THE **TRANSIT** ADVOCATE

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Torrance Transit New Flyer 304 in front of the Del Amo Mall in June 2010.

- Kim Turner Photo



Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Our thanks to David Lazarus, business columnist for the Los Angeles Times, for an engaging dialogue at our June 12th meeting.

The guest speaker at our July 10th meeting will be Jon Hillmer of Metro. He will discuss the organizational changes at Metro, including the role of the governance councils in the reorganized agency.

The Amtrak Customer Advisory Committee (ACAC) is currently recruiting new committee members from Southern California. To find out how to apply search "Become an ACAC Member" on the Amtrak website http://www.amtrak.com.

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

All dues-paying members are entitled to access the member message board on our website. To request a password send an email to Kymberleigh Richards at: krichards@socata.net

Department of Corrections:

The photo of Torrance New Flyer 309 on page 7 of our June Issue was actually taken by Bradley Tollison of Torrance Transit System. Our apologies to Mr. Tollison.

Members in Action:

Jerard Wright was quoted in David Lazarus' June 4th Los Angeles Times column "Blue ribbon transit committee mails it in."

Alek Friedman's photos of the equipment displays at Union Station for National Train Day appeared in the June 2010 issue of Western Rail Passenger Review

CityWatch Vol 8 Issue 46 (June 11, 2010) reprinted comments by Bart Reed that originated in the Transit Coalition e-newsletter as "Unrelenting Opposition by Tunnel-or-Nothing Crowd a Puzzler."

Andrew Novak, Russ Jones and Ken Ruben Rode the PRS *Metrolink Ramble* on June 26th. Alek Friedman was also along for the first half of the trip to Lancaster and return.

Ken Ruben attended the "Meetings with Art Leahy" on June 21st and 22nd.

The meeting on the 21st was the All Governance Councils Meeting. Jerard Wright and Kymberleigh Richards were also in attendance. The meeting on the 22nd was attended by Kent Landsfield, Nate Zablen, Lionel Jones, Hank Fung, Joe Drummond, Kirk Schneider, Jerard Wright, Bart Reed and Ren Ruben.

Ruben also attended the Governance Councils Meetings on June 9 and 14, Westside and San Gabriel Valley, respectively. He mentioned the passing of former Culver City Mayor, Albert Vera, who once nominated Ruben for a seat on the Westside Sector Governance Council when it was being set up.

Ruben attended the Culver City Council Meeting on June 7 and spoke about the short notice to the Culver City residents in regards Culver City Bus not serving West LA College anymore effective June 9.



Transit Updates

Big Blue Bus (Santa Monica)

Super 12 began its summer break on June 11th. Limited service begins on August 30th and full service begins on September 13th.

The following service changes went into effect on June 20th.

Line 3 had a daily trip added departing Santa Monica at 11:45 pm and serving LAX and the hotels on Century Blvd. Saturday evenings there is more frequent service from the Green Line Station to Santa Monica. For the summer only, early evening service has been added from Santa Monica to the Green Line Station on weekends.

Line 7 and Rapid 7 had schedule adjustments for summer traffic.

Line 9 added an early morning trip departing at 6:25 am from Santa Monica to Pacific Palisades along with minor weekend schedule adjustments.

Sunset Ride now operates every 20-25 minutes Monday-Friday.

Mini Blue Beach Ride now operates on Monday only to the Annenberg Beach House pool. The Beach Ride travels along Pico starting at Virginia Ave. The first trip leaves at 10 am and then departs every hour on the hour. Return trips begin at 10:30 am and run hourly. Service does not run on July 5th and ends on August 30th.



El Monte Summer Beach Bus

The City of El Monte began special summer Beach Bus service on June 5th. The service takes passengers from the El Monte Trolley Station to Huntington Beach and return. The service operates on Tuesdays departing the Trolley Station at noon and Saturdays departing at 11:00 am. Service departs Huntington Beach at 6:00 pm on both days.

Round trip on the Beach Bus is \$3.00 per person. Items such as tote bags, small coolers and boogie boards are allowed on the bus and must fit within the passenger's seating space. Surfboards, large coolers and bikes are not permitted. For more information call the El Monte Trolley Station at (626) 580-2242 during regular business hours.

Golden Empire Transit (Bakersfield)

Effective August 1st GET fares will increase. The new single ride fare will be \$1.25 and 75¢ reduced fare. The express single ride fare will be \$1.50 and 75¢ reduced fare. The price of the regular day pass will now be \$3.00 and the express day pass will be \$5.00. Reduced fare day passes are \$1.50 and \$2.50 respectively.

31-Day passes will also be increasing in price. For more details visit www.getbus.org



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Transit Updates Continued

Gold Coast Transit (Oxnard)

On June 14th the new route 19 began operation and connects the Oxnard Airport, Mexican Consulate and the Industrial Area of East Oxnard. The new route 19 will run weekdays from 5:30 am to 6:30 pm. The new Route 19 replaces school booster route, 18B.

Metrolink All Star Train

For the All Star Game in Anaheim on July 13th, Metrolink will be operating special trains to the Anaheim Stadium Station. Train 620 will depart Los Angeles at 3:00 pm and Train 623 will depart Oceanside at 2:46 pm. Special Train 621, to Los Angeles, and Train 624, to Oceanside, will depart the Anaheim Stadium Station 30 minutes after the game ends. For more information visit: http://www.octa.net/midsummer.aspx

Moorpark Beach Bus

Beginning June 15th and operating until August 19th, the Moorpark Beach bus will operate between Moorpark and Zuma Beach Tuesday through Thursday. Fares for general riders is \$5.00 round trip and \$2.00 round trip reduced fare.

For more information about the stops in Moorpark and departure times call the City of Moorpark at (805) 517-6256 or visit: www.ci.moorpark.ca.us

Palos Verdes Transit

On June 16th base fare increased to \$2.50. Senior Fare remains \$1.00 http://www.palosverdes.com/pvtransit/

San Diego MTS

Effective June 13th MTS made the following changes to service in San Diego.

- -Rote 3 on Sundays has been extended to UCSD Hospital via 4th/5th Avenues. Service to City College Trolley Station has been discontinued.
- -Routes 8 and 9 have been restructured as two separate routes (instead of a loop route): Route 8 serves West Mission Bay Dr. and Mission Blvd. Route 9 serves Sea World, Ingraham St., Crown Point, and Garnet Ave. Levels of service will be similar to the existing Route 8/9, and additional service will be provided throughout the summer.
- -Route 27 has added summer only service that operates every 60 minutes from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. This expanded summer service will operate through Labor Day. The Pacific Beach terminal has been moved from Bayard Street to Felspar Street near Mission Blvd.
- -Route 44 service to the Sharp and Children's hospitals area on Sundays has been replaced by Route 120. Sunday service eastbound from Clairemont Square (toward Old Town) now uses stops on Clairemont Drive (behind Clairemont Square).
- -Route 120 on Sundays has been extended from Fashion Valley north to Health Center Dr. (Sharp Hospital area) replacing Route 44A and will operate hourly.



Metro Board Report for June 2010 by Kymberleigh Richards

This was a light month for the Metro Board of Directors, with very little on the agenda and the wise move by the Bus Riders' Union to boycott this month's meeting (marking the first time they have done so since the days preceding the consent decree). So this month's column will be shorter than usual, with just some quick reports on the few items of significance.

The 710 Amendments Get Heard: As we reported last month, a number of amendments to the SR-710 "gap closure" by Ara Najarian, Mike Antonovich, Richard Katz, and José Huizar were moved to this month's meeting. And of course, that brought out most of the same people as last month, with comments nearly identical to last month. I suppose they can't help themselves, even though I wonder how much impact they have when they parrot the same public comment every time. In any event, once the commenter's were done, the amendments passed with essentially the same language as when they were presented last month (which in my mind means they would have been finished with last month, were it not for the BRU's nonsense that began during the 710 agenda item). I'd list the key points except that I consider 99.9% of the amendments to do little more than codify what would have been the case anyway for scoping and EIR creation. One part of the Huizar amendment (calling for the surface route to be eliminated from the environmental review process) had to be deleted because it would have created a problem under CEQA; that didn't stop some of the commenter's from calling for that language to be restored, claiming Metro's staff person didn't know the law. You'll laugh when I tell you the staff person in question is former Caltrans district director Doug Failing,

who now heads up highway projects at Metro.

AnsaldoBreda Is Probably Laughing: After considerable discussion at the Operations Committee, including CEO Art Leahy pointing out that Metro is approaching a critical point in acquiring light rail vehicles for the Expo Line (not to mention the rest of the projects in the 30/10 initiative), the item which would authorize staff to begin a procurement process to replace the now-canceled Ansaldo-Breda contract was held for retooling to find more opportunities for bidders to build near or in Los Angeles without endangering federal funding. At one point Mark Ridley-Thomas said the process would "lead to a lot of excuses later" but then tried to interrupt Leahy while he addressed those concerns. You would think the Board was being asked to approve the new contract, rather than just authorizing staff to issue the bid solicitation

I Don't Know Why This Took Five Years: In a flashback to 2005, the Metro Red Line canopy project - to protect the escalators and stairs, and the passengers who use them, from the rain at Civic Center, Pershing Square, and Westlake/MacArthur Park Stations - has resurfaced. I'd wondered for some time why that \$5.9 million project had never moved forward, and now we know why. It turns out that the three bids received ranged from \$8.9 to \$17.3 million, and were all rejected as being higher than the budgeted amount. Now, after talking with the bidders to get suggestions on how to reduce the costs of the canopies, the contract will go back out for rebidding ...

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Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

During our dialogue with David Lazarus the suggestion was put forward that contracting could be a valuable tool to achieve the sort of service quality Lazarus posits is necessary for the transit providers to deliver if they are ever to have a chance to attract choice users.

It seems to me ground zero for whether that concept can prove out is North County Transit District in northern San Diego county. Earlier this year NCTD awarded a seven year contract for operations and maintenance to First Transit. As far as I know this is the first example of a transit agency in our region that has gone from directly employing personnel to contracting. Other agencies such as Foothill undertook contracting from start-up.

If NCTD succeeds in the transition to contracting and if as time passes it seems to be able to reduce costs while key indicators show service quality has been maintained or improved compared to what it was like under the previous labor agreements then I think it may attract some interest among policymakers to consider contracting as a viable option for existing providers, especially if the current perilous financial conditions persist for the next few years.

Regarding the appearance by Lazarus, my main impression is he certainly has a high opinion of his opinion and despite much talk of still learning he seems to actually think he already has most of the answers and all this is left is for the rest of us to gather and follow as he leads us in storming the battlements. I'll decline and basically now expect, despite all the hype, he will accomplish little or nothing. Just another meaningless radar blip.

I have been hearing that the Bus Riders Union has been very helpful in advocating for

the Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit project, writing letters and putting pressure on corridor elected officials to support it. Lord knows we need all the help we can get to make the bus lanes a reality given the history of bureaucratic delay and NIMBY pushback that means even now approval isn't a slam-dunk. I just wish this was simply one of many examples of the BRU now being engaged in a positive manner; instead sadly this seems to be the one "real" campaign they have at this time.

Via Google I recently stumbled across a long July 16, 2009 post by BRU head honcho Eric Mann on zcommunications.org titled "Grassroots Organizing for a World Revolution". Buried in all the long-winded dogma are some interesting facts about the BRU that belay claims it has made in the past about its membership and organizational structure. Mann says that they annually recruit between 350–500 new dues paying members yet attendance at their monthly general membership meeting over the years has stagnated at between 90 to 100 people.

Each monthly meeting includes a new member orientation. Thanks to the extensive marketing/outreach BRU organizers do on buses etc. these attract between 15-25 new people a month, with over 80% of those attend the orientation meeting subsequently becoming annual dues paying members.

While they are able to mobilize a large response on occasion the actual activist membership that attends meetings on an regular basis is rather small, especially for an organization whose resources allow it to maintain a monthly mailing list that sends materials to over 1,000 people that Mann describes as including current dues paying members and active members.

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Public and Legislative Affairs Continued

So what is the bottom line? I think the foregoing confirms my long held suspicion that the BRU has a major problem with attrition--that they draw in bus riders who are interested in improving service but many after just a few meetings become frustrated at the autocratic command and control structure Mann imposes on the group and quickly drift away from further involvement. This explains in part why Mann has to devote substantial resources on an ongoing basis to recruitment.

And while the sea of yellow shirted members they can field on certain occasions may seem impressive, one has to conclude after 15+ years and millions of dollars devoted to the effort that the much touted Mann model for community activism is a giant flop. It generates revenue and attention but in terms of building a mass movement it is limited by Mann's approach and ideology that guarantees they never progress beyond a small core of true believers.

One thing I readily concede is in the mid-90s a lot of what the BRU was protesting against deserved opposition (like the attempt to eliminate monthly passes). But the impression I have is after the consent decree ended in 2006 Mann was unwilling to accommodate the changing conditions the BRU would have to adjust to if it was ever to mature and reach its potential. Most of its dogma is antiquated. Meanwhile transportation is no longer a sleepy backwater of policy that Mann can dominate plus the novelty of multi-cultural/environmental justice demonstration protests have lost their power to drive change.

Certainly at this point the BRU are one of the stakeholders, not THE stakeholders -- a role unfamiliar to them. You contemplate the ineffectual campaign they have mounted against Metro's fare increase and wonder what were they thinking when they decided gestures like

a hunger strike plus staging a mini-riot at the May Board meeting would accomplish anything. The San Fernando Sun (http://www.sanfernandosun.com) in its article "Metro Fares to go up July 1st -- Protest Group Vows To Fight Metro Fare Hike" has the BRU outlining a toothless set of actions that they claim could stop the increase: staging a protest at Mayor Villaraigosa's official residence, demanding the federal government audit Metro and attempting to stage a fare strike among riders. The latter has been tried by them before and quickly fizzled.

The BRU aren't vanishing anytime soon but I think the handwriting is on the wall that their day in the sun is fading. This presents a challenge to transit activists accustomed to the BRU getting the lion's share of the attention on these issues. It likely will be we who need to confront the shifting paradigms and provide leadership in this new but scary environment. It won't be easy and the solutions will often be hard to reach. Well, no one ever said activism was for sissys...

Well, Proposition 22 to protect transit funding which we endorsed has been certified for the November ballot. We'll keep members appraised of how they can assist the campaign to pass it. Looks like this will be a very heated election as the usual big stakeholders push their agendas. That means lots more political ads, as if we haven't already heard and seen enough of those. UGH!

I'll conclude by noting the rough treatment given Larry Zarian by the Governor, who tossed Larry off the Transportation Commission for the temerity to vote his conscience instead of doing what the big shots wanted. We should be encouraging that sort of courage, not punish it. Just the latest bit of evidence how dysfunctional our contemporary political scene is.

Metro Board Report Continued

but now it's a \$7.2 million project (a good chunk coming from ARRA funds) that is expected to save \$1.12 million over a 16-year period on escalator maintenance costs. Is it all worth it? Time will tell.

Goodbye Micro-Managing? The muchanticipated Parsons Brinkerhoff report on MTA policies, practices and organizational structure to ensure successful Measure R project delivery was released, which led Art Leahy to point out that Measure R and 30/10 will be the largest public works program in U.S. history and that the Board will, out of necessity, have to delegate some lesser decisions on projects to staff without CEO or Board review. While many on the Board are rather uncomfortable with that suggestion, Leahy pointed out that second-guessing or micro-managing will end up causing every little decision to clog the Board agenda for years to come. After Mark Ridley-Thomas pointed out that the PB report was useful "only if it is embraced far beyond the scope of the policymakers" a consensus of sorts was reached that would delegate some authority to the Measure R Project Delivery Committee in hopes of keeping the full Board agenda lighter. But are we ready for an allday committee meeting every month?

Quote Of The Month: This month's honors go to a gentleman whose name I did not catch, who prefaced his comments before that same Measure R committee with "while I have a doctorate, I don't use the title to try to impress officials." Then why the hell did you mention it? (And no, it wasn't new gadfly-on-the-scene Dr. Clyde Williams, who this month wanted the Metro Board to order a review of LADOT's pending service reductions ...as if Metro didn't have enough on its plate

dealing with its own service restructuring to make budget.)

Honoring A Politician Worth Respecting: Dana makes reference in this month's PLAC Report to the removal by Governor Schwarzenegger of Larry Zarian from the California Transportation Commission. Those of us who have been attending Metro Board meetings for years remember Zarian's long tenure as a Director, including two years as its chair, and this month the current Board recognized his many years of service in the public transportation world (among his lesser-known accomplishments was the creation of the Glendale Beeline system) by presenting him with a resolution. Zarian described his removal from the CTC as being a case of "voting my conscience regardless of the political consequences" and that doing so "still allows me to look at myself in the mirror every morning." Larry Zarian, in my experience, is one of the most honorable elected officials in our region's history and I am happy to see him honored in this way, even if the Governator didn't appreciate him.

I close this month by acknowledging the retirement, announced at this month's Planning and Programming Committee meeting, of Rex Gephart, who leaves after 27 years of service to Metro and predecessor RTD. Among his achievements is one that will be a daily reminder of his work: Rex was the father of Metro Rapid. I wish him a happy and well-deserved retirement.



Foothill Transit Service Changes

On June 27th, Foothill Transit raised their fares. Adult cash fare is now \$1.25 and 50¢ for Senior/Disabled (SD). Silver Streak Fare is now \$2.75 and \$1.35 (SD). Commuter Express fare will now be \$4.90. 31-Day pass prices also increased, adult local is now \$70.00 and \$22.00 (SD). Silver Streak 31-Day passes are now \$105.00 for regular and \$52.00 (SD). Commuter Express passes are now \$170.00. Transfers are still 50¢ for regular and 25¢ (SD).

On July 18th, Foothill will be making several route changes through out their system. The following is a summary of those changes.

Line 187: The line will be reroute from Merced to Los Angeles Street away from the residential area of the route. Service will operate hourly on weekends and will not serve the Metrolink station in Baldwin Park and remain on Pacific

Line 184: Line will be canceled.

Line 185: Weekday service to the Industry Park and Ride will only operate between 5:00 am to 10:00 am and between 1:00 pm and 9:00 pm. There will be no weekend service to the Park and Ride.

Line 195: Will operate peak hours only.

Line 269: Service between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm will now operate hourly.

Line 274: Line will end at Baldwin Park Metrolink and no long serve West Covina. The line will also be rerouted from Crossroads to Workman Ave.

Line 280: Northbound service will end at Foothill and Azusa and eliminate service between Foothill Blvd, and Sierra Madre Ave.

Line 281: The line will terminate at Citrus and Foothill Blvds.

Line 282: New Line 282 will replace the western portion on Line 482 between Puente Hills Mall and El Monte Station. There will be hourly service on this line during the midday.

Line 284: The Line will now operate peak hours only 7 days a week. The line will be rerouted from Cypress to Covina and will terminate at Fastland Center

Line 285: The Line will operate commute hours only 7 days a week.

Line 289: The will now operate commute hours only weekdays only.

Line 292: Weekend service is canceled.

Line 482: Line will be split and between Pomona and Puente Hills Mall will remain Line 482. Western portion becomes Line 282.

Line 493: All trips will begin and end at the Diamond Bar Park and Ride.

Line 497: All trips will begin and end at the Chino Park and Ride.

Line 498: A reduction in the number of trips that begin at Foothill and Barranca.

Line 851: Line will be canceled.

Line 853: Cancel trip to Pomona Transit Center.

For more information about these service changes visit the Foothill website at:

www.foothilltransit.org



LADOT Service Changes

On August 1st, LADOT will make several changes to both DASH and Commuter Service lines. LADOT will also increase fares for all services.

DASH Changes

- -Fairfax and Studio City will be reduced to 30 minute service on weekdays and Saturdays.
- -Lincoln Heights/Chinatown will be reduced to 30 minute service on weekdays and Saturdays, eliminate weekday service after 6:30 pm and eliminate service on Sundays and holidays.
- -Highland Park/Eagle Rock service will be eliminated along Yosemite Dr. and Colorado Blvd. east of Townsend Ave. Service on weekdays after 6:30 pm and service on Sundays and weekends will be eliminated.
- -El Sereno/City Terrace will now operate every 25 minutes seven days a week and on holidays.
- -Hollywood service after 6:30 pm on weekdays and on Sundays and holidays will be eliminated.
- -Southeast, Wilshire Center/Koreatown, and Panorama City/Van Nuys will no longer have service after 6:30 pm on weekdays.
- -Crenshaw and Midtown will no longer operate on Sundays and holidays.
- -Downtown Central City East, Downtown C, Downtown DD, Hyde Park Shuttle, Hollywood/ West Hollywood, and Warner Center (North & South) will be canceled.
- -Northridge will have the AM & PM Commuter Service eliminated. The frequency will be reduced to every 15 minutes until noon; then service every 20 minutes until end of service.
- -Downtown D will now operate every 15 minutes after 6:00 pm.
- -Wilmington will now end service at 7:00 pm on weekdays.

DASH fares will now be 35¢ regular and 15¢ reduced. Monthly Passes will now be \$13.00 and Trip Ticket Booklet will be \$21.00.

Commuter Express Changes

Line 142 will no longer serve the Customs House or Terminal Island. Service will now be every 30 minutes until 9:00 pm and every 60 minutes after 9:00 pm.

Line 419 will no longer offer service west of the Chatsworth Metrolink Station.

Line 422 will have two westbound trips (6:29 am and 6:44 am) and two eastbound trips (3:50 pm and 4:34 pm) eliminated.

Line 423 will no longer serve Borchard Road and the western terminus will now be at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center. The eastbound trip at 8:00 am will be eliminated.

Line 431 will now serve Loyola High School on select trips due to the cancelation on Line 430.

Lines 413, 430, and 575 will be canceled.

Commuter Express fares will now be \$1.25 for base fare with an increase in zone fares as well with a Zone 4 fare being \$3.90.

For more details on the monthly passes for Commuter Express, details on the 2011 fare increase and changes to the City Ride program visit: http://www.ladottransit.com





Photos of the Month









On June 26, 2010, ground was broken at Newcastle Park in Arcadia for the Foothill Extension of the Metro Gold Line. The authority hopes to start construction on the Pasadena to Azusa phase in September 2010 with completion by 2014. The above photo was taken by Bob Liebow and shows the site of the future Arcadia Station at 1st Avenue and Santa Clara Street. The photo at left was taken by Alan Weeks and shows the various dignitaries at the ground-breaking ceremony.

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The PDF newsletters will be available a week before the meeting and will be in full color.
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How to join SO.CA.TA: Yearly dues are \$30.00 (\$12.00 low income). Dues are prorated on a quarterly basis.

Submission of materials: ALL materials for the TRANSIT ADVOCATE newsletter go to Andrew Novak at P.O. Box 2383, Downey California 90242 logos of agencies appear for information and or to rtd1121@yahoo.com. Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope for returns.

Newsletter deadlines are the Fridays a week before SO.CA.TA meetings, at 6:00 p.m. Pacific time, unless otherwise announced.

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NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS: July 10th and Aug 14th at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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