

Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Our thanks to Alex Clifford for his candid discussion of the proposed high speed rail project at our March meeting.

Our guest speaker at our April 10th meeting is Denny Zane, Executive Director of MoveLA, and will speak on Mayor Villaraigosa's 30-10 plan.

We will have booths at Brea Railroad Days (May 1-2) and at Union Station for National Train Day (May 8). We are shifting our monthly meeting to May 15th to accommodate these outreach opportunities.

The Railroad Passenger Association of California/National Association of Railroad Passengers joint meeting is being held at the Metro Board room on Saturday April 17. Details at <http://www.railpac.org/>

FourBillion.Com is a coalition working to secure further federal high speed rail funding.

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website. We have upgraded the calendar and you can 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>

****Deadline for material submission for the May newsletter will be April 30th at 6 pm. ****

Members in Action:

"Metrolink proposing cutbacks" in the March 11th Daily News quoted Kymberleigh Richards regarding proposed revisions on the Antelope Valley Line. "That line has had expansion over the years because there is ridership

on it. I get concerned when weekday service gets cut on a line that I know to be productive."

Jane Reifer was quoted in the Los Angeles Times March 22nd article "Governor, lawmakers agree to early budget package" regarding the tax swap deal reached between legislative Democrats and the Governor: "This is probably just about the best we can do right now."

Andy Novak and Ken Ruben attended *Winterail* in Stockton on March 13.

Ken Ruben attended the March 8 San Gabriel Valley Sector Governance Council and made comments expressing appreciation to departing Sector General Manager Jack Gabig. Ruben also attended the March 10 Westside Sector Governance Council meeting and the March 18 meeting of the Westside Cities Council of Governments.

Hank Fung and Ken Ruben attended the Foothill fare hearing March 24. Fung presented our position with Ruben making his own comments. On that same date Ruben, joined by Bart Reed and Jerry Martin, attended the LOSSAN Board Meeting. 🚆 🚆 🚆

Transit Factoid:

Throw That Ticket Away;
San Francisco MUNI Can't Make Fare...
The city had 50 fare inspectors as of January 2009, who earn \$35 an hour. This adds up to about \$3.6 million a year. The agency collects \$900,000 a year in fare evasion penalties, officials said Thursday, and has no metric to determine whether or not the fare inspection program encourages riders to pay up.

-Published Thursday, March 25, 2010, by the SF Appeal.

Transit Updates

Dodger Shuttle

Metro is now offering service to Dodger home games for the 2010 season. Buses will board at Bay 8 in Gateway Plaza and operate to Dodger Stadium making stops at Cesar E. Chavez/Broadway and Cesar E. Chavez/Figueroa if space is available. The service begins 90 minutes before games time and runs every 10 minutes thru the 3rd inning. 30 minute service will be provided between the 3rd and 7th innings. Return service begins during the 7th inning and continues until 45 minutes after the last out. Dodger tickets are valid for fare and drop off at the stadium will be inside Dodger Stadium behind Center Field.

Metro



Metro contractor Veolia has a new bus in service, NABI 3100. This is the first bus Metro has purchased specifically for the contract services and is 31 feet long.

*Metro 3100 at the Veolia yard in Los Angeles.
(Paul Castillo Photo)*

Riverside Transit Agency

Due to low ridership, Temecula's Route 57 Red Line Trolley was discontinued on Thursday, April 1. The city's Route 55 Green Line Trolley continues to operate.

New bus stops have been added at 4th Street and "G" Street in Perris for the following routes; Route 27 northbound, Route 27 Southbound and Route 30 Eastbound.

San Diego

Using federal stimulus funds, SANDAG, the

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and the City of La Mesa have begun work on a project to enhance pedestrian and ADA access at the Grossmont Transit Center. The construction project will add elevators and a pedestrian bridge, making it easier for transit patrons to move back and forth to the busy Grossmont Center-area businesses on a mesa about 40 feet above the center and Trolley station.

The project will cost a total of \$8 million, including \$4 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. The city of La Mesa contributed \$540,000. The rest of the funds come from federal and state transportation programs. SANDAG will oversee the construction, being done by Riha Construction. MTS will maintain and operate the facility.

Additional enhancements will include a bridge landing at the mesa, new paving, a colonnade flanking the elevator tower, furniture, landscaping, lighting, and enhanced busway pavement. Bicycle lockers also will be installed near the Trolley platform. Work is expected to be complete in summer of 2011.

Metrolink's new CEO

A longtime transportation and business executive was named as the new chief executive officer of Metrolink. John E. Fenton will join the agency April 16, taking over for David R. Solow, who stepped down in December.

Fenton has a masters degree from USC and over the years has worked for various railroads including Canadian National, Kansas City Southern, Union Pacific and Santa Fe.



2009 Day After Thanksgiving Trip Part 3

Continued from Last Month:

We reached West Corona at 10:16 a.m., followed by North Main Corona at 10:20 a.m. This was where another sight to be familiar during our travels met our eyes-- boring industrial parks, interspaced with residential neighborhoods followed by another pairing of flood control channels and mobile homes

Mark Strickert joined our group at 10:29 a.m. at the Riverside-La Sierra station stop. At 10:37 a.m. via Twitter Nick learned the train we had been riding earlier was being terminated in San Clemente. For passengers travelling further south to Oceanside they would need to transfer to Amtrak train 566 at San Juan Capistrano to continue on. Sure sounds like the Surf Line was a mess in the wake of the signal problems. How symbolic the next sights we spotted were a cemetery, followed by a dry riverbed.

After a brief stop in Riverside we continued on toward San Bernardino, passing the famed Colton Crossing and a tiny station at Colton not used for passengers but filled with gasoline tank trucks. At first we were amidst a work class area, which became industrial/residential. Then we passed the San Bernardino BNSF yard. At this point we had made up 8 minutes of the delay in departing Orange, and were only 5 minutes late. Riding the same equipment we departed San Bernardino on time as Train 321 at 11 a.m., quickly taking the flyover to the tracks leading toward Los Angeles. Once again mobile homes were spotted, along with residential areas nestled behind sound walls.

Mr. Strickert left us when we reached Rialto at 11:05 a.m. In 5 minutes we were at Fontana station. The first of several gravel pits were spotted, along with a mini rail yard.

Two sheriff deputies came through to check tickets. Then we passed the California Speedway, forlorn and empty. At 11:20 a.m. a Metrolink train in the opposite direction whizzed by us.

It turns out the deputies ended up doing more than just checking tickets. They had a scofflaw who not only didn't have a ticket but refused to answer questions they had about the ID he offered. He was handcuffed and taken off the train when we reached Pomona, which is near where the deputies are based and could process the arrest.

At 11:24 a.m. we were at Rancho Cucamonga, and spotted a sign advising about a Pedestrian Underpass project at that station. Seven minutes later we reached the Upland station, which like many is in an industrial area. A mere 5 more minutes we were at Montclair station, from which we saw the nearby Omnitrans bus yard.

At 11:39 a.m. we stopped at Claremont and member Eric Griswold ran up, gestured to Kymberleigh and handed off some snacks he had brought us. What a nice thing to do! The snacks were shared along with some granola bars Kymberleigh had brought along (procured at a Halloween clearance sale).

11:44 we watched as the deputies and their charge deboarded at Pomona. Soon after we passed the Fairplex, where the L.A. County Fair is held each year. Word reached us that the non-members who were on the tour were spending their time in clusters, chatting and getting to know each other. This is an example of the camaraderie that travel can create.

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Metro Board Report for March 2010 by Kymberleigh Richards

Show Me The Money, If You Can Find It: As the economy wobbles and Sacramento plays games with tax revenue, the balancing of any transit agency's budget starts looking like a game of shuffleboard. Metro is no exception; this month found the Board being asked to juggle interest on Proposition A & C revenue into funding streams for operations, reducing Transportation Development Act funding benchmarks while raising that for Measure R's bus operations portion, and coping with revenue shortfalls in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Of all the above, it was TIP that got the bulk of the Board's attention, with John Fasana needing clarification of the trade-offs if federal stimulus funds are used for streets and roads (the answer is that doing so frees up funds for transit "good repair" projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan, or LRTP), Ara Najarian wanting to exclude the I-710 tunnel from a vote on the TIP priority setting criteria, Zev Yaroslavsky wanting to hold off on making a decision "until we know the money is coming", Richard Katz asking if any of the "new" money is operations-eligible (thank heavens someone thought to ask that), Antonio Villaraigosa cautioning against sending the Feds a signal that might result in a lesser amount of allocated funds, and Diane DuBois putting forward a motion to allocate half of stimulus and jobs-creation funding to street and road projects.

After the dust cleared, the DuBois motion passed, including the direction of funds to Measure R and other LRTP commitments and prioritizing the first ten years of LRTP projects.

Never ones to leave alone an opportunity to assert their non-existent authority over Metro, the BRU wasted public comment time by

claiming the TIP allocations had something to do with the July fare increase, with Barbara Lott-Holland demanding that the increase be cancelled by redirecting Measure R funds to cover operating deficits. All these years and they still don't understand the difference between funds designated by the voters for capital projects and funds that can be used to operate service ...

And, in a double case of people thinking this vote was actually approving the immediate starts of the environmental review process, the anti-710 tunnel people opposed the TIP allocations and Damien Goodmon trotted out his usual light rail grade separation rhetoric.

This would be comical if I hadn't seen it previously ... and before that, and prior to this, and ... well, I've lost count of the number of times this drama has played out.

But None Of That Money Will Come From Advertising Booze: Turning away \$1.5 million in potential advertising revenue, the Board overwhelmingly rejected a request by Metro's advertising contractor to include beer and wine on the list of products that can be advertised on buses and trains. This prompted John Walsh to proclaim that "finally, we found something to agree on" before asking if medical marijuana dispensaries, massage parlors, and porn would be considered next.

One concern, expressed by Zev Yaroslavsky, is that even though beer and wine advertising is allowed under 80% of the various contracts for shelter advertising with the various municipalities, there is no transit agency anywhere in California that allows same on its vehicles.

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The latest twist of Metro's ongoing TAP fiasco is the recent policy expecting bus operators to notch TAP cards that the farebox doesn't read. This ignores the well known problems of false readings of the cards by often faulty fareboxes. Plus puts the drivers in an awkward position. When Streetsblog L.A. inquired about rumors from high up in Metro management that due to complaints by the driver's union that the policy has been rescinded Matt Raymond responded he wasn't aware of any such action. Seemingly another example of the left hand at Metro not aware of what the right one is up to.

What irony! the Las Vegas Sun March 17th ("\$45 million for maglev shifted to airport road project") reported that the federal funds for the Vegas to Anaheim maglev have been shifted to make road improvements at McCarran Airport. How much longer before we put a fork in this project and declare it done?

Quote of the Month: "If Los Angeles compresses thirty years of transit spending into ten, what happens during the other twenty? Nothing at all, unless another separate revenue source is established. So none of the infrastructure bank proposals put forth thus far will actually aid in reversing the current lack of adequate financing for transportation." (Transport Politic, "Benefits and Pitfalls of a National Infrastructure Bank", www.thetransportpolitic.com)

Every time consumer columnist David Lazarus of the Los Angeles Times writes on transportation issues, I end up shaking my head in disbelief. But his March 23rd piece on transit fares ("L.A. mass transit agencies make only a token effort to get people onboard") is a true masterpiece of mindless whining. He spent TWO HOURS hassling a Metro

p.r. representative and still ended up clueless. Beyond sad.

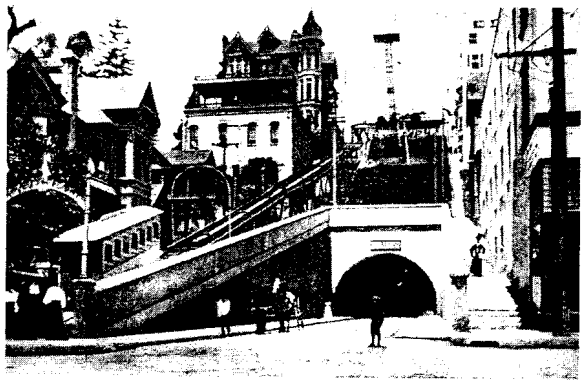
I sympathize with Damien Newton of Streetsblog L.A. who recently mentioned in comments the flack he gets from trying to stay impartial regarding the various stakeholders on transportation issues. An example: "One prominent bike advocate basically told me our relationship would be damaged if I kept quoting another." Sounds familiar.

Glad to see Curbed L.A. noted at a recent Metro meeting on the proposed Crenshaw station for the Purple Line extension that John Welborne (a resident of the area and also president of Angels Flight Railway Foundation) as he prepared to make comments got a standing ovation from those present for his long years of work to get the beloved funicular reopened. Bravo!

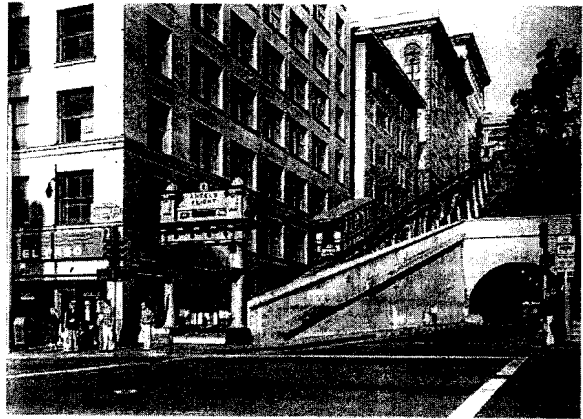
And to conclude here is the latest tidbit from our friends at Access Services about shenanigans with the free fare program allowing Access users to ride local transit for free: ASI Executive Director Shelly Verrinder "informed the Board that there were some cases [of] fraud reported with Access cards. She stated that some Access riders who were authorized for a [Personal Care Assistant] were waiting at bus stops with other passengers and offered the other riders at the bus stop free rides \$0.50. Mr. Verrinder stated that drivers were also noticing that when the Access rider exits the vehicle the PCA stayed on the vehicle. She also stated that there was currently no method in place for Access to identify who the individuals were but when the Tap Card is implemented Access Services would be able to identify who was on the vehicle during that period of time." (per the Minutes of ASI Board Feb. 22, 2010 meeting minutes). 🚗 🚗 🚗

Angels Flight Returns!

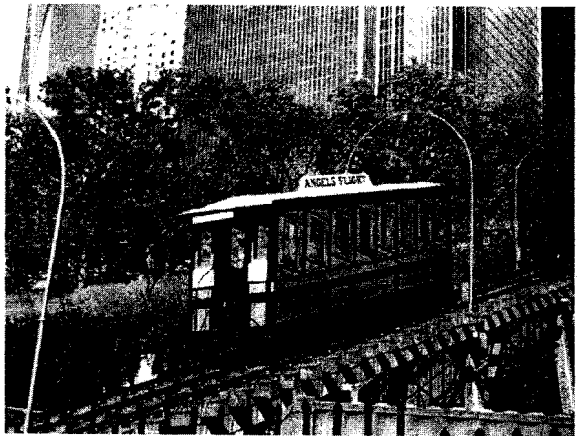
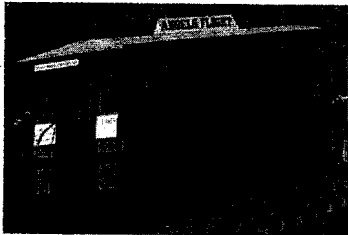
On March 15, 2010 at 6:45 am the "World's Shortest Railway", Angels Flight, reopened to the public in downtown Los Angeles. The funicular railway on Hill Street between 3rd and 4th Streets had been closed since February 2001 after an accident on the railway claimed the life of a passenger. The railway reopened with a redesigned hosting mechanism and the approval of the Public Utilities Commission, the two orange and black passenger cars named "Olivet" and "Sinai" began operating again between Hill Street and the Water Court at California Plaza.



The railway opened in December 1901 and was designed and financed by Col. J.W. Eddy. The railway was originally located on the southwest corner of Hill and 3rd Streets. The new railway allowed Bunker Hill residence access to Hill Street and connections with the street car railroads in Los Angeles. Angels Flight continued to operate until 1969 when the railway was removed to make way for the Bunker Hill redevelopment. The cars and buildings for the railway were stored with plans to bring the railway back at some point in time. In February 1996 the railway reopened just south of its original location. It continued to operate until the dead accident in February 2001 when the railway closed.



Fare on the newly reopened Angels Flight is 25¢ one-way or you can purchase five tickets for \$1. The service runs 365 days a year from 6:45 am to 10:00 pm. 🚋 🚋 🚋



Metro Board Report Continued

Richard Katz seems to think there is money to be made with station naming rights instead, although I don't think "Verizon Station" is going to be a useful name when passengers are trying to figure out where a rail line goes.

Also, About That Measure R Money: The amount of Measure R sales tax received is falling short of projections, due to an expected lag in reporting by merchants. Using Proposition A revenue as a comparison, Measure R tax was underreported by almost 20% in September, and has risen to somewhere around a 90% collection rate as of February. But according to chief financial officer Terry Matsumoto, it took five years for Proposition C to reach parity with Proposition A, so the current figures aren't as bad as they would be on their own.

Who's In Charge Here Again?: Gloria Molina put forward a motion that would require the decisions of the Pasadena Metro Blue Line Construction Authority (PMBLCA) and the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority to be ratified and approved by the Metro Board. And I have to say she has a point: While the two construction authorities were created by the state Legislature to gain brownie points from local constituents, the creation did not exempt Metro (and its directors) from financial liability if costs go awry, and with no oversight protections in place either, the situation is, as Molina rightly puts it, "like giving the authorities a credit card without being responsible for the bill." Too bad her motion failed for lack of a second, although it did prompt Ara Najarian to ask staff to research the possibility of sponsoring legislation to create the proper insulations.

And The Foothill Extension Managed To Dodge That Bullet: After discussions that Art Leahy politely called "contentious", an agree-

ment was reached with the PMBLCA which brings any cost overruns on the Gold Line extension to Azusa to the Metro Board. That made it possible for agreements to be finalized with the construction authority to begin work on the extension and get their Measure R funds for same. Now, of course, they're going to have to prove they are up to the task.

The funding agreement also highlighted the wisdom of Art Leahy hiring Doug Failing away from Caltrans to be the interim chief planning officer. Failing, in working out the agreement with PBLMCA, deliberately used a lower amount of funding in order to counter inflation if the project is delayed. I think that's proof that he should be given the job for real.

Here Comes Micro-Managing Mark Again: When an emergency item was added to the agenda to correct language in a previous Board action that could have caused a default on Proposition C bonds, Mark Ridley-Thomas tried to delay the vote "until physical documentation can be produced on this correction" which amounted to changing one phrase to properly show that return on the bonds is estimated, rather than capped. Told that the bank needed an answer the next day, he backed down, but it was obvious that he wasn't happy about not getting his way.

Quote Of The Month: After John Walsh said his muckracking website (which shall remain nameless) not only receives more traffic than Zev Yaroslavsky's site at the County of Los Angeles, it receives more "failed requests" than Zev's does legitimate hits, the Supervisor from the Third District quipped "my site gets only high quality requests."

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From the back of the bus...

This appeared in the February 1926 issue of The Motor Carrier, the publication produced by the Motor Carrier Association of California.

TWENTY-SIX WAYS TO KILL YOUR ASSOCIATION

1. Don't come to the meetings.
2. If you do come, come late.
3. If the weather doesn't suit you, don't think of coming.
4. If you do attend a meeting, find fault with the work of the officers and other members.
5. Never accept an office, as it is easier to criticize than to do things.
6. Nevertheless, get sore if you are not appointed on committee; but if you are, do not attend committee meetings.
7. If asked by the chairman to give your opinion regarding same important matter, tell him you have nothing to say. After the meeting tell everyone how things ought to be done.
8. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary; but when other members roll up their sleeves and willingly, unselfishly, use their ability to help matters along, howl that the Association is run by a clique.
9. Hold back your dues as long as possible, or don't pay at all.
10. Don't bother about getting new members. Let the Secretary do it.
11. When a banquet is being given, tell everybody money is being wasted on blow-outs which make a big noise and accomplish nothing.
12. When no banquets are given say the Association is dead and needs a can tied to it.
13. If you don't receive a bill for your dues, don't pay.
14. If you receive a bill after you've paid, resign from the Association.
15. If you receive service without joining, don't think of joining.
16. If the Association doesn't correct abuses in your neighbor's business, howl that nothing is done.
17. If it calls attention to abuses in your own, resign from the Association.
18. Keep your eyes open for something wrong and when you find it, resign.
19. At every opportunity threaten to resign and then get your friends to resign.
20. When you attend a meeting, vote to do something and then go home and do the opposite.
21. Agree to everything said at the meeting and disagree with it outside.
22. When asked for information, don't give it.
23. Curse the Association for the incompleteness of its information.
24. Get all the Association gives you but don't give it anything.
25. Talk co-operation for the other fellow with you; but never co-operate with him.
26. When everything else fails, curse the Secretary.

The 2009-2010 Transit Guide is now available!

For anyone who uses public transportation in southern California, the Transit Guide is a must have. The guide has a complete list of all the bus and rail transit from Santa Barbara to San Diego.

You can purchase the Transit Guide on our web site at:
<http://socata.net/guide.html>

You can also order the 2009-10 Transit Guide by sending a check or money order for **\$15.00** to:

**Southern California Transit Advocates
3010 Wilshire Blvd. #362
Los Angeles, CA 90010**

***Get yours today
before they are all gone!***

Metro Board Report Continued

Rather than try to explain just what happened to the gasoline tax in Sacramento and what may happen next – even though that was the subject of a lengthy staff report during committee meetings – I'll give that update verbally at the April 10th meeting. Perhaps that will give you all an excuse to attend. 🚗 🚗 🚗

Day After Thanksgiving Trip Continued

A football field at one of the local high schools was spotted. This one had a large sign "Chargers" (evidently the name of the team that plays there). Several schools were seen during our travels.

11:51 a.m. we had reached Covina. Soon after another Metrolink train going in the opposite direction whizzed by. Also spotted was another quarry pit. 11:57 a.m. we were at Baldwin Park and passed a swap meet site in a former drive in (you run across a fair number of these when you travel around our region). 12:06 p.m. we were at the El Monte station where we spotted an El Monte Transit vehicle in the parking lot near the platform. At this location an entire family (mom, dad, kids etc.) boarded.

We continued via viaduct, passing the El Monte Transit center and more mobile homes. Through the Gibson Tunnel we emerged in the middle of the 10 freeway and soon were passing autos on the adjacent lanes. 12:15 p.m. we were at the Cal State L.A. station, where the doors in our car didn't open. Evidently they did announce that only the doors of the cars at the front would open because the platform is too short for trains beyond a certain length. Soon we passed Metro's Bus Division 10 and then the 12:20 p.m. Metrolink train bound for San Bernardino passed us. We arrived at Union Station at 12:28 p.m.

It was our lunch break, and everyone scurried since we had only 40 minutes to obtain nourishment. At this point Charles Powell and Gerard Wright joined the trip. As we began gathering to board the next train word spread that while most of the old cars in the consist lacked electrical outlets the new car at the front had them. Many of the participants settled there to get juice for their electrical devices (laptops, blackberries, cell phones, etc.).

By now it looked like we had lost some of the non-member participants who decided a half day trip had been enough. But there were still about 18-20 of us who were going to make a day of it.

I decided to be low key for this part of the trip and joined Woody Rosner on the lower level of car #136. There was an announcement that all passengers must have a valid ticket before boarding. Then at 1:10 p.m. we departed on time. We went up the west side of the L.A. River, past industrial areas that had heavy graffiti.

Then we passed the Gold Line yard and Metrolink yard, the latter included some of the UTA Frontrunner equipment. A conductor came by to check our tickets. The train seemed to have extremely light patronage.

To Be Continued... 🚗 🚗 🚗

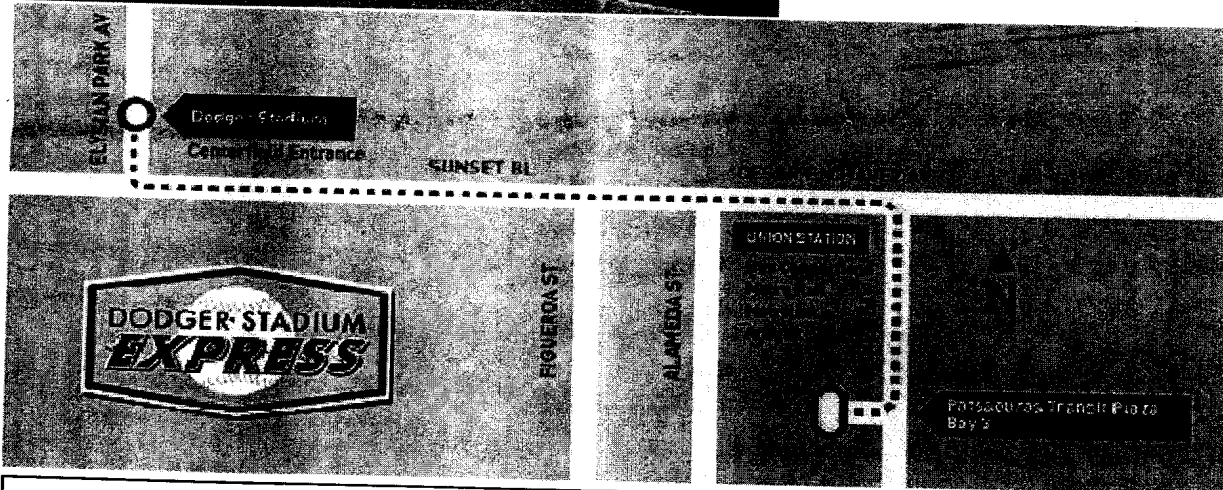
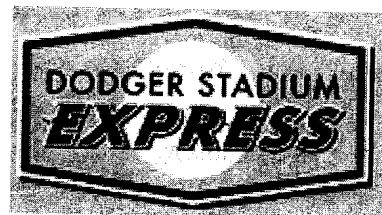


Photo of the Month



Metro NABI 7943 is parked at Dodger Stadium on March 20, 2010 during a training run for drivers, supervisors and dispatchers of Southland Transit Inc. (STI). STI will operate the new service for Metro. Below is a map of the new service.

Photo by Josh Thurman



Are you buried in paper?

Are you interested in getting your SOCATA newsletter in PDF?

We are now offering the SOCATA newsletter in PDF format to our members.

The PDF newsletters will be available a week before the meeting and will be in full color.

If you would like to get the PDF newsletter instead of the printed version email us at:

rtd1121@yahoo.com