

BULLETIN BOARD

Our thanks to Conan Cheung for an enjoyable and informative dialogue with our members at the last meeting. This month Gordon Robinson of the Orange County Transportation Authority will give us an update on its Bravo! Bus Rapid Transit project. The presentation will begin at 1:00 p.m., followed by our monthly meeting.

The morning of meeting day we will be staffing a workshop to assist the residents of the Angelus Plaza senior residential complex in applying for their Transit Access Pass (TAP) card. This will be in our usual meeting space from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. We need volunteers to help in this effort--contact the Executive Secretary at (213) 388-2364 or dgabbard@hotmail.com if you can help.

Due to the Easter holiday our April meeting will be on the first Saturday of the month, April 4th. The speaker is Bruce Shelburne of Metro who will discuss Metro Rail issues. The May meeting may also be rescheduled to accommodate the National Train Day celebration at Union Station.

The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration has established a subscription e-mail service that will notify subscribers when new FRA Research Results Reports are available. The four-page reports summarize significant rail research and development projects.

https://service.govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=USDOTFRA_13

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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. We think you will be impressed at the depth and breadth of coverage therein. 🚆 🚆 🚆

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Kymberleigh Richards had an op-ed on the state budget deal ("Voters Shorted on Transit Funding") in the Feb. 16th daily news.

http://www.dailynews.com/editorial/ci_11712328

Bart Reed and Ken Ruben attended the Feb. 27th Metrolink Board Meeting. They, along with Mina Nichols and Kymberleigh Richards, also attended the Feb 26th Metro Board Meeting.

Ruben also attended the Expo Authority phase 1 presentation in Culver City on February 19th.

At the Westside Governance Council Meeting on February 11th Richards made the official SOCATA presentation of our position regarding the pro-

posed service changes. Ruben, Alex Schaeffer and Joe Dunn also spoke on the proposed changes. Jerard Wright is a member of the Council.

Richards also presented our position at the the San Gabriel Valley Governance Council Meeting on February 9th which Ruben, Hank Fung and Robert Meinert also attended and made comments.

And Richards presented our position at the the Gateway Cities Governance Council Meeting on February 12th.

Ruben, Richards, Wright, Roger Christensen and Dana Gabbard were at the Feb. 25th Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting. 🚆 🚆 🚆

Metro's new CEO Arthur T. Leahy

On April 6, 2009, Arthur T. Leahy will become the new chief executive officer (CEO) of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). Leahy will replace retiring CEO Roger Snoble.

Leahy began his career in transportation in 1971 as a bus operator for Metro's predecessor SCRTD. Both of his parents, his brother and wife have all worked for public transit agencies in Los Angeles.

For the last 8 years Leahy has been CEO at OCTA where he was instrumental in securing funding for several key transportation projects including a renewal of the Measure M funding.

Prior to his time at OCTA, Leahy was general manager in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Leahy has extensive knowledge of the transportation network in southern California and is the ideal choice for the CEO job at Metro.



(Metro Photo)

TRANSIT UPDATES

Foothill Transit

Effective March 17, 2009, Foothill Transit will no longer offer WiFi service aboard Silver Streak Buses. Foothill decided to end WiFi service due to increased cost and low usage. The agency has also cited advancements in cell phone and PDA technology as another reason for eliminating WiFi.

Long Beach Transit

Effective February 15, 2009, Long Beach Transit raised cash fares and monthly pass prices and will raise fares again on February 14, 2010. They also introduced a new day pass. On April 1, 2009 the agency will introduce new passes that will be farebox activated and the monthly passes will become 30 day passes.

New fares:

Cash Fare: \$1.10

Interagency Transfer 50¢

Day Pass \$3.50

New 5 day pass \$16.00

OCTA

Effective March 8, 2009 OCTA Line 60 will no longer serve downtown Long Beach during the owl hours, approximately 10 pm to 4 am. During this time Line 60 will end at 7th and Channel drive in east Long Beach.

Passengers can use Long Beach Transit Line 94 for service between 7th and Channel and downtown Long Beach until midnight.

Beginning in March OCTA will also be changing many of the bus stop cassettes to a map-only configuration eliminating the schedule information.

RTA—CommuterLink

Effective immediately, CommuterLink Route 202's southbound morning trips will only provide drop-off service at the Town Center North timepoint at 4:40 a.m., 5:13 a.m., 5:59 a.m., 6:39 a.m. Customers will not be allowed to board at this location at these times.

Northbound morning trips will only provide pick-up service at Town Center North at 5:12 a.m., 5:50 a.m., 6:41 a.m. and 7:53 a.m. Buses will not stop to allow passengers to exit the bus.

Persons affected by the new policy may use North County Transit District buses for their travel needs.

MTS-San Diego

Due to the elimination of state funds, MTS is proposing several changes to the system.

MTS will be holding public hearing on March 26th to accept comments on the proposed changes which could take effect on June 14th.

The public hearing will be at the MTS Board Meeting 9:00 a.m. at MTS headquarters, 1255 Imperial Ave., Suite 1000.

Comments can also be made to MTS at the following:

Phone: 619-595-4912

Email: mts.planning@sdmts.com

**Mail: Metropolitan Transit System
1255 Imperial Ave., Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101**

Visit www.sdmts.com for more details.



Planning a trip at the drop of a schedule

By Andrew Novak (Part 2)

OCTA Line 1 is one of the most scenic routes in the system and probably one of the longest in the system, running from Long Beach to San Clemente along Pacific Coast Highway. The views of the Pacific Ocean from this line can be spectacular on clear days and I recommend everyone take a ride on this line at some point in time. We alighted Line 1 at the Laguna Beach bus station in the hopes of seeing the Laguna Beach Transit Buses. When we checked the schedule, we noted that the Laguna Beach buses were going on lunch break and we decided not to wait until service resumed.

From Laguna Beach we rode OCTA New Flyer C40LFR #5576 on Line 89 through Laguna Canyon and into Laguna Hills and the Laguna Hills Transportation Center. The transportation center is located next to the Laguna Hills Mall, and since it was now lunch time we decided to have lunch at the mall's food court. This was the first time I had ever been in this mall and I was surprised to see that there was a B. Dalton Book store (owned by Barnes and Noble) next to the food court. For lunch we decided to try the Cajon Café, a Chinese fast food style restaurant; and the food was pretty good. Before returning to the transportation center, we made a quick trip through the book store and of course, I found a book.

As we waited for our next bus of the day, we got pictures of the Orion II buses that are operated by the Laguna Woods Village (formerly known as Leisure World). Laguna Woods is a rather large retirement commu-

nity and the buses take residents to various places within the community, to the various shopping centers and the mall in Laguna Hills. We were not 100% sure where the buses stopped at the mall, and since our bus was due shortly, we decided to come back another day to get more pictures of the Laguna Woods fleet.

From Laguna Hills we rode OCTA New Flyer D40LF #5408 on Line 83 back toward Anaheim. Bus 5408 had a full bus advertising wrap for the San Diego Zoo on it. Line 83 travels north along Interstate 5 making a limited number of stops, most of them in Santa Ana. At the Santa Ana Transit Terminal (SATT) we spotted one of the OCTA Hybrid buses, New Flyer H40LF #5419, and we decided to bail off the 83 and ride this unique bus. 5419 and sister bus 5420 were the first two hybrid buses purchased by OCTA and since then the fleet has grown to four, adding 5421 and 5422. That day 5419 was on Line 64 and we rode west from SATT to 1st and Fairview.

Our last ride of the day was on OCTA NABI 040.09 #2281 on Line 47 for the trip back north to The Block at Orange to get the truck. While the bus riding portion of our day was complete we still had some time before meeting our friend Edmund in Santa Ana for dinner, so we drove over to the Orange Transportation Center to see if there were any buses there worth taking pictures of. We were there for about 5 minutes and one of OCTA's newest buses, New Flyer C40LFR #7526 came through on Line 59.

It was a great trip and we covered quite a few miles considering there was no set plan for our trip that day.

As I write it is seen as likely OCTA CEO Art Leahy will be the new CEO of Metro. This is a smart choice. Leahy will be the first head of Metro who got his start as a bus driver. He knows the political landscape and how to get big projects done. Plus he is also a nice guy--very affable. It is a good balanced skill set he brings, and we are lucky to snag him!

The other shoe is finally falling about the impact of Metro's gating and TAP on Metrolink. Pass holders needing to transfer to Metro Bus and Rail will have to purchase a discounted TAP card from Metrolink, resulting in an average 11% increase in their travel cost. One Way and Round Trip tickets, which comprise 20% of weekday riders but 80% of weekday ticket sales, would no longer include a transit transfer privilege. After a year of study this is the solution? Yeesh! We advocates knew from the get go gating was bad news for Metrolink users (per agenda item #5, Feb. 13 Metrolink Special Board meeting).

What I find amazing while scanning the blog rants of Damien Goodmon in the wake of the PUC decision on Expo light rail Phase 1 grade crossings is the realization that when he quotes from the decision it is immediately apparent his claims of what it means are contradicted by a common sense reading of what he quotes.

Insight of the month: state legislators excuse the transit funding cuts by claiming to not see it have any impact on transit service per Michael Turner of Metro Government Relations at the Feb. 25 Metro Citi-

zen's Advisory Council meeting. Which makes you wonder: are these officials being disingenuous because it is useful or are they and their staffs that our of touch with how transit is being impacted in their districts? Not a flattering picture, whichever is the truth.

I am mildly hopeful the upcoming federal transpiration funding reauthorization will begin to address our inconsistent funding regime. This is why the stimulus could fund so many "shovel ready" projects--many were in the pipeline then stalled by funding irregularities. Stable long term funding is becoming part of the policy discussion buzz, as this Brookings commentary ("Untangling Transportation Funding") notes in describing why the need to address the crisis of the federal transportation trust funds can no longer be deferred: http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0226_vehicle_miles_traveled_public_transit_modes.aspx?emc=lm&m=222802&l=6&v=37173

In June of 1990 the voters of California passed **Proposition 116** which included \$125 million for the City of **Irvine** to build a fixed guideway demonstration. After years of toying with monorail, people movers, and even to potentially help fund the since shelved Centerline light rail, with the city facing an impending "use it or lose it" deadline, Irvine has arranged for the funds to be transferred to OCTA (per agenda item #33, Jan. 26 OCTA Board meeting) for various rail related projects OCTA can start before the deadline. Irvine in return will get

Public/Legislative Affairs Continued...

credit toward local match for its future projects in the renewed Measure M. So why did Irvine work so hard to get funding it never quite knew what it wanted to do with? Odd, isn't it? Anyway, the deal sounds like a win, win.

Kymerleigh Richards informs me the lobbying firm of Shaw Yoder has been hired by Metro to beef up its presence in Sacramento. Firm head Josh Shaw doubles as the head honcho of the California Transit Association and besides him Shaw Yoder has some very savvy people who know transit policy issues inside and out. Sounds like a good move by Metro.

The "Transportation 101" primer on the aforementioned Ms. Richards' website Transit Insider has made the jump to printed form, by means of the Metro Library adapting it into a spiral-bound book which will be available for patrons of the Library as soon as it is catalogued. How about that?

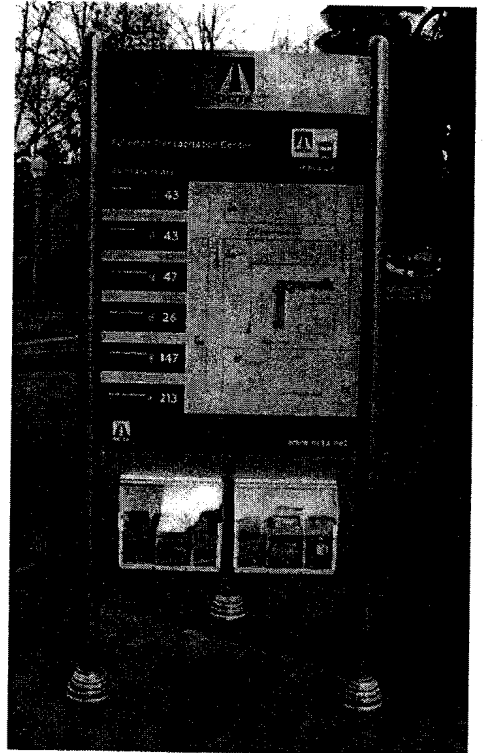
With no fanfare Amalgamated Transit Union Locals 1277 and 1589 have merged. 1277 represents Metro service attendants and mechanics plus the drivers and maintenance employees at RTA, Sunline and the First Student yard in Corona. 1589 represented Long Beach Transit employees.

Just to mention it, a member recently showed me a copy of the Daily Breeze with an article disclosing that former head of Beach Cities Transit Teresa Price is now suing the city of Redondo Beach. She claims funding hanky panky by city officials she

tried to stop led to her being retaliated against. At least we now know what Teresa is up to...

In this cyber dominated era, it is no surprise more and more agencies are ceasing hardcopy distribution of agendas on the basis that they are posted on the net. This means from time to time I have to do some agenda cybersurfing to keep up with what is going on. That is how I know among the gems of item #9J at the March 6 meeting of the Ventura County Transportation Commission is this request received from riders of the Vista Express buses: Several passengers want movies shown on the buses.

How do I top that? See you next month.



Metro Board Report for February 2009

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

Measure R: Metro held the first meeting of its ad hoc Measure R Project Delivery Committee and it was surprisingly upbeat, although there was some discussion about mitigation of state funding gaps and the structural operating deficit.

Staff believes that, in the first five years, construction will begin on the Purple Line, the Green Line extension to LAX, the Gold Line Foothill extension, the Regional Connector, and the Crenshaw Corridor. They also pointed out the necessity of establishing a reserve fund to operate those projects, once completed.

It is also hoped that the Rapid and Express network will expand during the next five years, as well as funding improvements by municipal operators. A "wish list" from the five sectors was also distributed.

The Metro Board has directed that the commuter rail funds from Measure R be prioritized for Metrolink safety improvements, with priority for the positive train control upgrades.

Metro Rail: Because all those rail projects are going to need rail cars, a joint 119 new car/69 car rebuild solicitation is being developed. This will have the net effect of doubling the light rail fleet size by 2018. There may be a reconfiguration of seating in the rebuilt cars (and possibly the new ones as well) to put all seating along the car walls

facing the aisle, to provide for better standing capacity.

Because of construction of the Expo Line/Blue Line junction at Washington Blvd. & Flower St., weekend and late night service on the Blue Line will likely be shortlined from July until December of this year. Service will only operate as far north as Washington or San Pedro Stations, with bus bridges from there to 7th St./Metro Center. The construction work to be accommodated includes new crossovers on Flower between Pico and Venice Blvds., and on Washington between Maple Ave. and Trinity St. There are proposals in the works for additional crossovers in that area, as well as an inspection facility that would have a 12-car storage capacity.

A new configuration for bicycles, luggage, and strollers on the Gold Line will be tested beginning sometime in March. It involves the removal of the flip-up seats and bright yellow signage designating the cleared area for what are being called "oversize items".

TAP: Staff seems to have figured out how to transition the EZ Pass to TAP without the smaller municipal operators having to replace their fareboxes. A small validator, which would be programmed only to show whether a TAP card had a valid EZ Pass loaded on it, would be provided to the munis. Unlike the full TAP-enabled fareboxes, which send and receive information via WiFi in the division yards, these devices would update via a cellular connection.

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Metro Board Report for February 2009 Continued

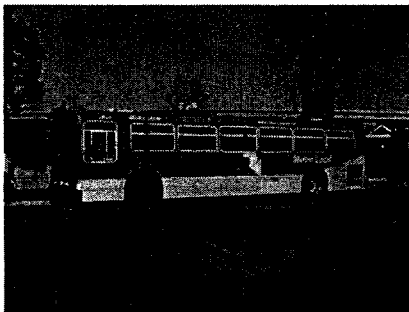
L.A. Marathon: After the mess created by moving the marathon start point to Universal City in 2007 and 2008, the route returns to the 2006 configuration, which means a less complex bus/rail interface plan. Also, the marathon will run on Memorial Day this year, and the usual Sunday service schedule on the Red, Purple, Gold and Blue Lines will be enhanced to run one additional trip per hour between 6:30 and 9:30am, with one additional car on all Blue and Gold Line trains and two additional cars on all Purple Line trains in the morning.

"State the Obvious" Tiger Team: The team assembled in July to evaluate the Five-Year Ridership Plan issued its report (and got a six month extension on its existence) this month. While the plan itself was suspended due to the State funding crisis, some elements were still evaluated, such as improving parking capacity at the more heavily-used Metro Rail stations, passenger safety, operational efficiencies, and improving bus-rail feeder connections.
No surprises there...

Federal Funding: Based on estimates of Los Angeles County's share of transportation funding in the federal stimulus bill, Metro believes it will be able to fund the long-delayed Metro Rail subway escalator canopy project, build the pedestrian bridge across Lankershim Blvd. at Universal City Station, and implement an enhanced bus stop information system. Several lesser-cost projects are also on the list, and the cities have a laundry list of projects that they can use stimulus money to fund (the biggest, by far, is a \$29 million redesign of Broadway in downtown Los Angeles).

Intern Program Killed: After our bringing to the attention of the Operations Committee last month the problems Foothill Transit had with the Transportation Foundation Los Angeles in their internship program, Metro staff recommended that there be no new agreement with TFLA to provide veterans as interns. Other factors included the possible budget reductions for interns and the fact that TFLA's efforts would be duplicative of outreach and recruiting efforts already undertaken by Metro.

Staff reports on these items, as well as other matters of interest, will be available for reading at the March 14 meeting.



A blast from the past...

Long before Metrolink began operating commuter trains from Los Angeles to Oxnard, Southern Pacific along with the state of California, operated a limited amount of commuter service between Los Angeles and Oxnard.

Beginning on October 18, 1982, trains began running to Los Angeles in the morning and to Oxnard in the afternoon. The service at first used borrowed Amtrak equipment and later Southern Pacific commuter equipment from the San Francisco Bay Area.

The service was not well received, especially by the Southern Pacific, and the state Public Utilities Commission forced the railroad to operate the service. The railroad claimed that operations of the commuter trains would have interfered with switching operations at the large General Motor plant in Van Nuys.

The service came to an end officially on March 11, 1983, although train service have actually ended on February 28th due to a washout in Moorpark. Southern Pacific was charging the state too much to operate the service and with a lack of ridership the service ended.

Additional information provided by Bill Farmer and John Signor.



One of the Oxnard commuter trains stops at the Glendale Station on its way to LA. (Jay Roberts Photo)