

## BULLETIN BOARD

At the February 9<sup>th</sup> SO.CA.TA meeting, staff from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) will give a presentation on the draft Regional Transportation Plan, starting at 2:15 PM. We will continue discussion of a possible dues increase for 2009, to \$30 per year. After the meeting, *Transit Guide* volunteers will meet to discuss production of this year's edition

The Whittier Historic Depot Surface Transportation Museum officially opened Tuesday Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> as part of the restored depot, at 7333 Greenleaf Ave. The depot, which was built in 1888 by Southern Pacific Railroad, was extensively renovated in 2002. The museum is open from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. Further information: (562) 698-2131

California Operation Lifesaver provides free presentations on safety around rail tracks to professional truck drivers, emergency responders and community organizations. To request one: 877-827-2265 or [info@caol.us](mailto:info@caol.us)

Implementing Tomorrow's Technologies: Lessons Learned from the Evolution of Infrastructure is a free lecture by Joel A. Tarr being given at USC's Ralph & Goldy Lewis Hall on Tuesday Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 1:00 PM. For more information, contact Deirdre Flanagan (213) 740-2695; e-mail [dmflanag@usc](mailto:dmflanag@usc)

A panel discussion sponsored by the Westside Urban Forum, "The Realpolitik of Rail Politics," takes place Friday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 9:00 AM at The Regency Club, 10900 Wilshire Blvd., 17th Floor (at Westwood Blvd.). Cost for non-members is \$55 until Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> (\$20 for full-time students with ID), \$65 thereafter. For more

information contact Christyne Buteyn at (310) 322-1520; e-mail to [info@westsideurbanforum.com](mailto:info@westsideurbanforum.com)

The City of Los Angeles is holding community meetings around for its updated Bicycle Master Plan (<http://www.altaplanning.com/labikeplan/Main.html>):

Saturday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:00-Noon -- Expo Center Swim Stadium Community Rm., 3980 S. Menlo Ave.

Wednesday Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 PM -- Felicia Mahood Multi Purpose Center, 11338 Santa Monica Blvd.

Wednesday Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 PM -- Marvin Braude-San Fernando Constituent Services Center, Conference Room 1B, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys

Saturday, Mar. 1<sup>st</sup>, 10:00-Noon -- Banning's Landing Community Center, 100 E. Water St., Wilmington

OCTA and Metrolink are among the sponsors of a Year of the Rat party at Irvine Transportation Ctr., 15215 Barranca Pkwy., on Saturday, Feb 9<sup>th</sup>. Festivities start at 9:30 AM. First 300 in line will get free Metrolink tickets for the 10:37 AM train to Los Angeles Union Station, and same-day return. 🚆



MTA's new San Gabriel Valley Sector office building, behind El Monte Bus Station

## MEMBERS IN ACTION

Andy Novak's article on ATE 4450s appeared in the Nov.-Dec. issue of *The Pad-dle*, newsletter of the Pacific Bus Museum

Nate Zaben appeared on the Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> newscast on KABC-TV 7 commenting on the condition of local roads

John Ulloth's ad urging (among other things) passage of Proposition 91 appeared in the February issue of *Change Links*

Ken Alpern's commentary "A Few Choice Words from a Grassroots Advocate (an open letter to the Metro Board)" appeared in the online *CityWatch* newsletter: <http://www.citywatchla.com/content/view/939/75/>

Kymerleigh Richards as spokesperson for our campaign on behalf of passage of Proposition 91 was quoted extensively in the media. This includes on KABC-TV 7 Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>, in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> ("Prop 91: Never heard of it? You're not missing

much"), in the *San Francisco Chronicle* ("Backers now urge voting against Prop. 91") and the *Sacramento News & Review* ("Ninety-one is the loneliest number") on Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>, *Ventura County Star* Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> ("Prop. 91 fuel tax ballot measure runs out of gas"), and on San Francisco radio station KGO's Karel Show on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>. Kymerleigh Richards and Dana Gabbard had an op-ed in support of Proposition 91 in the Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> *Daily News* ("Prop. 91 still needed to shield transit funds")

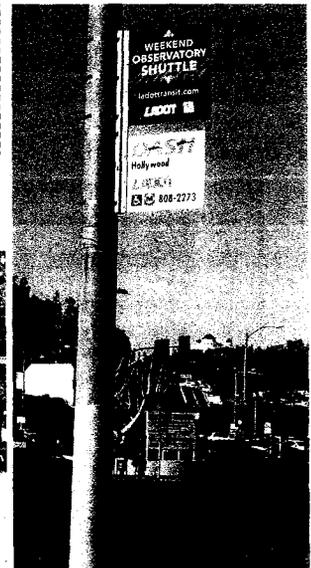
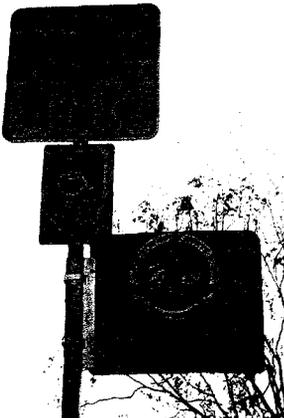
Ken Ruben attended the Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> Westside/Central Sector meeting..."I mainly spoke for myself in regards the good and the bad on MTA during my regular meanderings on MTA as almost a daily rider. On behalf of SOCATA, I did mention that we would be monitoring the changes and presenting our reports at the various Sector Governance Council hearings."

Robert Meinert and Ken Ruben attended the Westside Transportation Study meeting 

*El Monte Metrolink shuttle stop, near El Monte Bus Station* 

**Beginning and End** — the new LADOT Weekend Observatory Shuttle bus stop at Vermont and Sunset, with the route's destination in the background 

*A Laguna Beach Transit bus, near their new HQ at 1900 Laguna Canyon Rd.* 



Our quixotic campaign on behalf of Proposition 91 thus far has fallen short in one aspect: the *L.A. Times* still won't run an op-ed from us. Other than that it has been a sensational success garnering us more publicity statewide than we received in the previous 15+ years. And we did it in furtherance of principles! By the time this appears we'll know whether the darn thing passed. Wouldn't that knock the bigshots for a loop, if it did!

All I'll say about the unfolding gating fiasco at Metro is it appears to be the biggest debacle foisted on the agency by the Board since the ATTB (aka the stealth bus). Actually this idiotic idea may blow a bigger hole in the budget than that ill-advised bus project. At least Roger Stanger with his analysis has made some Board members a bit nervous about whether this is a bad idea (and trust me, it is).

The latest blowhard quote by windbag L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky was this priceless gem at the It's Time to Move L.A. Conference in re the proposed Downtown Connector rail project: "a half-billion just so that people can save a couple of minutes to get downtown". Clever, Uncle Zev. And once word gets around it would be the most cost-effective rail project of all the present proposals, how fast before Mr. Zig-Zag switches to being chief cheerleader? Is it re-run season already?

Total cost almost a half a billion dollars, 30 minute headways (even in rush hour), and service ending at 10 p.m. due to freight conflicts. NCTD's Sprinter with all its woes has probably killed any further interest in Diesel Mobile Unit technology around the country, or at least made interested parties

a little more leery of the concept. And it won't even open until March 9th? Oy!

In another surprise exit, longtime Foothill Transit director of planning Rahul Kumar is leaving for Transportation Management & Design, Russell Chisholm's consulting firm. Meanwhile in the midst of its budget woes Foothill Staff at the Nov. 8, 2007 Special Executive Board meeting reported that besides the recent fare changes a restructuring may also need to be considered in the coming fiscal year and that they are "currently reviewing underproductive service to identify service cuts that will minimize the impact to Foothill Transit customers".

It is no surprise that I have received a belated "thanks for all the help" letter from Mobility 21, acknowledging the expansion of its reach to a 5 county group and that the Executive Committee I formerly sat on has been supplanted by a new Steering Committee composed of a "limited group". This was apparent months ago, and is just the other shoe falling. P.S., the letter was addressed to "Ms. Donna Gabbard". Thanks, guys!

Is anyone surprised the Mobility Management Pilot Program at Access Services, Inc. (to assist those given restricted eligibility or found ineligible for ASI) found "A complication that was encountered for some of the referrals to the dial-a-ride programs administered by cities' is that many cities do not have a lot of information about their services." (ASI Jan. 16 Board Box, item #2 - <http://asila.org/pdf/BoardBox336.pdf>) Boy, we transit users are often familiar with that situation (albeit it is getting somewhat better thanks to websites, and maybe the impending 511 service).

I also am not surprised that the long-promised compliance and performance audit of Access Services by the Metro Office of the Inspector General didn't provide the knockout blow many disability activists were hoping for in re the eligibility process. As the ASI website notes "... surveys taken in connection with the audit indicate that a majority of ASI riders find the eligibility process to be fair and 80% of the respondents rated the overall quality of the eligibility evaluation as good or excellent." The audit can be downloaded at [http://www.asila.org/pdf/FILE\\_pdf\\_20080128\\_133312.pdf](http://www.asila.org/pdf/FILE_pdf_20080128_133312.pdf)

So Metro is considering installing sliding doors to protect its bus operators from assault per the presentation at the Nov. 15, 2007 Metro Board Operations Committee meeting? When asked about it at the Jan. 23 Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting, San Fernando Valley Service Sector General Manager Richard Hunt noted it is currently being field tested but no decision has been made regarding implementation.

My how times change. Mesrrs. Rubin and Moore were offered another opportunity to blast rail in an op-ed in the *L.A. Times* ("The MTA's Train Wreck", Jan. 13). Only to have them blown to pieces by scathing letters to the editor, a guest commentary by Fred Camino on the Times' own environmental blog Emerald City ("Buses, trains and the transit-oriented lifestyle", Jan. 16) and a "blowback" op-ed by Matthew Hetz in the Times itself ("L.A. deserves rail", January 22). My key observation is the stereotype of transit only being for the poor is no longer viable. To Moore & Rubin it must be galling after so many years dominating the debate to find themselves more and more marginalized...

Speaking of marginalized, when the biparti-

san National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission [<http://www.transportationfortomorrow.org>] released recommendations that didn't jibe with the George W. Bush lame-duck agenda, what did he have his appointees on the Commission do? Vote against them, whining that more funding isn't the answer to our transportation crisis. This is the same crew that failed in their jihad against Amtrak, and sat on reauthorization for two years just to make right-wing zealots happy. And they have tried to suppress the chapter of the final report dealing with light rail, a level of chutzpah stunning even ultra right-winger Paul Weyrich who wrote the chapter (Ken Ruben tipped me off to this latter development - <http://www.nationalcorridors.org/df2/df01212008.shtml#Bush>). I guess the dialogue won't start until Bush 43 exits in 12 months...

Guess what? The Transit Center in downtown Perris is slated to be named after legendary train buff (and Disney animator) Ward Kimball.

The Southern California Regional Airport Authority [[http://www.scr\\_aa.org/](http://www.scr_aa.org/)] is trying to decide what its purpose should be, as outlined in a consultant study prepared for the still-born entity. Suspicion among key stakeholders has hampered its attempt to champion a regional approach to meeting future air travel demand, and it isn't clear that a study alone can overcome that impediment.

I'll close by noting the death on Jan. 28 of Russell "Rusty" Hammer, the former president of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. It was his vision that launched the Mobility 21 Coalition. Our task is to carry forward the works he started. 🚗

# TRANSIT UPDATES

## MTA ("Metro")

Remaining Sector meetings and June 2008 service change hearings for February:

"All Sector" service change public hearing — Saturday, Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM, MTA headquarters boardroom, 1 Gateway Plaza

San Gabriel Valley — Monday Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, Governance Council meeting 5:00 PM, public hearing 6:00 PM, at San Gabriel Valley sector office, 3449 Santa Anita Ave. 3rd Fl., El Monte

Gateway Cities — Tues. Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> public hearing 6:00 PM, at Girls Clubhouse, 4940 Southern Ave., South Gate; Thurs. Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, Governance Council meeting 2:00 PM, public hearing 4:00 PM, at The Gas Company, 9240 Firestone Blvd., Downey

Westside/Central - no Governance Council meeting this month; Wednesday Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> public hearing 5:00 PM at La Cienega Tennis Center, Sunset Room, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills

## North County Transit District (NCTD)

New scheduled start date for NCTD's SPRINTER train service is Sunday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. The new line from Oceanside to Escondido had not yet passed its California Public Utilities Commission safety inspection by Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>. NCTD will give no less than two weeks advance notice of the opening, as it coincides with many changes to the BREEZE bus service along the train route. Current

BREEZE bus schedules will remain in effect until the Sprinter line opens.

The eastbound Escondido Ave. platform needs to be rebuilt, and will likely not be ready for the start of service. The platform had been constructed to old specifications.

## Santa Monica Big Blue Bus

As part of the regularly scheduled Santa Monica City Council meeting on Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, City Council voted to discontinue Farmers' Market Ride service due to very low ridership. Additionally, most Farmers' Market Ride passengers should be able to use Line 4 or Line 9 to get them to and from the markets. The last day of service for both the Downtown Farmers' Market Ride and the Pico Farmers' Market Ride was Saturday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Sunset Ride: effective Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 -- will operate every 15 minutes Mon-Thurs, and every 20 minutes on Fridays. Hours will remain 7:00 AM-6:00 PM.

## City of Anaheim

Per Barry Christensen – the City of Anaheim is proposing building a monorail to connect Disneyland with their planned Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center, near the Anaheim Stadium train station. While they intend to seek Measure M funding, the city will ask Disney and other businesses to pay for it.

Speaking of Disneyland, new monorail cars are being delivered. 🚆

