

## Bulletin Board / Members in Action

### Department of Corrections:

Due to an oversight we forgot to mention that the photo of the new Culver City Rapid Bus in the December issue came from Alex Leungkm.

Correction on the Metro Service Changes in December. Line 445 makes all stops on the Harbor Transitway.

### Bulletin Board:

At the Dec. meeting the following officers and Directors were elected for 2010.

Directors at Large - Ken Ruben, Nate Zablen, J.K. Drummond

Treasurer - Hank Fung

Recording Secretary - Kymberleigh Richards

Corresponding Secretary - Dana Gabbard

Vice President - Charles Hobbs

President - Lionel Jones

Our thanks to the following for donating trinkets for the goodie bag and door prizes at our annual holiday banquet -- Metro Gold Line Construction Authority, Metro, Metrolink, VCTC, Culver CityBus, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, Santa Barbara MTD, Los Angeles World Airports, Omnitrans, Santa Clarita Transit, Foothill Transit, Expo Construction Authority plus Dana Gabbard, Kymberleigh Richards and Steve Crosmer.

At our Jan 9<sup>th</sup> meeting Los Angeles Deputy Mayor Jaime de la Vega will make a presentation on Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's "30-10 Plan" for implementation of projects approved by the voters in 2008's Measure R.

Westside Urban Forum

([www.westsideurbanforum](http://www.westsideurbanforum)) on Friday Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> has as its guest Metro CEO Art Leahy on the Art of Moving LA.

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website. We have now

upgraded the calendar and you can now get an e-mail reminder 3 days before any listed event (the feature is included in the pop-up box when you click on an event listing).

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

### Members in Action:

Ken Alpern's latest transportation columns for the CityWatch website include "Giving Due Diligence Its Due", "Hopes ... 10 of 'em ... for Transportation 2010", "Environmental Justice ... or 'Just Us'?", "The Expo Line Should Connect, Not Conquer, Neighbors" and "Stimulus Shenanigans?"

The article "Monterey Branch Line (Monterey to Castroville)" by Chris Flescher appeared in the October issue of Western Rail Passenger Review.

Thomas Rubin's opinion piece "Will Pacheco Suit Reform the Runaway HSR Project?" appeared in the October issue of California Rail News.

Ken Ruben and Bart Reed attended the Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> LOSSAN Board meeting. Ruben on the same date attended the Westside/Central Service Sector Governance Council meeting. Ruben also attended the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Governance Council meeting Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>.

Ruben, Reed and Kymberleigh Richards attended the Metro Board meeting held Dec 10<sup>th</sup>. They also attended the Metrolink Board meeting/Public Hearing on Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, with Richards presenting SOCATA's position on the proposed service reductions. The same day they attended the retirement function for Metro COO Carolyn Flowers.



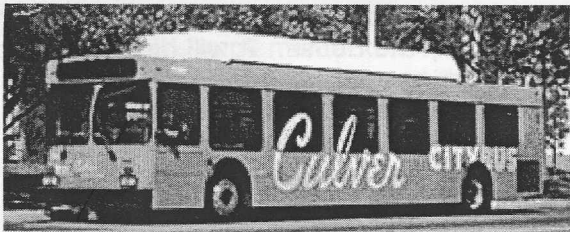
## Transit Updates

### AVTA

Starting in January AVTA has converted all monthly passes to TAP cards. The agency has also eliminated all punch passes.

### Culver City Bus

On Monday January 4<sup>th</sup> Culver City Bus began operation of new Rapid Line 6 on Sepulveda from Aviation Green Line Station to UCLA. The service operates every 15 minutes from 5:50 am to 9:57 am and from 2:20 pm to 7:35 pm. The service runs Monday through Friday only and makes the following stops: Aviation Green Line, LAX City Bus Center, Manchester Bl., Centinela Bl., Playa St. (NB Only), Slauson Av. (SB Only), Sawtelle Bl., Washington Bl., Venice Bl., Palms Bl., National Bl., Pico Bl., Santa Monica Bl., Westwood/Lindbrook, Westwood/Weyburn, and UCLA.



### Gold Coast Transit

On January 24<sup>th</sup> GCT's adult bus fare will increase from \$1.25 to \$1.35. Fares on GCT's ACCESS paratransit service will increase by 20¢ to \$2.70.

### Metro

Metro has launched an official Facebook page aimed at offering better customer service to its passengers, customer base, the public and stakeholders with the opportunity

to interact with each other on transit related issues. The new Facebook page can be found under "Metro Los Angeles" and is averaging 75 new fans a day for a total of more than 400 subscribers in the first few days. Metro Communications is managing the page and will be responsible for its content with comments and pictures.

Under this page the transit agency will promote other links to other Metro projects that are already on Facebook such as the Metro Silver Line, Metro Westside Subway Extension, Metro Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor, Metro Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2; and the Metro Library and Archives.

### Metrolink Bus Transfers

Metrolink commuters who use the Metro Silver Line (formerly Metro bus lines 484 and 490) between Cal State Los Angeles station and Union Station will be required to pay a \$1.20 per trip surcharge. Metro lines 485, 487 and 489 are still available between Cal State Los Angeles and Union Station and only require your valid Metrolink ticket for free passage.

### Sun Line

On January 3rd Sun Line will make a variety of service adjustments on the following Lines: 14, 24, 30, 32, 50, 70, 80, 90, 91, and 111. Most of these changes are schedule adjustments aimed at improving service.

### Thousand Oaks Transit (TOT)

TOT is looking for volunteer Transit Ambassadors will to ride on TOT buses and share information about riding bus service in the area. If anyone is interested please contact Angela Arrazola at (805) 370-0047 or email TOT at [TOTransit@toaks.org](mailto:TOTransit@toaks.org)   

## ***Money for Transit in Economic Stimulus from APTA***

### ***Courtesy of APTA: Congress Enacts Short-term Extension of SAFETEA-LU; House Passes Second Economic Stimulus Bill with \$8.4 Billion for Transit***

With end of the year deadlines looming, Congress has been engaged in a flurry of activity to finish its work before heading home for the holidays. The week before Christmas, Congress considered and passed several key measures with impacts on the federal transit programs.

Included in the legislation passed was a Defense appropriations bill (H.R. 3326) which also included a further extension of core highway and transit programs through February 28, 2010. This enables Congress to continue consideration of a long-term surface transportation authorization bill or a further extension of existing programs, such as the one-year extension included in separate legislation passed by the House of Representatives. As a result, the Federal Transit Program has five full months of authority, and APTA has asked the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to apportion those funds immediately.

Further action by the House included its passage of a second economic stimulus bill (H.R. 2847) that would appropriate \$37.3 billion for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), including \$8.4 billion for the Federal Transit Program. Within that allocation, \$6.15 billion would be provided for transit capital assistance formula programs, including \$4.84 billion allocated for urban formula grants. The New Starts program would receive a \$500 million investment, while the Fixed Guideway Modernization program would be funded at \$1.75 billion. Amtrak will receive \$800 million that

can be used for both rehabilitation of current equipment and for the purchase of new equipment.

H.R. 2847 also renewed a provision made available through an amendment to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in July that enables grant recipients to use up to 10 percent of their formula apportionment for operating costs or other eligible activities.

Most importantly, the bill provides for a further extension of SAFETEA-LU through the end of FY 2010. House Transportation leaders and staff have indicated that it is their intent that this further extension will provide sufficient authority to cover the funding levels set in the FY 2010 Transportation appropriations bill.

It is important to note that the full-year extension of SAFETEA-LU and the 10 percent operating assistance provision has only been acted on by the House. It will have to await Senate action and the President's signature before it can become law. Senate leaders have indicated that they will consider their bills when the Senate returns from the holiday recess period in January. 🚊 🚊 🚊





When the holiday season is upon us, the Metro Board of Directors accommodates the calendar by holding the committee meetings the week before Thanksgiving with the Board meeting following in early December). Not surprisingly, this "month" felt more like two, and the Board meeting on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> went on for so long that in order to vote on one item near the end, staff had to retrieve someone who had already left the meeting before they left the building as well, in order to maintain a quorum! (It's the first time in my memory that the Chief Executive Officer's report was given as the last item before adjournment.)

But within those committee meetings and the exhausting Board meeting, some real gems were unearthed.

**BRU Strikes Out ... Again:** Back in March, I reported on the Bus Riders Union's repackaging of their consent decree plan as their "Clean Air and Environmental Justice Plan" and demanding that it be considered as part of Measure R's implementation. Metro staff has finished their evaluation, and the resultant "Board Box" report shoots down virtually every one of their proposals:

The BRU estimates that the two new divisions required to operate the 600 new buses (500 plus a 20% spare ratio) would cost a total of \$134 million. As documented in staff reports for the proposed Union and LAX divisions, the real cost is \$100 million each.

A proposed 18% service expansion would cost \$1.14 million in additional operating costs by 2016, but there is no mention of where the BRU thinks that extra money will come from. Apparently they've been napping during all the staff reports on the loss of the State Transit Assistance funds ...

They maintain that South and East Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley lack adequate night and weekend service, oblivious to the 2006 Title VI analysis (to comply with the Federal Transit Administration's triennial audit process) demonstrating that all areas of Metro's service area are properly served.

Five new freeway express lines, five new local lines, and ten new Rapid lines are proposed (the only real difference being their embrace of Rapid after being its staunchest critics when introduced a decade ago). They also want more bus-only lanes, but appear to remain ignorant of Metro's limited role in authorizing same.

And of course, the "new" plan calls for reversing the 2007 fare increase and no increases until at least 2016. The staff report says doing so would increase the operating deficit from \$800 million over that period to somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.4 billion, if the plan's service increases were also implemented. So, as usual, the BRU wants the moon but thinks it should be free.

**The Mayor's "30-10 Plan":** The first move by Director Antonio Villaraigosa toward getting as much of the Measure R project list under construction in the next decade turned out to be a two-page motion to "improve policies, practices and organizational structure" to "ensure successful project delivery". While it calls for the formation of an industry peer review and advisory group to provide recommendations – not a bad idea in any event – it also calls for evaluation of construction authorities a la Expo or Gold Line as possible efficiencies (a staff report on that is due at the March meeting).

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## ***Public and Legislative Affairs*** By Dana Gabbard

A deal has been worked out between the school district and Expo Authority entailing that Expo add a station where the light rail line passes Dorsey High. This resolves safety concerns about the crossing used by the students as the trains will be slowing/stopped to serve the station being added. I have to imagine the PUC will endorse this and it will end the long running drama of Damien Goodman's crusade for tunnels at that location. And this harbingers LAUSD (or its grandstanding board) won't be allies of the NIMBYs for Phase II of the project.

A further blow for Damien Goodman occurred when the L.A. Sentinel (the leading paper for the African American community) in its Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> article "Will Black Contractors Participate in Crenshaw Light Rail Project?" made no mention of him and in fact instead credited an obscure organization (called the California Friends of the African Americans Caucus-huh?) as being the ones rallying the community. It appears as I long predicted once the Crenshaw Line became a hot issue Goodman would discover the established insiders would quickly start shunting him aside. He may soon wish for the good old days when I was his chief pest...

I was gratified Steve Hyman in a Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> post on The Source (<http://thesource.metro.net/>) titled "Reader email, v 1.0" noting my e-mail citing our concerns about Metro's new Silver Line.

Here is a rare piece of good news: MTD in Santa Barbara has experienced a 320.9% increase in ridership over last year for its Line 27. This is attributed to significantly more service on the route this year due to a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant

(per agenda item #8, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> MTD Board meeting).

Deputy L.A. Mayor Diego Alvarez is leaving Villaraigosa's office to become regional transportation coordinator for Los Angeles World Airports, per a report in the Daily Breeze. Maybe this is a sign we'll finally have some action about the long stalled Green Line extension to serve the airport?

So Queen Elizabeth recently took a public train (albeit in first class) to travel for her Christmas break at Sandringham. Kymberleigh Richards asked me "If Her Majesty can take public transport, why can't we get lowly elected officials to?" A good question worth pondering in the coming year...

Remember Gerald Francis, who left Metro to join former Metro Deputy CEO John Catoe at WMATA (Washington, DC) as Catoe's Deputy General Manager? Francis is leaving the agency in March for the private sector in a move widely seen as taking the fall in the wake of the June 22<sup>nd</sup> train crash that killed nine and provoked concerns about safety. Quite a blow for someone who seemed an up and comer not so long ago.

It is no surprise the Governor is now pursuing a convoluted swap to facilitate further raids of transit funds despite the recent victory of the suit brought by advocates and the transit industry that resulted in a ruling against the legality of past diversions. I hope this nonsense can be stopped dead in its tracks to avoid yet more route cuts and fare hikes beyond those already endured by transit users across the state.

The Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> Downtown News had a profile of Mark Cole ("What the Piano Player Saw"), who plays the piano to entertain shoppers at

## Public and Legislative Affairs Continued

Macy's Plaza shopping mall in Downtown Los Angeles. It mentions a woman in her late 80s who regularly travels from Long Beach to listen to Cole play. He noted "she loves great music and when her husband died 10 years ago she had nothing left except for the piano, so it cheers her up to come," While the article doesn't say so I'd bet dollars to doughnuts she gets there via the Blue Line.

The Orange County Register reports in the Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> article "OCTA scales back plan to add Metrolink trains" that the expanded Metrolink service in Orange County OCTA planned to start next summer is being trimmed back (to only a third of the originally planned service) due to softening sales tax revenues. This after millions were invested in track improvements and equipment to facilitate the expansion.

Well, Sue Doyle has decided to go freelance and leave the Daily News. Just the latest sign of the downward spiral of local media. I'm not sure anyone will even cover the transportation beat at the Daily News now. Instead general assignment reporters likely will handle breaking stories. Beyond sad.

Another departure is Durand Rall, retiring as Omnitrans General Manager after holding the job since Aug. 1993.

I'll conclude by noting the death Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> of Tom Nelson, who along with Dick Finley covered Metrolink and Metro Board meetings for years on behalf of the Pacific Railroad Society and its newsletter Wheel Clicks. A gracious gentleman who will be much missed.



*Metro NABI 8372  
on Line 902 in  
North Hollywood.  
(Alex Leungkm  
Photo)*



## **Metro Board Report Continued**

Of interest, but hardly surprising, was that during the public comment, the BRU made its usual claims that bus operations money was being used for rail operations, leading Chair Ara Najarian to ask at one point what the relevance was of their comments to the Villaraigosa motion. The response? More of the same rhetoric.

**Governance Councils Remain, But What Do They Govern?:** One organizational structure change already in the process of implementation is the "flattening" of Metro's service operations into a "recentralized" service development, vehicle operations, and maintenance management system. Yet the five sector Governance Councils will remain in place, with CEO Art Leahy devoting one half-page of a five-page report to the positive benefits of their remaining intact.

It is unclear what the Council's decision-making role will be, though; although Leahy says they will continue to "contribute to service evaluation and changes" there was no reference to either continuing their authority over Tier 2 and Tier 3 service, expanding their authority over Tier 1, or simply making recommendations for the Metro Board to act upon. The discussion over this change showed that the Board still appears to be unclear as to what the sectors have been doing; the only substantive question came from Director John Fasana, who wanted to know how the structural changes would affect the bus/rail interface.

**TAP – The Good And The Bad:** Now that TAP is under the purview of Matt Raymond, reports on same are included in the monthly report to the Executive Management and Audit Committee, instead of being hidden away in the Operations Committee. And (as Gomer Pyle would say) surprise, surprise! ...

there are issues with day pass sales, with "alternatives" being considered, including off-vehicle loading of the TAP card and/or a return to physical media (also known as the paper day pass). The real issue? Because there is no paper receipt for a farebox-loaded day pass, there is no way to verify whether fare was paid or not when a TAP card reads as "no value".

Raymond also showed a confusing chart which appeared to show a 22% fare evasion rate pre-gate installation, a 10% increase in revenue with the free-spinning gate, and a 2.1% increase in ticket vending machine (TVM) collection. The truth is somewhere between all those figures, but the chart is also based on a comparison of weekly TVM transactions with the weekly average of 2009, so I remain skeptical that these numbers actually mean anything and will eagerly await the next update to see if there is any clarification.

**More Controversy Over Gold Line Quad Gates?:** As has been widely reported in the press, quadrant gates are proposed for 22 intersections along the Gold Line Eastside Extension, requiring a new environmental impact report (or at the least, an environmental impact study). Yet, due to – or perhaps, despite – pushing from Director Gloria Molina, the Board was unable to approve moving forward without first having a lengthy discussion on whether or not the action was necessary. Not the installation of the gates themselves, mind you, but the legal process. Director Villaraigosa wanted a "mitigated" negative declaration, only to be short-circuited by County Counsel pointing out that a study would still be required in order to make such a declaration.

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## ***Metro Board Report Continued***

Molina said that the Board's vote a year ago directing staff to take steps to seek approval for the gates should have been sufficient and questioned the need for "additional studies" before moving forward. And Director Fasana, heeding County Counsel's advice, worried that the Villaraigosa motion amounted to "shooting ourselves in the foot". Which resulted in Molina insisting that the State Legislature should be convinced to give Metro an exemption, without really specifying the basis for them to do so.

Of no help whatsoever were members of the public, some of whom serve on the Eastside Extension Review Advisory Committee, who urged the Board to "skip the EIR and do the gates now".

Harbor? Crenshaw? Ridley-Thomas?: Both the Harbor Subdivision and Crenshaw transit corridors saw forward movement in their respective processes, as the Board approved the moving forward on the draft EIR for Harbor and adopted light rail as the preferred alternative for Crenshaw. Of course, Director Mark Ridley-Thomas had to meddle before the approval on the latter, adding eleven blocks of below-grade operation on Crenshaw between two already-proposed such segments.

He also now refers to this as the "Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor" which is, I presume, a strategy for getting support from those who have complained about the Green Line not going directly to the airport (even though the new line wouldn't do that either). And the Harbor Subdivision corridor is now called the "Green Line South Bay Extension".

With Line 902, Every "Solution" Leads To

More Questions: Unless you spent the past few months out of town, you know about the

overlay Line 902 service in the San Fernando Valley, creating a direct link between Van Nuys Blvd. local service and North Hollywood Station, that was implemented on Dec 14<sup>th</sup>.

In a situation that could best be described as "putting the cart before the horse after the barn doors have closed" the Board approved spending \$732,000 in traffic congestion relief and state local transportation partnership program funds to add "bus, speed improvements" (such as signal timing and priority) along Line 902. This is on top of \$900,000 already given to the City of Los Angeles in 2007 for analysis and preliminary engineering, which begs two questions:

One, why was Line 902 pushed into service so quickly when the speed improvement program was still in preliminary stages (and won't be implemented until sometime in the 2011-12 fiscal year), and two, why wasn't the more logical step of giving the Orange Line signal priority implemented if the City is willing to give it to Line 902?

Seems Like Just Yesterday We Were Negoti-

ating: The one-year extensions of the contracts with the United Transportation Union (UTU), which represents Metro's bus and rail operators, and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), which represents Metro's vehicle maintenance personnel were ratified ... just in time for negotiations to begin again after the start of the new year.

The extensions include a 1% pay increase, in quarterly increments, but are otherwise unchanged from the previous three-year contracts.

*(Continued on Page 10)*



## ***Metro Board Report Continued***

Quote Of The Month: John Walsh takes the honor this month, for calling *Los Angeles Times* columnist Steve Lopez a "fake Mexican" (whatever that is) during public comment on the Ridley-Thomas motion to add more underground mileage to the Crenshaw/LAX light rail line. For the record, Lopez' father is of Spanish heritage and his mother is European. Yes, I know Spain is technically in Europe too. You tell John.

Obviously, there is a lot more to these items than this summary, which is why I will be

bringing an unprecedented four pounds of staff reports and presentation printouts to the January 9 meeting (including a staff report given to the Governance Councils – but not the Board – on a "blue ribbon committee" to review and restructure transit service in 2010). Whoever said we were going to a paperless society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century was dead wrong! 🚊 🚊 🚊



### ***Photo of the Month***



*Metro NABI 8365 at El Monte Station on the new Silver Line on December 18, 2009.  
(Andrew Novak Photo)*

## RTA Service Changes in January

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, RTA will make several service changes to improve service and also to serve the new Perris Station Transit Center.

The new Perris Station Transit Center will open on January 10<sup>th</sup> and is located on South C Street between West 4<sup>th</sup> Street and West San Jacinto Avenue in the City of Perris. It includes eight bus bays, a pedestrian plaza and a 141-space park-and-ride lot. The following routes will be affected when the new transit center opens: 19, 22, 27, 30, 74, 208 and 212.

For Routes 19, 22, 27, 208, and 212 the timepoint at 4th and Wilkerson will be replaced by the Perris Transit Center. Line 74 will no longer service 4th and Wilkerson.

ROUTE 7: (Lake Elsinore) frequency of weekend service will improve to every 50 minutes, instead of the current hour and forty five minutes increasing the number of daily trips from 7 to 14.

ROUTE 8: (Lake Elsinore-Wildomar) frequency of weekend service will improve to every 55 minutes, instead of the current hour and forty five minutes increasing the

number of daily trips from 7 to 13.

ROUTE 41: (Moreno Valley-Perris-Mead Valley) will now have Saturday and Sunday service with trips every 45 minutes between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

ROUTE 53: (UC Riverside Bear Runner Express) is a new trolley route that will offer evening service in and around UC Riverside and the Canyon Crest area between 7:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m., Monday through Thursday on academic days only.

In February 2010, work is scheduled to begin on a project along Magnolia Av. Between Jurupa Av. and Beatty Dr. that is designed to separate train and vehicle traffic. Construction and detours are expected to last through fall 2011. Routes 1, 13 and 15 will be affected when construction begins. Below is a diagram that shows the detour for these three routes.

For more information on these changes or to download the newest RTA bus book visit: [www.riversidetransit.com](http://www.riversidetransit.com)   

