

BULLETIN BOARD

Our thanks to Alan Mittelstaedt for a lively presentation/discussion at our January meeting.

This month Conan Cheung, Metro's Deputy Executive Officer for Operations Service Planning and Development, will speak on service issues post-Measure R and the Governor's proposal to eliminate the State Transit Assistance Fund. This will begin at 1 p.m. with our meeting to follow.

Upcoming speakers include:

-March: Gordon Robinson of OCTA on the Bravo! BRT project, (OCTA)

-April: Bruce Shelburne of Metro on Metro Rail issues

-May: Long Beach Transit (speaker TBD)

We have learned that Fullerton Railroad Days 2009 has been canceled. This is in the wake of the Fullerton Redevelopment Agency's failure to pass a motion to include the Southern California Railroad Experience in the plans for the Fullerton

Transportation Center. As this has been the primary mission of the Fullerton Railway Plaza Association (FRPA) and Fullerton Railroad Days the city's denial obviates the purpose of the event. FRPA is considering its options and we'll keep our members apprised of whatever direction they decide to take.

We are working to have booths at National Train Day (May 9th) and at the Gold Line opening (late June). We also are arranging to have a preview trip aboard the light rail extension, hopefully on a Saturday.

Now that the members-only discussion board is back online and debugged, any member's password can be reset if they have forgotten it; just e-mail username and desired password to krichards@socata.net and she will reset it as soon as received.

Also, it is no longer necessary to have the default "first initial, last name" login, so if anyone would like to have their username changed to their full name, with or without capitalization or including spaces, please also e-mail Kymberleigh. 🚆 🚆 🚆

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Kymberleigh Richards is quoted in the January issue of the Southern Sierran ("How Do You Get There From Here?"), monthly newsletter of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club

Harold Katz had an op-ed in Feb. 2nd issue of the Los Angeles Business Journal entitled "Rand's Road To Nowhere" on the Rand Corporation traffic study funded by Thomas Properties.

Members Roger Christensen, Nate Zablen, and Tom Rubin had letters published in the January 18th LA Daily News on how they felt Metro should use its Measure R tax proceeds first to

get people moving.

Ken Ruben attended the Westside Cities Council of Government meeting in Culver City on January 29th. He attended the San Gabriel Valley Metro Governance Council meeting on January 12th, introducing himself as our new representative for that Sector and also as our representative attended at the Jan. 14th Westside Sector Meeting. Lastly he attended the Exposition Authority project status meeting on January 22nd.

Attending the Metro Board meeting on Jan. 22nd were Roger Christensen, Kymberleigh Richards, Ken Ruben and Bart Reed. 🚆 🚆 🚆

First car travels on Gold Line Extension

On January 27, 2009 Metro towed a Breda LRV on the new Gold Line extension to East Los Angeles. The car made the trip from Union Station to the eastern terminus at Pomona and Atlantic to test clearances on the station platforms and on the line's 1.8 mile underground section.

While the track work is complete on the line, there is still a considerable amount of work that needs to be completed before the line is opened. Many of the stations still need to be completed along with the widening of the 1st Street bridge over the Los Angeles River.



*The Breda LRV used for the clearance testing is seen entering 1st Street at Alameda.
(Metro Photo)*

TRANSIT UPDATES

AVTA

The agency is considering multiple changes to the three commuter routes that operate into downtown Los Angeles. AVTA stated that these changes are designed to make the system more efficient and to use the existing transit networks.

The changes to Lines 785, 786, and 787 would cut out almost all the stops along the lines and add additional service to the lines.

The changes will also force passengers to change buses at various locations in Los Angeles.

The agency is wondering if they should even be going into downtown Los Angeles and the long term plans include the possibility of cutting most of the commuter service.

AVTA is accepting public input on these changes and will make a final decision about the changes in March.

They have scheduled open houses on Saturday February 7th and February 21st.

For more details visit www.avta.org or call (661) 945-9445.

(Transit updates continued on Page 4)

TRANSIT UPDATES Ctd...

Commerce Municipal Bus

The City of Commerce is expecting to take delivery of 7 new CNG powered NABIs some time in February. The new buses will replace the current Commerce fleet that consists of Flixible Metros and Nova Bus RTSes.

LADOT

The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) is planning to eliminate the free transfers between the six downtown DASH routes.

Previously passengers could request a free transfer to another DASH route when they paid the 25¢ base fare (10¢ senior/disabled).

This change is in response to the City of Los Angeles financial crisis. Recently LADOT began offering a new DASH monthly bus pass for \$9.00. These monthly passes are good on all the downtown DASH routes and 27 other DASH routes throughout the city.

MARTA

MARTA plans to implement new routes and schedules February 23, 2009. The new schedule includes 30 minute service along Big Bear Blvd and an additional Off-the-Mountain run from Big Bear Valley leaving at 11:00 a.m. (Monday – Friday).

In the RIM area the new schedule changes will provide hourly service from Crestline to Lake Arrowhead and from Running Springs to Lake Arrowhead; and lifeline Dial-a-Ride service to Green Valley Lake two days a week.

The new schedules also provide improved connections with Metrolink service in San Bernardino

The changes to MARTA's schedules and routes have been included in the newly created Riders' Guide. The Riders' Guide is also being translated into Spanish.

MARTA successfully applied for operating assistance under the 5311F Intercity Bus Program Grant, Federal Fiscal Year 2008 and has been awarded \$125,286.00 for the Bear Valley Off-the-Mountain service.

This amount covers the operating cost for both the new Off-the-Mountain service being implemented February 23, 2009 as well as operating costs for the two existing Off-the-Mountain runs.

Sun Line

Beginning March 2nd, Sun Line will begin using new GFI fareboxes. These new fareboxes will allow passengers to purchase day passes and transfers on the bus. Previously day passes had to be purchased from the main office.

New 31 day passes will replace the old monthly passes and a 10 ride card will replace the old 10 ride punch card. New passes go on sale on February 21st.

City of Yucaipa

The City of Yucaipa planning commission recently approved plans for a new transit center to be built adjacent to City Hall.

The plan for the transit center goes before the Yucaipa City Council at their March meeting. 🚌 🚌 🚌

Planning a trip at the drop of a schedule

By Andrew Novak (Part 1)

About 6 years ago several of us transit fans in Los Angeles would go on weekly bus excursions around southern California. Most of the time we planned our trips ahead of time, but on some occasions we would not have any set plan for our trip. Some days we would meet at Union Station in the morning and we would have no idea where we were going that day.

These trips would be planed as we went, and we began to refer to these trips as "Trips planned at the drop of a schedule." At the beginning of one of these trips we actually dropped a schedule on the ground. Over time everyone's work schedule changed and we took fewer and fewer weekly trips.

On Monday May 19, 2008, my friend Craig and I resurrected the idea of planning a trip at the drop of a schedule and we spent the day traveling around south Orange County. Craig met me at the Fullerton train station and we discussed where we would go, and what lines we wanted to ride. Our plan changed throughout the course of the day, and for this story I will only include the lines we actually rode and not the ones we thought about riding.

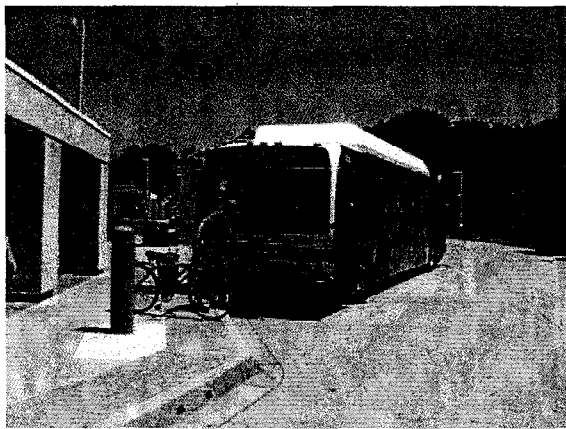
From Fullerton we drove over to The Block at Orange, formerly the City Shopping Center, and parked there. Our first bus of the day was Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) New Flyer C40LFR #5620 on Line 57 which we rode south to South Coast

Plaza in Costa Mesa. South Coast Plaza is the largest mall in Orange County and rivals the Del Amo Fashion Square in Torrance for largest mall in California.

South Coast Plaza is also one of the only malls in the area that is not owned by one of the major mall holding companies. Our Next bus was OCTA NABI 040.09 #2202 on Line 55. Line 55 took us through portions of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach before arriving at the Newport Transportation Center. Neither of us had been on the 55 before and it was an interesting line.

At the Newport Transportation Center we only had a couple minutes to catch our next bus, New Flyer C40LFR #5528 on Line 1. This bus had a full bus advertising wrap for the San Diego Wild Animal Park.

To Be Continued....



*A passenger loads a bicycle on the bike rack of OCTA New Flyer 5528 at the Newport Transportation Center on May 19, 2008.
(Andrew Novak Photo)*

I may have been premature when I predicted in my column last month that Damien Goodmon will soon fade away. It appears he is positioning himself as the champion of South L.A. He was quoted in a Jan. 7th L.A. Times article ("Subway to the Sea" timetable is too long for Villarraigosa") as "a transit activist in South Los Angeles". Of course his m.o. is the same, only now he is making exaggerated claims about the Crenshaw project and Measure R passage. So his rhetoric certainly is unchanged. Only what he rants about is shifting.

TransForm (the Bay Area advocacy group for livability and public transit) has hired Nick Caston for their new office in Sacramento and to coordinate the statewide California Transit Funding Coalition TransForm is building. I understand Mr. Caston was the campaign manager for the Santa Barbara County 2008 transportation sales tax measure, which passed with about 80% of the vote. Sounds like TransForm made a good choice.

The Coalition is forming a Yahoo Group - you can join via a form on the group page:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CATransit/>

I won't even say anything about our prospects in Sacramento for funding beyond I expect the worse and that we will be sold out (again!) by the very folks who are supposed to be our allies. This little dance is getting very old. And meanwhile everyone knows greenhouse gas reduction that many in officialdom champion will depend on

more use of mass transit. As for the federal stimulus, it may be most helpful to transit capital needs by funding non-transit projects now and thus freeing up funding in the off years for transit projects in the pipeline, most of which probably need another 2-4 years to be ready and thus are not good candidates to be part of the economic revival program. You need to look at the big picture, not just fixate on who got x number of dollars this year.

Mike Bohlke, who was L.A. County Supervisor Yvonne Burke's longtime transportation deputy, is Pam O'Connor's new deputy. Karen Heit goes back to being deputy to the seat formerly occupied by Bonnie Lowenthal, now occupied by Lakewood city council member Diane DuBois. The Planning Deputy for new L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas is Dan Rosenfeld, whose background has been in planning issues as a developer and a staffer for the city of L.A. and state of California.

I wonder if SCAGLEV is dead. The maglev task force had only two meetings last year. Kymberleigh Richards brought to my attention that the calmaglev.org website is dead. Sanity hasn't totally broke out as the laughable Orangeline Development Authority (<http://www.olda.org/>) continues to hold meetings. But you have to wonder how long they can keep up the fantasy. Billions are not in the offing.

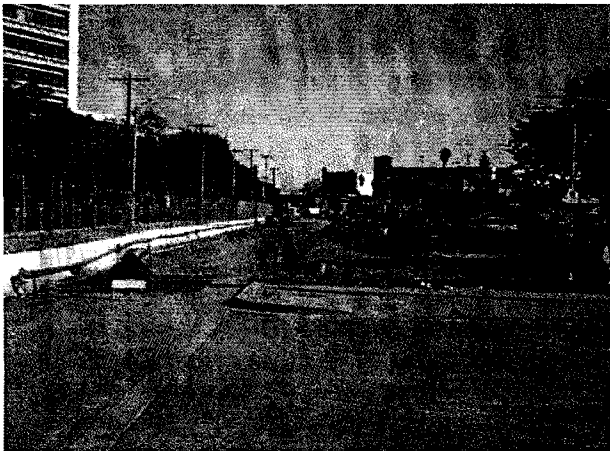
Well, we had long wondered if L.A. Councilman Bernard Parks would stay on the Metro Board if his bid to be a County Supervisor failed.

Public/Legislative Affairs Continued...

Our first clue was when Kymberleigh Richards noted his nameplate missing at the January Metro Board meeting (and Parks also was a no show). But no one there spoke of his resignation. A week passed before the first public acknowledgment of what had happened occurred, via comments by Pam O'Connor at the Westside Cities Council of Governments meeting attended by Ken Ruben. Ken told me, I told Kymberleigh, she told Steve Hyman at the Times and suddenly the town is buzzing in the wake of Hyman's coverage of Parks' action. Who will be appointed by Mayor Villaraigosa as his replacement? My suspicion is Councilman Rosendahl, who is big on transportation issues.

The San Francisco Chronicle broke that MUNI Executive Director Nathaniel Ford has been contacted about the Metro CEO job ("L.A. may offer MTA chief more than glitter", Feb. 4th). It makes sense as Ford is overseeing an agency in the midst of a challenging program of capital projects extending their light rail network. I'll be curious who else is in the running.

And to conclude I'll note Ethan Elkind informs me he is readying for publication his book chronicling the history of Metro Rail from 1973 to at least the passage of Measure R in 2008. Funding and support for the book has come from the John Randolph Haynes Foundation and UCLA School of Law. Sounds like it will make a very interesting read. 🚃 🚃 🚃



Expo



Two photos show construction progress on the Metro Expo light next to the USC Campus. These photos were taken on January 17, 2009 by Alex Friedman

Big Blue Bus Changes

On February 15th Big Blue Bus will be making several changes to their bus system. These changes were recently approved by the Santa Monica City council and were brought about as a result of the state wide budget crisis.

With the current state budget crisis Big Blue Bus could lose as much as \$3.5 million in state funding and even more if the governor uses more transit funds as a way to close the state budget gap.

The planners at Big Blue Bus set up a special criteria in order to determine where to make the cuts.

Lines in the system that carry at least 60 passengers for 2 miles or more were considered ones that need more resources.

Lines that can be trimmed are ones that carry less than 20 passengers per service hour.

Lines that could be eliminated or reconfigured carry less than 15 passengers per service hour.

The changes that will take effect on February 15th will eliminate 4,299 service hours for the year and will result in a savings of \$430,000. The agency will use this money to help offset rising fuel costs and the lack of state funding.

Lines effected in this service change include: Line 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, Rapid 3, Sunset Ride and Tide Ride.

Below is a brief summary of the changes. For more details visit the Big Blue Bus website at:

<http://www.bigbluebus.com/home/index.asp?noticeid=140>

Schedule Changes to improve on-time performance will be made to Lines 1, 3, 8, and Rapid 3.

Late night service will be eliminated on Lines 4, 5, and 9.

Two early AM trips and two late PM trips on Sunday Only will be eliminated on Line 10.


The service currently operating as the "Campus Connector" between SMC and UCLA will now be called Line 11. There will be no route changes and only minor schedule adjustments.

Weekday service on Line 14 will be modified after 7:30 pm.

Service will be added on the Rapid Line 3 and there will also be minor service adjustments.

The schedule on the Sunset ride will be modified after 4:30 pm due to low ridership.

The city has proposed elimination of the Tide Ride service and reallocate the resources for a new service called Beach Ride. This new service would serve the Annenberg Community Beach House and operate from May through September on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays only.

A public hearing is scheduled for February 24th to hear comments on the proposed elimination of the Tide Ride 

Metro Board Report for January 2009

**by Kymberleigh Richards, Public &
Legislative Affairs Director**

Since there is likely to be a lot of activity at Metro now that Measure R has passed and also because the State Transit Assistance (STA) fund is being jeopardized, I will be writing a brief summary for each month's newsletter of the significant reports and actions of the Metro Board of Directors. I will, of course, continue to give more detailed reports at the monthly general membership meetings, but this will at least give those who either miss a meeting or cannot attend some idea of what is going on.

Budget Issues: Metro expects to not receive \$136.3 million in STA funds that were to have been received between now and June. They are shifting operations-eligible funds (Prop C 40%, prior years' STA contributions to the Special Revenue Fund, etc.) to backfill that shortfall. Worse still, because of the economic downturn Metro expects to receive \$14 million less in Prop A & C sales tax revenue this year than had been projected. The good news is that five of the seven investors who could have demanded repayment of their AIG-backed leaseback deals with Metro have agreed to extend terms, and there is a bill making its way through Congress that would cover those deals.

Some discussion is taking place about what to do next year, when the STA shortfall is expected to be \$227.1 million and Prop A & C sales tax revenues are projected to be

down by \$51.3 million; there is a strong possibility that 160,000 bus revenue service hours will need to be cut.

Corridor Studies: Westside subway, Regional Connector, and Eastside Phase II all approved to go to draft Environmental Impact Reports and advanced conceptual engineering. Many politicians appeared both at the committee meetings and the Board meeting supporting the alignments that benefit their own cities, apparently not realizing that this isn't the time to make those statements.

TAP: Staff now proposes to transition the day pass to TAP during the period of March 15 through April 11. All nine campuses of the Los Angeles Community College District are now on the TAP I-Pass program, and more than 11,000 TAP cards are now being used for the employer pass sales program

Orange Line Phase II: Environmental Impact Report approved and \$215.6 million allocated for the project. The same firm that was used for the original busway's design development and engineering support services will be used for the extension.

Long Range Transportation Plan: Originally scheduled to be approved this month, it was pulled from the agenda right before the committee meetings. The staff report – all 45 pages of it – was still made available.

(Continued on Page 10)

Metro Board Report for January 2009 Continued

Red Line Late Night Pilot: The privately-funded experiment in December cost \$4500 per night to run and took in about one-tenth of that amount in fare revenue. It was used more by westbound-traveling passengers (by a factor of almost two-to-one) with more going to North Hollywood than any other station. Heaviest boardings were at Union Station, 7th St./Metro Center, and Hollywood/Highland-Hollywood/Vine Stations (what eastbound use there was is attributed to those who would normally use bus service).

Security: Metro will be getting up to \$26 million in federal Homeland Security funds and an additional \$2 million of state Proposition 1B Transit Security funds, which will pay for an automated license plate recognition system, remote monitoring of the bus

divisions' closed circuit TV cameras at the headquarters building, security enhancements to the rail gating program, and portable CNG refueling stations for emergency use, among other things.

Welcome Aboard: January marked the first meetings attended by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, and Janet DuBois, city councilmember from Lakewood, was appointed just in time for the committee meetings.

New Board Committee: Chair Villaraigosa created a new Measure R Project Delivery Committee "to ensure that all Measure R projects move forward consistent with the schedules and funding levels identified in Measure R and to determine if we can do even better and deliver projects even faster and more cost effectively." Richard Katz is chair, Zev Yaroslavsky, Don Knabe, Ara Najarian and Pam O'Connor are the rest of the committee members. 🚌 🚌 🚌



CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

The newsletter editor is eliminating the calendar we publish each month. We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website

<http://socata.net/calendar.htm>

This includes far more detail than any printed calendar can and is able to be updated or enhanced as we become aware of events almost immediately. Dana Gabbard and Kymberleigh Richards have labored to create this resource, which had to be built from scratch after the recent attack of our site. We think you will be impressed at the depth and breadth of coverage therein.

Transit Fact

During the recent presidential Inauguration in Washington D.C., the Washington Metro carried more passengers on that one day than any other day in the agency's 33 year history. The agency ran 17 hours of rush hour service. The agency also set ridership records on January 18th and 19th.

January 20th Facts:

Train Trips: 1,120,000

Bus Trips: 423,000

Paratransit rides: 1,721

A total of 1,544,721 trips.

