

BULLETIN BOARD

Our Jan. 10th meeting will be held in the auditorium adjacent to our usual meeting space. The guest speaker is Alan Mittelstaedt, formerly the news editor of the *L.A. Weekly* and *L.A. CityBeat*. His presentation will begin at 1 p.m. After the meeting, an ad-hoc committee will meet to discuss proposed service changes by Metro and determine So.CA.TA's official positions on them.

The speaker at our Feb. meeting will be Conan Cheung, Deputy Executive Officer for Operations Service Planning and Development at Metro.

The annual holiday banquet held this year at Clifton's Cafeteria was a rousing success. Trinkets and door prizes were donated by Culver CityBus, MTS, Gold Coast Transit, Torrance Transit, Caltrans Division of Rail, Omnitrans, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, Foothill Transit and Metro plus Steve Cromser, Dana Gabbard, Dave Snowden, Carlos Osuna and Mark Strickert. We received holiday cards from CalPIRG, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, Torrance Transit, Steve Crosmer and PV Transit.

The member site links page of our website is being updated, so anyone who would like their transit-related website included send the URL to krichards@socata.net. If anyone needs a password reset for access to the member board, send to the aforementioned e-mail address your login name and choice of password.

The environmental documents for the proposed extension of the Orange Line along Canoga are posted on the Metro website: http://metro.net/projects_studies/canoga_corridor/meetings.htm

Fixing Angelinos Stuck in Traffic (FAST) is a non-profit working to implement the recent RAND report on reducing congestion: <http://www.fastla.org/> 🚗 🚗 🚗

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Ken Ruben attended the Metro Westside Sector Governance Council December 10 meeting. He spoke on the Wilshire bus lane proposal and other matters before thanking the council for their kind attention to his comments on our behalf during the past year. 🚗 🚗 🚗

Metrolink Leases Cars

Metrolink has leased 24 "Comet Cars" to replace the leased Sounder Cars that will be returned to Washington State. 14 of these single level cars came directly from New Jersey Transit and the other 10 are from Utah Transit Authority. These cars were originally built between 1970-1972 for the Erie Lackawanna and New Jersey Department of Transportation. 🚗 🚗 🚗



Coach 5734 at Union Station on 12-31-08. (Albert Novak Photo)

Proposed Metro Service Changes for June 2009

Metro has proposed a number of service changes that would take effect in June 2009 if approved. A series of public hears will be held in February in order to receive public comments on the proposed changes.

The list of changes was compiled by Kymberleigh Richards.

Lines 14 and 714 (Beverly Blvd.): Reallocation of resources to reduce service levels on 714 and improve service levels on 14.

Line 26 (Virgil Ave.): Cancel, subject to agreement by LADOT as replacement provider.

Line 30-31 (Pico Blvd.-E. 1st St.): Replace on Floral Dr. with extension of Line 287, terminating at Indiana Gold Line Station; Lower service levels east of Alameda because of Gold Line service duplicating route.

Line 51-53 (Avalon Blvd.-Central Ave.): Restructure owl service to operate bi-directional as Line 51 on Avalon Blvd.

Line 68 (Cesar Chavez Ave.): Replace with Line 287 between Atlantic Blvd. and Montebello Town Center.

Line 94 (San Fernando Rd.): Return to pre-June 2008 route between downtown Los Angeles and Sun Valley (part of Line 794 proposal).

Line 105 (La Cienega Blvd.-Vernon Ave.): Operate only to Vernon Station (peak-hour only segment between Blue Line and Maywood cancelled).

Line 111 (Florence Ave.): New weekday shortline shuttle between Figueroa and Pacific.

Line 124 (El Segundo Blvd.): Cancel, pending "alternate service provider."

Line 125 (Rosecrans Ave.): Cancel route segment west of Douglas Green Line Station pending "alternate service provider" for cancelled segment or entire line.

Line 126 (Manhattan Beach Blvd., etc.): Cancel segment between Crenshaw Station and Century Blvd., or cancel entire line pending "alternate service provider".

Line 128 (Alondra Blvd.): Extend route to Cerritos Town Center.

Line 177 (California Blvd.-Walnut St.): Operate only between Pasadena City College and Sierra Madre Gold Line Station, and operate weekday peak-hours only.

Line 207 (Western Ave.): Shorten route to new terminal at Sunset/Western, with turnaround loop continuing to serve Hollywood/Western Station.

Line 209 (Van Ness Ave.): Cancel route south of Imperial Highway and operate remaining service weekday peak-hours only.

Line 220 (Robertson Blvd.): Cancel due to "low productivity".

Line 224 (Lankershim Blvd.-San Fernando Rd.): Return to pre-June 2008 service levels on Lankershim Blvd., using resources from cancelling Line 724.

Line 254 (Lorena St.-Boyle Ave.): Realign mid-route to serve Indiana Gold Line Station.

Line 256 (Eastern Ave.-Hill Ave.): Cancel; Montebello and Pasadena have expressed interest in being replacement providers.

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Metro Proposals Continued

Line 287 (Sierra Madre Blvd.-Garvey Ave.): Extend west from Montebello Town Center to Indiana Station over routes of Lines 30 and 68, which it will replace on those segments. Cancelled segment replaced by extension of Line 487.

Line 439 (LAX-Downtown L.A. Express): Operate midday and weekend service only to Washington/Fairfax "hub" (service to downtown during weekday peak-hours only).

Line 444 (Rancho Palos Verdes-Downtown L.A. Express): Cancel service south of Artesia Transit Center pending "alternate service provider"; replaced by Line 910 on Harbor Transitway.

Lines 446 and 447 (San Pedro-Downtown L.A. Express): Operate only south of Artesia Transit Center as Lines 246 and 247, replaced by Line 910 on Harbor Transitway.

Lines 484 and 490 (Pomona-Downtown L.A. Express): Operate only east of El Monte Station as Lines 184 and 190, replaced by Line 910 on El Monte Busway.

Line 487 (Sierra Madre Villa Station-Downtown L.A. Express): Extend via Santa Anita Dr. to El Monte Station as replacement for Line 287.

Line 620 (Boyle Heights Shuttle): Extend to Indiana Gold Line Station.

Line 704 (Santa Monica Blvd. Rapid): Adjustment of service levels and establishment of shortline at Sepulveda Blvd.

Line 711 (Florence Ave. Rapid): Cancel weekend service.

Line 724 (Lankershim-San Fernando Rapid): Replace on San Fernando Rd. by

Line 794; cancel Lankershim Blvd. segment and transfer resources to Line 224.

Line 730 (Pico Blvd. Rapid): Realign east terminal from Union Station to Little Tokyo/Arts District Station.

Line 794 (San Fernando-Brand Rapid): Extend from Burbank to Sylmar Station via San Fernando Rd. and eliminate Brand Blvd. route deviation in Glendale.

Line 910 (Dual Hub BRT): New service replacing Lines 484 and 490 on El Monte Busway and Lines 444, 446 and 447 on Harbor Transitway, with street running segment in downtown Los Angeles, probably using existing route of 444/446/447.

Line 920 (Wilshire Rapid Express): Adjust service levels and establishment of shortline at Westwood.

Metro will be holding public hearings on the following dates:

February 4: Metro San Fernando Valley, 6:30pm

February 9: Metro San Gabriel Valley and Metro South Bay, 6:00pm

February 11: Metro Westside/Central, 5:00pm

February 12: Metro Gateway Cities, 5:30pm

(The public hearings will be held at the usual sector governance council meeting locations.) 🚌 🚋 🚊



So who do I think is in the running to succeed retiring Metro CEO Roger Snoble? I haven't a clue but one insider kindly shared what appears a thoughtful perspective: "Hopefully someone with experience in delivering projects with that kind of specific voter approved project list, timeline, and budgets. San Diego, Denver, Seattle, OC, and Miami come to mind...who knows....we've had a luxurious life with comparatively non specific props A and C. Measure R is serious and something no one here has experience with."

Bill Boyarsky spent years covering local stories at the L.A. Times. So you would think he was rather savvy. Yet in discussing in his L.A. Observed column the length of time Metro will take to do the environmental documents for the Purple Line extension he states: "I was amazed. Developers can get an EIR done overnight if money is on the line. It wouldn't take Casden 24 months." (http://www.laobserved.com/boyarsky/2008/12/post_6.php). I bet if Casden did indeed rush a report, they would simply quickly get bogged down in litigation by the reliably NIMBY westsiders. Metro is well advised to be extra careful in preparing the EIR, and ignore carping by folks like Mr. Boyarsky who obviously doesn't know whereof he speaks...

I am dismayed at the multiple problems with the TAP card rollout. Paper day passes no longer sold after March 14? Full implementation to occur by June to facilitate gates at the two underground Metro Gold Line eastside extension stations? Attrition of sales outlets? Muni integration barely begun? YEOW! And then add the impending

stupidity of the Dual Hub BRT--likely to have the dubious distinction of ruining service reliability on two busways as buses on the downtown run-through section bog down. More Metro self-inflicted wounds--all I can ask is Why? Why?

Again transit advocates from around the state are making an effort to stop the state from stealing transit funds to fix its perpetual budget crisis. This is not easy as transit funds constitute one of the last pots of money that can be stolen. The state legislature has a long history of avoiding tax increases by stealing funds and engaging in smoke and mirror gimmicks. These have created pushback from those able to erect barriers to protect themselves and their funding. With options dwindling it is understandable the resistance is very high among legislators to foreswear robbing transit and therefore have to deal with the reality of the state's budget situation. And again there are rumors of whether a ballot measure a la Proposition 91 will eventually be needed to end this nonsense.

I mentioned last month the Service Performance Monitoring Process in which Metro staff are looking at bus service fundamentals as a first step to consider restructuring. Meanwhile Los Angeles Mayor Villaragosa at the Dec. 4, 2007 Metro Board meeting made a motion to begin work on a bus improvement plan (agenda item #46). Also Metro staff have proposed a raft of service change proposals for possible implementation at the June shakeup. Doesn't all this seem scattershot and disconnected?

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TRANSIT TRAVEL PHOTO ESSAY

John Ulloth

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK'S SEQUOIA SHUTTLE

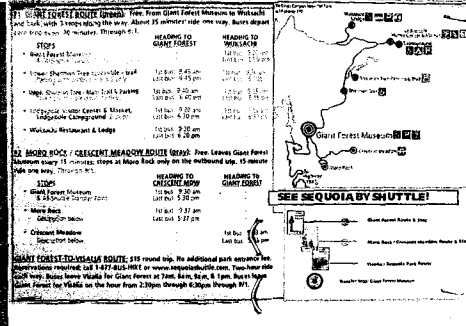
Ridership on Sequoia National Park's Shuttle, a demonstration service operated by MV, sees standing loads in August. Center: A Shuttle cutaway at the Wuksachi Lodge stop, northern end of the service area. Right: 1 sign, all the essential rider information.



One driver confided the half-dozen full-size coaches "ex-Chicago" "high milers" spend so much time in the shop, "I don't think they've all run the same day." Kids a constant blur.



Sequoia's Sherman Tree stop; is this California's most magnificently landscaped bus stop? Ancient Sequoia Groves start right behind. Shelter, shade, bathrooms! Right: A sightseeing cutaway mixes it up with RVs & the underbrush; hopefully its tailpipe's not wildfire-hot!



CHICAGOLAND'S METRA

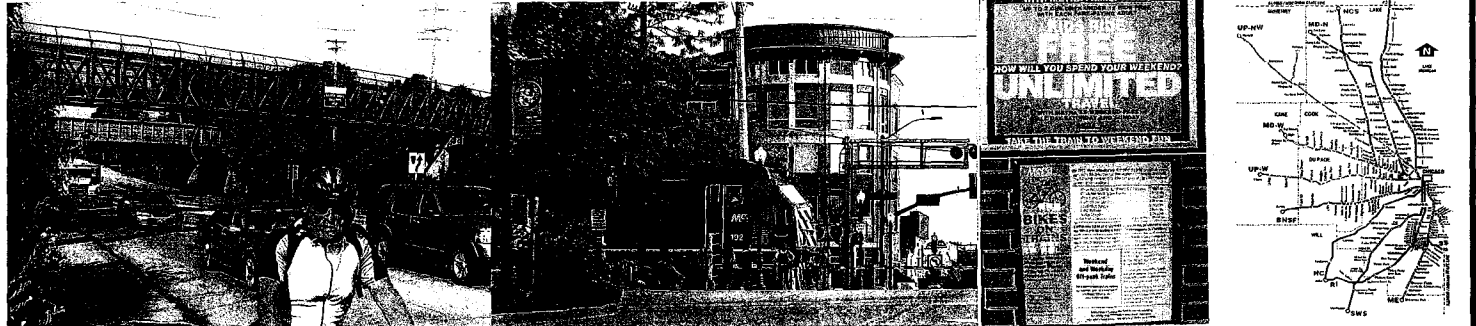
In the wake of MetroLink's Chatsworth wreck, I went looking for what's old & new at my old commuter line(s): Old: real stations, well-maintained double track all over. New: "Next-train" signs. Suburban PACE busses- not yet region-wide "hubs" to Metra's "spokes", but a start.



Big New: MPI locomotives. Oldies-but-Goodies: Push-Pull Gallery cars - they originated here. Old-Fashioned: on time, frequent, well-staffed trains... and isn't that a change dispenser with real money on the conductors' belt? Common sense about everywhere you look.



Ancient: Grade separation (rear); New: rails to trails "Skokie Valley Bike Path" grade separation (front). Same old Chicago attitude: (on bicyclist's face!) Old: METRA's unique F-40 cab units. New: 5-story T.O.D. comes to Downers Grove (where I graduated high school). Unlike Pacific Electric long gone from our area, METRA transitioned from for-profit commuter rail lines to regional public transit (right).



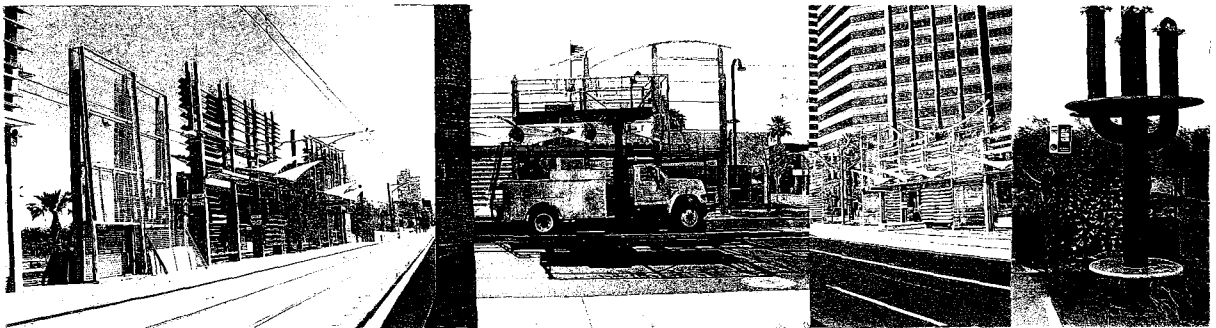
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PHOENIX VALLEY METRO

Left: An artic' arrives at Phoenix Arts District transit center. Right: Some historic equipment's corralled outside... I'd taken pictures for half an hour at the transit center, but focusing one last photo- of the new light rail map- two security guards came running to stop me, shouting. Why? "Don't you know about 9/11?" one asked incredulously.



As of August, Phoenix' light rail was due to open in December 2008. But what does all this stuff do?...a line truck checks work in a station... maybe this schwag is for finding your station among the tall buildings? Far right: Metal cacti offer scant shade/ seats along a stretch of suburban Scottsdale bus stops; 91 °F, will jump 10 ° after dawn!



PORT OF LOS ANGELES' WATERFRONT RED CARS

The Port of Los Angeles' Waterfront Red Car is experimenting with expanded evening & weekday hours not on their signs: 10am-9pm Fridays through Sundays, PLUS 10am-6pm on those Tuesdays through Thursdays ONLY when a cruise ship is in port. A new illuminated show fountain has been completed near the cruise ship terminal.



I hope at some point we could have a coherent process that balances coverage and need. Which would be preferable to the current zig zag approach.

Poor Damien Goodmon is finding his hopes of jumpstarting his political ambitions via his Expo antics are not panning out. He has a few in the community bamboozled (most prominently WAVE columnist Betty Pleasant) and he is getting lots of media attention but the trends look bad in re the California Public Utilities Commission hearings. And I am sure he over-promised the outcome to persuade South L.A. NIMBYs to attend multiple hearings etc. and about now he is getting complaints from them over his tactics not killing the project. Plus to what extent the Cheviot Hills folks are really the ones calling the shots from behind the scenes is an open question. With his credibility in peril Goodmon of late has taken to posting lengthy diatribes on local blogs trying to build up some sort of image as a technical expert. Does he hope this will aid his attempt to torpedo the Expo project on various dubious grounds? He looks to me a tad desperate to shore up his faltering enterprise. Measure R's passage really blew a giant hole in his hopes. I predict he is another fly by night type soon to exit, stage right.

Alvin Kusumoto has been promoted from Metro's CEO office to Construction as a Transportation Sustainability Energy Manager which includes overseeing the retrofit of some of Metro's existing buildings to make them more sustainable/energy efficient.

Faithful Reader tipped me off to this tidbit from the minutes of the Nov. 21, 2008 Metrolink Board meeting regarding continued problems with the Motive Power locomotives: "A full set of windshields arrived at the Central Maintenance Facility, however, upon inspection of these by Metrolink and the FRA it was discovered that they were not compliant due to distortion, contrary to the contractors' report. Motive Power, Inc. is now working with a different supplier and they are trying to expedite sufficient quantities for delivery to get these installed and place the locomotives in service."

I was left speechless by the Holiday Greetings from Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority that appeared in my e-mail box. It extols the Gold Line extension to Azusa that passage of Measure R will fund. And these were the same folks who tried to kill Measure R and denounced it at every turn? Talk about hypocrisy!

And to conclude I'll note to my dismay Foothill is having to spend \$31,200 to obtain some interns per the minutes of the Oct. 24, 2008 meeting of its Executive Board. This all due to the failure of the Transportation Foundation of Los Angeles (TFLA) to supply them. TFLA is run by a crony of now former L.A. County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke. And if it can't even do its alleged purpose, to provide interns, isn't it time to ask why it even still exists? P.S. Mr. Bigshot pays himself \$84,000 to run this "non profit" per its latest Form 990 I examined at the Guidestar website. Amazing! 🚂 🚂 🚂

TRANSIT UPDATES

AVTA

In December AVTA raised fares on commuter lines 785, 786, and 787. One way cash fares on all three lines went from \$12.00 to \$14.00. The monthly passes prices also went up about \$30.00 each pass. EZ-Pass prices also went up in December.

AVTA has also proposed a number of service changes to local bus service in the Lancaster and Palmdale. AVTA will have a public hearing on January 26th to receive comments on the proposed changes. A decision will be made at the agency's February board meeting.

MTA (Metro)

MTA made system wide changes on December 13th, 2008.

Lines 33/333 – Line 33 was restructured to operate between Main and Sunset in Venice and 6th and Main in downtown Los Angeles. Limited Line 333 was restructured to operate between from 2nd and Santa Monica to Union Station. Both lines now operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Line 66 - All midday trips on weekdays now terminate at 8th and Western and no service is provided to the Wilshire and Western Red Line Station during the midday on weekdays.

Line 381 - was canceled and all the Limited Line 381 trips were converted to Local Line 81 trips.

Line 577X – New stops were added at the Los Cerritos Center Mall and 7th and Redondo Streets in Long Beach.

Line 715 – was extended from Atlantic to Firestone to the Downey Transit Center (DTC). New stops were added at Firestone

and Garfield and at the DTC.

Service was also added on Lines 26/51/52/352, 45, 62, 450X, 460, 550, 577X, and 745 on weekdays and Lines 66 and 460 on Saturdays.

MTD (Santa Barbara)

MTD Fares increased on January 1st, 2009, including:

Base - \$1.75 (up from 1.25),

Senior/Disabled 85¢ (up from 60¢)

30-day Pass - \$52.00 (41.00),

Senior/Disabled \$20.00 (18.00)

With the new fare policy MTD has also introduced a new Adult Day Pass for \$6.00.

MTS (San Diego)

Beginning at 6:00 PM on December 31th, 2008 and continuing into the morning of January 1st, 2009, MTS will operate "Night Owl" all night service on bus Lines 7, 11, and 901 and on the trolley routes. During this time bus and trolley rides will be free.

Montebello

On January 18th, Montebello will cancel the segment of Line 20 between Las Tunas Blvd. and the Sierra Madre Villa Gold Line Station.

OCTA

Beginning at 6:00 PM on December 31th, 2008 and continuing to 4:00 AM on January 1st, 2009, all fixed route bus service will be free of charge.

OCTA Fares increased on January 4th, 2009, including:

Base - \$1.50 (up from 1.25),

Senior/Disabled 60¢ (up from 50¢)

30-day Pass - \$55.00 (45.00),

Senior/Disabled \$18.00 (15.00)

The day passes at OCTA also went up in price from \$3.00 to \$4.00. 🚗 🚗 🚗