gateway Cities sector meeting.

John Andoh and Mark Strickert attended a training session for "Sprinter Ambassadors" at North County Transit District HQ in Oceanside Jan. 5th. 🚌



UP IN DOWNEY

All four DowneyLink routes are scheduled to leave the Downtown depot at the same time. This time 3 of the 4 reached La Reina and Firestone together

Mark Strickert photos



TRANSIT UPDATES

Foothill Transit

Increased some of its fares, effective January 1st:

Cash Fares	Current	New
Silver Streak	\$2.00	\$2.50
Discount Silver Streak*	\$1.00	\$1.25*
Commuter Express	\$3.65	\$4.40
Discount Commuter Express	\$1.80	none
31-Day Pass Prices	Current	New
Adult Local	\$55.00	\$66.00
Student Local	\$25.00	\$30.00
Senior/Disabled/Medicare Local	\$18.00	\$20.00
Silver Streak	\$80.00	\$96.00
Discount Silver Streak*	\$40.00	\$48.00*
Commuter Express	\$130.00	\$155.00
Discount Commuter Express	\$65.00	none

* - Silver Streak discount fares, for eligible senior, disabled, and Medicare card holders, only apply during off-peak periods. Peak times are 4:00 to 10:00 AM and 2:00 to 8:00 PM.

"Commuter Express" applies to Lines 493, 497, 498, 499, and 699. Discount fares for Commuter Express lines have been eliminated.

Los Angeles Dep't of Transportation (LADOT)

LADOT will no longer accept Metro passes on their DASH and Commuter Express buses. The MTA had stopped reimbursing for Metro passholders using LADOT buses.

EZ pass is still accepted, valid Metrolink tickets and passes still work where they did before, or in a pinch use US currency.

MTA ("Metro")

Public Hearings for service changes, proposed to be effective in June 2008 or later:

Proposed line cancellations:

124, 126, 127, 154, 155, 175, 177, 202, 209, 211, 215, 220, 254, 256, 608, 620, 626, 634, 940

Proposed cancellations of Saturday service:

201, 439, 711

Proposed cancellations of Sunday and holiday service:

102, 120, 121, 201, 265, 439, 612, 711

Proposed cancellations of late evening and/or Owl service:

10, 14, 37, 38

Other Service Cuts:

53 - re-route to serve Imperial/Wilmington station instead of Avalon Green Line station, plus other unnamed changes in conjunction with new Rapid **753**

60 - cut Owls south of Artesia Blvd., and cut Owl deviation to Compton Blue Line station

62 - cut south of Rosecrans ("May" be replaced by Norwalk Transit)

92 - move south terminus to Vignes/Cesar E. Chavez

94 - move south terminus to Vignes/Cesar E. Chavez; shift some local trips to new Rapid **794**

105 - cut east of Pacific Blvd.

108 - cut west of Fox Hills Mall

110 - extend west to Marina del Rey

115 - shift some weekday local trips to new Rapid **715**

156 - service reduction "to increase productivity"

201 - cut south of Vermont/1st (hours to be used improving remaining service)

224 - shift some weekday local trips to new Rapid **724**

237 - cancel weekday midday service on Woodley Ave.

258 - cut south of Garfield/Imperial

358 - cut west of Fox Hills Mall

439 - cancel middays

444 - replace midday and weekend service north of Artesia Transit Ctr. with **450X**

445 - replace midday and weekend service north of Artesia Transit Ctr. with **450X**

Other Service Changes:

51 - replace northbound-only **53 Owl** on Central with two-way **51 Owl** on Avalon [will it still go to Manchester?]

94 - extend north to Olive View

110 - cut east of Garfield Ave.

163 - Hollywood Way segment replaced by new **222** (with reduced service)

350 - to be replaced with new Rapid **753**, via same route as **53** to Imperial/Wilmington station

361 - to be replaced with new Rapid **762**, M-Sat from Fair Oaks/Colorado to Atlantic/Imperial

394 - Downtown, to either Burbank or to Sun Valley, would be replaced by new Rapid **794**

450X - to replace **444** and **445** midday and weekend service north of Artesia Transit Ctr.

705 - increase frequency and span (per Consent Decree)

315 - to be replaced with new Rapid **715**, but only east to Firestone/Atlantic

330 - to be replaced with new Rapid **730**

770 - add Saturday service

Public hearings will take during or immediately following the regularly-scheduled February sector meetings...see Meeting Calendar on page 11. Two additional hearings will be held:

Metro HQ Board Room - Saturday, Feb. 9th, 10:00 AM, Gateway Plaza 3rd Floor.

Gateway Cities Sector - Tuesday Feb. 12th, 6:00 PM, South Gate Recreation Ctr. Girls Clubhouse, 4940 Southern Ave. [west of 260 and 361 on Atlantic Ave., and south of 115 and 315 on Firestone].

North County Transit District (NCTD)

As of press time, NCTD's new "Sprinter" train was to begin scheduled service between Oceanside and Escondido on Sunday, January 13th. A delay of Opening Day may still happen, depending on effects of the recent rains, and upon delays completing final state safety inspections.

A number of bus route and schedule changes will be made to coincide with the start of Sprinter, and NCTD needs to give 2 weeks' notice for when the route changes take effect. One change is the cancellation of express line 320...it has been noted the Sprinter schedule is to start earlier than the 320 now does, but also ends one hour sooner on weekdays. Sprinter Weekday service will be every 30 minutes between 4:00 AM and 8:30 PM; Weekend/Holiday service will be hourly and start at 4:30 AM. Fares will be the same as NCTD "Breeze" bus service.

Riverside Transit Agency (RTA)

Service changes, effective January 13th, will include:

1 - Most trips will end at 6th/Smith in Corona; Only some trips will continue west to West Corona Metrolink. All trips east of downtown Riverside will use University instead of 3rd St., and will end at Canyon Crest. The 3rd St. segment, and east to Big Springs/Watkins, will be covered by changes to routes **10** and **14**

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TRANSIT UPDATES *cont'd from page 5*

7 & 8 – both routes adjusted on Riverside Dr., and will now both go to the Outlet mall
16 – Will be moved back on to Campus Dr. at UC-Riverside; **16E** cancelled...Moreno Valley users can use new route **210** (below)

29 – Instead of terminating at Bellegrave and Etiwanda, will continue west on Limonite to the new shopping areas west of I-15 at Hamner.

33 – route adjusted to serve Dartmouth Middle School, Hemet High School, and yes the Wal-Mart

36 – removed from Redlands; will instead go to Yucaipa High School, connecting there with Omnitrans 8 and 9

38 – route adjusted to cover more of the Limonite/Hamner area, but will terminate at Jurupa/Etiwanda. Riders continuing to Metrolink at The Pedley station will have to use the new **38E** express extension to East

Ontario Metrolink, or the rerouted **39** from Jurupa/Etiwanda

39 – replaces portions of the former Jurupa Shuttle, and with span expanded to 6:35 AM-5:00 PM

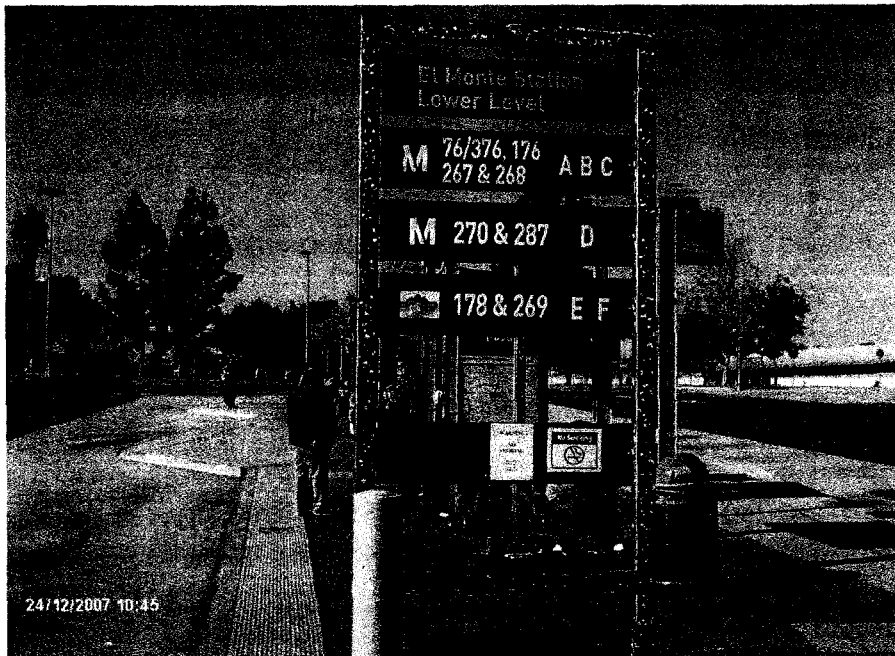
61 – extended south to Murrieta and to Promenade Mall in Temecula

204 – to also serve UC-Riverside; cuts to early AM and late PM trips

206 – added Saturday service, extended to serve shopping areas including the Galleria at Tyler

210 – new CommuterLink, from Moreno Valley SuperTarget and Moreno Valley Mall to Riverside Metrolink and Downtown Terminal area, with some added trips east to Beaumont and Banning

RTA's Customer Information Center hours will be expanded, to 6:00 AM-10:00 PM weekdays, and 8:00 AM-9:30 PM weekends. 🚗



In the November 7 article "Expo Safety Fears Are Aired", *Los Angeles Times* Staff Writer Jeffrey L. Rabin quotes comments made by California Public Utilities Commission Commissioner Timothy Simon at a public meeting in re Dorsey High and grade separations on the Expo light rail line: "This process has been extraordinarily informative to me. The people have spoken. I'm looking at all the crossings and their risk factors from a different perspective." Am I the only one disturbed at his seeming willingness to be swayed by mass hysteria? And is it reasonable to assume Simon won't be an impartial arbiter after expressing the seeming bias implicit in these comments?

I was gratified the influential blog *L.A. Observed* published my comment on the recent laughable column in the *L.A. Times* by David Lazarus touting DOA regional transit plans. I was especially exercised that the *Times* is AWOL "on transportation and its nexus with land use. There is a debate about the future of our region going on and it is a disgrace the leading media voice in the area isn't involved, either in its news coverage or opinion pages."

[http://www.laobserved.com/letters/2007/12/columnists_onenote_monorial_id.php]

Interesting fact of the month #1: Metrolink CEO David Solow's adjusted annual base salary is now \$220,091.56 (per the Dec. 14 Metrolink Board meeting, agenda item #18).

Also disgraceful is the seeming conviction of Metro that the only outreach it needs to make requesting public comment on its proposed Customer Code of Conduct will be

(or has been?) to place a legal notice buried in the classified section of a newspaper of general circulation (and ironically as of now no one to my knowledge can confirm whether the notice has in fact been published). Yet meanwhile this month Metro is holding a well publicized public hearing on tiles? That such an important matter should be handled in such a bureaucratic manner seems unconscionable. At the very least a notice to patrons requesting comment should be made available on transit vehicles, along with a notice on the front page of the Metro website. Anything less is unacceptable. My letter to Roger Snoble raising these concerns and others has been placed on the front page of our website, along with a page containing links to the text of the code and information on how to send Mr. Snoble comments (via mail or fax).

Does the Westside have the clout to get the funds needed to extend the Purple Line west under Wilshire? One indicator it may well is the recent resolution of long running community opposition to proposals for commercial development of the West Los Angeles VA property. In the end the locals won as President Bush, while expressing displeasure, signed a budget bill that included a provision banning such development. These folks have clout that even reaches into the Oval Office! Obtaining \$4 billion for the subway extension obviously is a daunting prospect but maybe not outside the realm of possibility if the right alliances are enlisted. HOO-HAH!

After months of behind the scenes

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PLAC cont'd from page 7

wrangling the new Formula Allocation Procedure for Los Angeles County was adopted astonishingly fast at the Nov. 28 MTA Board meeting. We await an analysis of just what impact this change will have.

Kudos to Richard Katz as the only Metro Board member to forcefully speak out against the mindless rail gating proposal. I am still sure sticker shock will eventually scotch this bad idea. Please?

Faithful Reader recently complained this column has been threadbare of late for juicy tidbits. To which I commiserated but said sometimes you just have a dry spell. To help alleviate this FR brought to my attention rather eye-opening procurement problems Metrolink is having with locomotives it ordered from Motive Power, INC. (MPI) as outlined at the Nov. 16 Metrolink Board meeting [http://www.metrolinktrains.com/documents/Board_Agenda/December_2007.PDF]. These include:

- * Cab heaters with a surface temperature of 175 degrees and therefore a potential hazard to the crews
- * Leakage around the seals of injectors
- * Material to be placed above the cab warped by being left outside in the Boise yard of MPI
- warping of the metal panels behind the cab, along the roof to side-body connection.
- * Head-end-power (HEP) units received with 24-volt power systems when Metrolink locomotives run on a 72-volt system

Various fixes are being made to these gaffes, but for obvious reasons the antici-

pated delivery of two locomotives in December will be delayed approximately two months.

In response to proposed development around the Duarte Gold Line station as part of the Foothill extension, resident Roger Medina expressed the essence of NIMBY-ism: "It would destroy the essence of what the city of Duarte really is. It's a heart-warming community and we want to keep it that way. This project is unnecessary. We've got enough stores. The city should stay the way it is - that's the bottom line." (as quoted in the Dec. 6 *Whittier Daily News* article "Transit meeting draws crowd").

In compiling and updating our website page on holiday transit services and events I was amazed how popular Santa trains are. For example, in only its 2nd year the COASTER's Santa Express drew more than 1,000 passengers (plus one desperate parent posted on Craigslist seeking tickets for the sold out train). YouTube has numerous videos of Metrolink Holiday Toy Express trains (for this year and previous ones). Trains operated at Traveltown in Griffith Park, the Orange Empire Railroad Museum in Perris and Fillmore & Western in Ventura County all had large responses. The North Pole Limited of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum (PSRM) in Campo sold out by early Dec. even with an extra car added. Regarding reserving seats for next year the PSRM website notes "Check the Museum's Web Site in July for scheduling and reservation information." July? YEOW!

Interesting fact of the month #2: The annual Holiday LightRunner tour of community holiday light displays operated by the

Palo Verde Valley Transit Agency was started in 2002 and now has a yearly ridership of 700+ passengers.

I am not surprised the Watts Labor Community Action Committee has again stalled the solicitation process for a replacement contract operator for the Hahn Trolley and Shuttle Service and wrangled another extension as they persist in playing racial politics and complain the screening process isn't fair. Sad to see a once venerable organization descend into near dementia [http://lacounty.info/omd/q4_2007/cms1_077418.pdf].

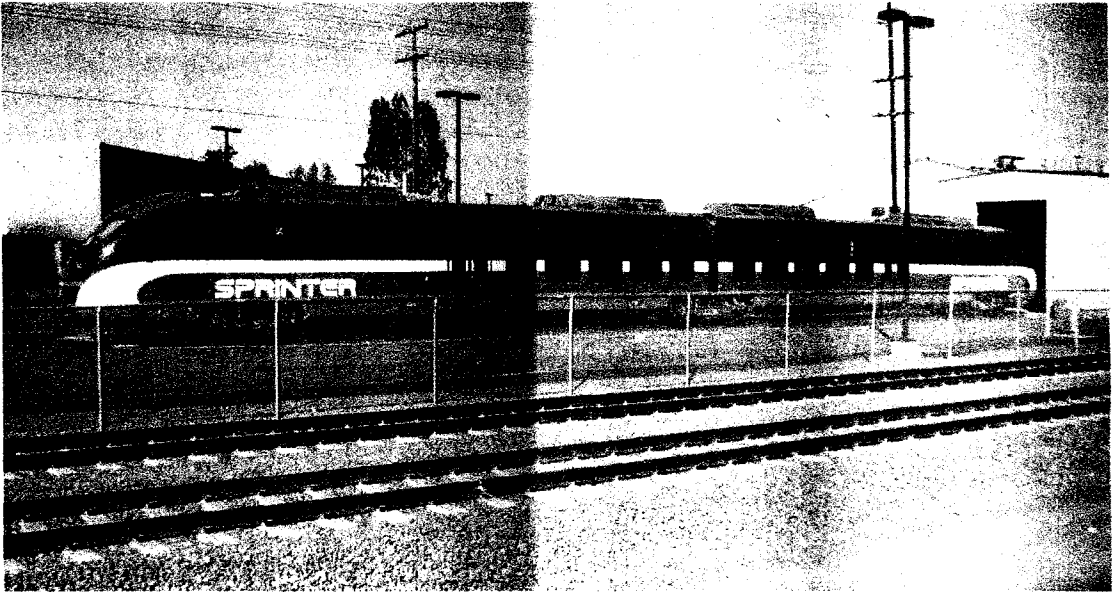
I'll conclude with a fond farewell to Ed Clifford, longtime director of service planning at Metro who has been hired as the first executive director of the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority in North Carolina, for which he will oversee the consolidation of 4 existing transit systems. A press release quotes him: "My most memorable experiences over the past three decades have been starting up new transit systems and mergers. It is challenging and there is a lot to do with mergers and start ups, but it is very exciting and rewarding." Our best wishes to Ed in his new endeavor. 🚌



MEGABUS AT LOS ANGELES UNION STATION

...including one of the several "Bus Stop" signs on the Union Station grounds. *Mark Strickert photos*





More NCTD Sprinter preview photos to
whet your appetite

John Ulloth photos

