

BULLETIN BOARD

SO.CA.TA Notes

Roger Molière, Chief of Real Property Management & Development for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), will be the guest speaker at the April SO.CA.TA meeting. He will be speaking about joint development opportunities at Metro Rail stations and the recent proposal adopted by the Metro Board to gate elevated and underground rail stations. The guest speaker's portion will begin at 2:15 p.m. Damian Carroll from Assemblyman Michael Feuer's office will also be in attendance to provide an overview of the Assemblyman's package of bills on local funding options and request our support.

A draft copy of the 2008 Transit Guide should be available for review at the April meeting. We expect to have the new edition ready for Fullerton Railroad Days weekend (see below).

Cathi Coles of Pasadena ARTS transit system is anticipated to be the speaker at our May 10th meeting.

On Friday April 25th, we will be undertaking our first study tour of the year, a second look at the MTA 577x during afternoon rush hour. The starting point is El Monte Transit Center, with members able to take either the 4:05 PM trip arriving at Long Beach Transit Mall at 5:26 PM, or the 4:39 PM trip arriving at 6:00 PM. We'll meet up at Taco Beach, 211 Pine Ave, a short walk from the Long Beach Transit Mall and share stories of what we experienced over a dinner of Mexican food.

SOCATA will have a table or booth at each of the following events:
Fullerton Railroad Days, weekend of May 3-4, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM, in parking lot east of

train station and Fullerton Transportation Center. We've been assigned booth #45, in the southeast corner of the lot roughly between the model layouts and the Amtrak tables. <http://www.scrmf.org/rrdays/>

South Bay Energy Fair, Saturday May 10th, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, at Pacific Unitarian Church, 5621 Montemalaga Dr. in Rancho Palos Verdes. \$5.00 suggested donation. <http://southbayenergyfair.com/>

National Train Day, Saturday May 10th, 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM, at Los Angeles Union Station, 800 N. Alameda St. Our thanks to RailPAC for allowing us to share their booth. <http://www.nationaltrainday.com/events-information/losangeles>

In Other News

There is now a blog for the proposed statewide bullet train bond measure on the November ballot for the proposed: <http://cahsr.blogspot.com/>.

Founding President and CEO of Solimar Research Group Bill Fulton now has a blog: <http://www.cp-dr.com/blog/27>

Some college students have posted an online petition advocating construction of the Gold Line foothill extension: <http://iwillride.org/>

The annual Torrance city yard open house will be held Saturday June 7th, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at 20500 Madrona Avenue in Torrance.


Save the date: the Transit Research Board-American Public Transit Association Joint Light Rail Transit Conference will be held in Los Angeles April 19-22 of 2009. Further details can be obtained via e-mail: PSHAW@nas.edu

Coast Starlight Communities Network is a coalition devoted to protecting and improv-

ing rail service between Washington, Oregon, and California. Go to: <http://groups.google.com/group/coast-starlight?hl=en> and click on "Apply for Membership" in the right column.

"Russell's Official National Motor Coach Guide", a nationwide guide, is still being published. Single issues are \$21.36 (check or money order). Each December edition

comes with the annual station listing. Call 319-364-6138 to purchase and/or more details.

Our website calendar is continually updated and includes new events as we become aware of them, cancellations, date and time changes, etc. Let us know if you find a mistake so we can correct it! 

TRANSIT UPDATES

FOOTHILL TRANSIT

Due to decreased store traffic, The Duarte Transit Store, located at 1740 E. Huntington Dr., will be closing permanently on Saturday, May 31st.

IRVINE SHUTTLE

The first of 3 Irvine Business Complex shuttle routes opened for business on March 31st. Route C operates weekday middays, as a bidirectional loop. Routes A and B, to connect Tustin Metrolink station with the business area and John Wayne Airport seven days a week, are scheduled to begin service Monday, June 9th. Fares are free until September. Route and schedule info at <http://www.irvineshuttle.net/>.

MTA

Phase 2 of the Eastside Transit Corridor project update meetings, based on feedback from the November '07 community meetings, will be held:

Saturday, April 12th 10:00-noon – South El Monte Senior Center, 1556 Central Ave (off Santa Anita Ave.; Foothill #269)

Monday, April 14th 6:30-8:30PM – Montebello Senior Center at City Park, 115 S. Taylor Ave. (at Whittier Blvd.; Montebello #10)

Thursday, April 17th 6:30-8:30PM – North Park Middle School, 4450 Durfee Ave., Pico Rivera (at Beverly Blvd.; Montebello #40 and #60)

METROLINK

Public hearing at their April 25th board meeting, regarding the next round of fare increases. Fare charts for 3.5%, 5.5%, and 7.5% increases are at www.metrolinktrains.com. They also say they have proposed service cuts, but no specific plans are given!? Hearing to be held in the Southern California Associated Governments' San Bernardino Conference Room, 12th floor of 818 W. 7th St. in Los Angeles

NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT

Watch for public hearing notices soon from NCTD. They expect to raise fares and make service cuts soon, in anticipation of an expected \$3 million deficit. Among staff recommendations are 50¢ increases to bus, Coaster, and Sprinter fares, and to the NCTD day pass, eliminating or charging extra for "Rail-2-Rail" between Coaster and Amtrak, cutting or eliminating the "FAST" dial-a-ride services in Encinitas, Fallbrook, Ramona and Vista, and eliminating bus

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TRANSIT UPDATES *cont'd from page 3*

route 101 service south of Del Mar. They plan no cuts to the new Sprinter train, though would put off proposed increases in weekend service.

OCTA

Public hearing at the April 14th board meeting, for service changes that would take effect June 8th, 2008 or later:

470 and **471** Stationlink shuttles to be cancelled, due to partial duplication by new Irvine Shuttle routes (above).

472 – new Stationlink shuttle, from Tustin Metrolink to Fairchild/Jamboree, via Edinger, Red Hill, MacArthur, Campus, and Jamboree

473 – new Stationlink shuttle, from Tustin Metrolink to UC Irvine, via Harvard

671 – new OC Flyer route, from Anaheim Canyon Metrolink and Tustin/Lincoln Park and Ride to fairgrounds

686 – cancel

792 – new intercounty express, from Galleria at Tyler area and Corona to Anaheim Canyon Metrolink and Disneyland 🚌

PUBLIC AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS *Dana Gabbard*

I attended the inaugural Regional Transit Summit held in downtown L.A. March 20th, sponsored by the Southern California Association of Governments, was impressed by the range of speakers and heard some very informative presentations (plus did some networking). Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa gave a good keynote about the need for more and better mass transit as our region undergoes a shift toward density. But I was flummoxed as David Crane, Special Advisor to the Governor for Jobs and Economic Growth, in his comments repeatedly asked the audience to support the Governor's budget reform proposals (rainy day fund, etc.). It was very surreal--basically he spoke about how much the administration cared about transit while glossing over the money they stole from transit the past few years during budget negotiations. I understand the structural reasons why this happened, but could go without hearing that basically they were regretful it happened. We'd prefer the funding instead of the sentiment. Now if as is widely suspected the

Governor eventually will be placing on the ballot measures to provide a revenue increase and significant budget reforms, THAT we could support.

My favorite presentation, *Innovative Performance in Transit – A Business Approach*, by David Duchscherer of Wendel & Duchscherer Architects and Engineers involved actually riding transit long distances and evaluating the experience. The results were nothing we riders don't already know about (lack of signage, difficulties transferring between routes, etc.) but it was heartening to have them discussed in a transit industry event.

The presentations made at the summit have been posted on the SCAG website: <http://scag.ca.gov/events/transitsummit.htm>

For the latest on the upcoming California Public Utilities Commission workshop on the Dorsey High crossing (currently slated for the week of May 5) keep an eye on the news page of the Friends 4 Expo Transit

website: <http://friends4expo.org/news.htm> [P.S. - the word on the street is Damien Goodmon's attack posture is making enemies even among many who otherwise could be potential allies].

Can you believe an Orangeline High Speed Maglev Investor & Developer Conference was held March 26th in Sacramento? Meanwhile Jacki meeting, insider par excellence, at the March Metro Citizen's Advisory Council meeting declared the SCAGLEV should be cancelled as none of the regional agencies except SCAG has it in their long range plans. I agree it is time to stop wasting time, on this fantasy.

Word of the month: Gategate (a la Watergate) for the impending rail gating debacle at Metro.

P.S. Wouldn't we all like to know who paid for speaker from MARTA who flew here to speak in support of the gates? Also wouldn't we like to know why Metro Board member Yvonne Burke publicly told the gentleman "Don't answer that question" when her fellow member of the Board Richard Katz tried to ask the same thing.

At least in the March 20th *L.A. CityBeat* I has my say about the gates in a letter to the editor:

Cubic lobbyist Barna Szabo - to further the interests of his client - issued a barrage of misinformation to provide cover for the Metro Board to pretend the rail gating is warranted [Re: "Buying Access to the Metro Board," March 13]. To me that constitutes sleazy tactics. Seemingly our only hope now is for someone in a position of authority like incoming Assembly Speaker Karen Bass to pressure the Metro Board to cry "Uncle!" and stop this nonsense. Frankly, why should a lobbyist, however genial, get access to

decision-makers while those of us who know the truth are shut out and ignored? Mark my words, like other Board-originated fiascos (anyone else remember the ATTB and P-2000 fiascos?) this one will come back to haunt them. Damn them! [http://www.lacitybeat.com/cms/story/detail/march_20_26_2008/6835/]

So L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky has been making a lot of noise about the dangers of density. But despite being used to his grandstanding I still was shocked when in Steve Lopez's March 19th *L.A. Times* column ("Touring L.A.'s growth in a fury") Zev has the audacity to assert an example of the appropriate place for density is a forlorn commercial stretch of Riverside Drive just north of the Ventura Freeway in the San Fernando Valley. How insulting - let's put growth where homeowners don't have to look at it. Shameful!

And meanwhile our local media continue to hollow out (the *Press-Telegram* has a staff of 10 and is an annex of the *Daily Breeze*?). Among the losses is *L.A. Times* reporter Jeff Rabin, who took the buyout and formerly covered transportation during several periods. Now I am told the *Times* doesn't even have anyone covering the monthly Metro Board meetings. What a sad decline of a once respected news source.

\$101,250 was the cost of the recent audit of Access Service, Inc. conducted by Metro's office of Inspector General (per the minutes of the Feb. 25 Access Services Board of Directors meeting). And the activists who ardently pushed for it now disdain it because it doesn't aid their agenda of perpetual protest against ASI. Amazing!

The Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension

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PLAC Report cont'd from page 5

Authority sending out large quantities of pre-paid postcards as part of a campaign to pressure Metro to include the project as part of the funded portion of the Long Range Plan. Words fail me.

So at the Feb. 5th Foothill Transit Executive Board meeting it was announced CHP has notified them both of their yards have "operation inspections [that] are not adequate". Anyone know whether the '8 minute inspection' that Foothill was to implement resolved CHP's concerns?

It caught my eye when I discovered the San Bernardino Associated Governments is so displeased about how Metro is handling the development of a regional 511 system that their board voted to "communicate these concerns personally to Caltrans Director Will Kempton" (item #4, April 2nd meeting).

I just about fell to the floor when I learned new General Manger of the L.A. Dept. of Water & Power David Nahai had hired Ramman Raj as Chief Operating Officer, reportedly for \$247,177 a year according to the Daily News (May 24 article "DWP top ranks reshuffled"). Years ago as a labor negotiator for MTA Raj famously made repeated blunders that cost the agency millions before finally being shown the door. And now he is to bestow his management genius upon DWP? Heaven help them!

How much does a transmission rebuild cost? In the case of Golden Empire Transit \$15,459 due to damage from leaking engine coolant (item VI D, April 12 GET Board meeting).

I've confirmed at a recent meeting of the L.A. City Council Transportation Committee

a councilman famous for being rude played to the crowd with nasty comments to a veteran of the transportation industry that they should be in a different line of work. And nary a word in the local press of the blogosphere.

Instead there is a lot of nonsense in the blogosphere, like the comment Ken Ruben brought to my attention on a travel site that the Flyaway bus allows you to avoid riding local transit with its "weird smells, passed out people, [and] threats of muggings or other undesirable inner city bus exposures." Does any other bus riders feel insulted at this?

<http://sanscaradventures.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2008-01-01T00%3A00%3A00-08%3A00&updated-max=2009-01-01T00%3A00%3A00-08%3A00&max-results=4>

One smart online commentator is Damien Newton of *StereetsblogLA*. He has picked up on how many alleged transit supporters have gone along with dubious funding diversions while still proclaiming their support. I especially enjoyed his pointing out in a March 5th posted titled "State Avoids Blame As Metro Prepares Service Cuts" that: State leadership has been so isolated from criticism, that State Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, delivered a statement to Metro Board last week saying: A large number of my constituents depend on public transportation and any reduction in services will have a far reaching effect in my district. I urge the board to carefully examine the implications of these proposed cuts and to exhaust every available option before considering a reduction of services.