

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

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November 2010

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*Red Car 501 on the San Pedro waterfront trolley
on October 17, 2010*

— Andrew Novak Photo



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Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Our thanks to Kathryn Engel, Transit Manager for the City of Glendale, for an informative presentation and discussion session on their system at our October meeting.

This month the speaker will be Conan Cheung, deputy executive officer for service development at Metro, discussing potential service changes for 2011.

At the November meeting we will have nominations for 2011 officers and directors.."

Our holiday banquet this year will be at the Wood Grill Buffet in Norwalk; more details in the December newsletter.

As of June 30, 2011 1-800-COMMUTE, the regional transit information number will be discontinued. Replacements include 323-GO-METRO and 511.

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

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website for transit meetings and events.
<http://socata.net/calendar.htm>

Members in Action:

Ken Ruben, Jerry Martin and Bart Reed attended the LOSSAN Board Meeting on October 27th

Ruben attended a TAP card presentation at the Long Beach Senior Citizens Center on September 17th, both Culver CityBus Line 7 hearings on October 20th plus the Metro Westside Governance Council meeting on October 13th. He also attended the San Gabriel Governance Council meeting on October 11th.

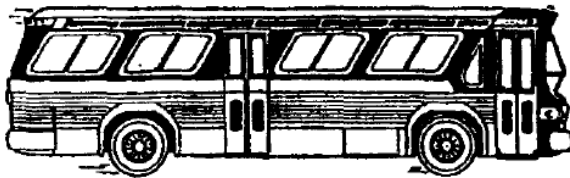
Charles Powell and Andrew Novak attended the CAC meeting on October 27th along with Dana Gabbard and Ken Ruban. 🚌 🚏

Are you buried in paper?

Are you interested in getting your SO.CA.TA newsletter in PDF?

We are now offering the SO.CA.TA 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

Go by BUS



Transit Updates

Foothill Transit

Due to a formal request from the City of Baldwin Park, the westbound Line 178 stop at the southeast corner of Baldwin Park Boulevard and Clark Street has been removed from service effective November 8th.

Passengers can use the bus stop at Baldwin Park Boulevard and Park Shadow Court, just south of Clark Street.

Due to construction along Route 66 between Lone Hill Boulevard and Hunters Ridge in Glendora, Foothill Transit is expecting some delays in service for Line 187. The road construction is expected to last until January 2011.

Metrolink

On November 8th Metrolink made several changes to their schedules. Below are the highlights of those changes. Minor schedule changes were made on the Ventura County Line, on the Orange County Line, and on the Inland Empire-Orange County (IEOC) Line. Weekend service on the Lancaster Line and San Bernardino Line have undergone significant changes. With these changes some connections at Union Station were improved. Time was added to trains 609 and 808 between Oceanside and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo Stations to resolve ongoing conflicts on this single track portion of the system. No changes were made on the Riverside Line or on the 91 Line. For more information visit: www.metrolinktrains.com



NCTD—Coaster

On December 4th, Coaster will operate a special Santa Train. The 90-minute trip includes decorations, party favors and visits from Santa and other holiday characters. The special train will depart Oceanside at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The tickets are \$4 each for all ages and there is a limit of six per person. Tickets go on sale November 16th at the Oceanside Transit Center. For more information visit: www.gonctd.com





Santa Monica Big Blue Bus

Big Blue Bus has recently added their information to Google Transit. The Google Transit Trip planner gives passengers step-by-step directions with arrival and departure times. Big Blue Bus is one of many southern California transit operators whose information is now on Google Transit. Visit Google Transit: www.google.com/transit

PE Right-of-Way Meetings

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is hosting a series of meetings on the possible reuse of former Pacific Electric (PE) right-of-way between Paramount and Santa Ana. These meetings will be held in November and December. For more information about the study and upcoming community meetings, please visit:

www.scag.ca.gov/perow

or contact Philip Law, Project Manager at (213) 236-1841 or law@scag.ca.gov  

Day After Thanksgiving Trip

For this years trip we will be exploring the new OmniGo service operated by OmniTrans. Below is the trip plan for the day.

It is recommended that you arrive at Union Station by 7:30 am to allow plenty of time to purchase tickets. You can purchase tickets in groups of four participants and use one ticket each from a Metrolink "Friends and Family 4-Pack", which costs \$29.00 (\$7.25 per person; it is suggested that you bring cash for this.) If you choose to purchase your ticket separately, you will need both a one-way ticket from Union Station to San Bernardino (\$11.75/\$6.00 senior or disabled) and a "one way ticket" from Fontana to Union Station (\$11.00/\$5.50).

Metrolink 302

LEAVE Union Station - 7:45 am
ARRIVE San Bernardino - 9:25 am

(Consult the Metrolink San Bernardino Line schedule for station arrival times if you choose to join the tour en route.)

Omnitrans 1 - purchase Omnitrans Day Pass (\$4.00/\$1.85)

LEAVE 3rd & Metrolink Way - 9:33 am
ARRIVE E & Court, after turnaround loop - 9:42 am
Walk to Transit Mall Shelter H, west of 4th & E.

Omnitrans 9

LEAVE Transit Mall Shelter H - 10:05 am
ARRIVE Yucaipa Transit Center - 11:21 am

OmniGo 308

LEAVE Yucaipa Transit Center - 11:25 am
ARRIVE Yucaipa Transit Center - 11:50 am

LUNCH BREAK -- Nearest fast food places: Del Taco (Yucaipa & 2nd), Jack in the Box (Yucaipa & 4th), Taco Bell (Yucaipa & 6th), KFC (Yucaipa & 7th. Nearest stops, Yucaipa & Commercial or Yucaipa & 6th)

Omnitrans 9

LEAVE Yucaipa Transit Center - 12:44 pm
ARRIVE Barton & Anderson - 1:28 pm

OmniGo 325

LEAVE Barton & Anderson - 1:29 pm (ride round trip)
ARRIVE Barton & Washington (Mojave Dr) - approximately 2:26 pm

Omnitrans 19

LEAVE Barton & Washington (Mojave Dr) - approximately 2:50 pm
ARRIVE Fontana Metrolink - 3:55 pm

Metrolink 331

LEAVE Fontana Metrolink - 4:11 pm
ARRIVE Montclair Station - 4:31 pm

Early bailout opportunity by continuing on Metrolink to Union Station, arriving 5:50 pm.

Omnitrans 65

LEAVE Montclair Station - 4:40 pm
ARRIVE Chino Transit Center - 5:10 pm

OmniGo 365

LEAVE Chino Transit Center - 5:15 pm
ARRIVE Chino Hills City Hall - 6:05 pm

Omnitrans 65

LEAVE Chino Hills City Hall - 6:35 pm
ARRIVE Montclair Station - 7:25 pm

Metrolink 337

LEAVE Montclair Station - 7:51 pm
ARRIVE Union Station - 8:50 pm

If we miss the 325, we have an alternative plan. For more details about the alternative and for additional ticket options visit our website at:

<http://www.socata.net/dat2010.html>  



"Subway Almost To The Sea" Moves

Forward: To no one's surprise, the draft Environmental Impact Report for the Purple Line extension to the Westside was approved, meaning a final EIR is expected to go to the Feds in about a year.

But – also to no one's surprise – the draft EIR approval came only after multiple public hearings before both the Planning and Programming and Measure R Delivery committees as well as before the whole Board (the latter forcing a rare rescheduling of the meeting start time to 9:00 a.m. from its usual 9:30 a.m. start). And, sadly, those hearings were filled with lots of rhetoric and emotional arguments, largely from residents of Beverly Hills who object to the tunnel being routed underneath Beverly Hills High School, practically a necessity if the Century City station is to be located at the preferred location of Constellation Blvd. & Avenue of the Stars.

I won't recap the testimony here, except to call out the president of the Beverly Hills Board of Education for claiming that "Metro's tunneling underneath 3rd Street 25 years ago resulted in a methane gas explosion". Apparently one can be in charge of public education without having the intelligence to properly research the facts before opening one's mouth: Metro has never tunneled under 3rd Street and the explosion in question is the well-known one which happened during digging for the foundation of a Ross Dress For Less store, which subsequently caused Congressman Henry Waxman to effectively ban tunneling in the area until convinced otherwise by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa a couple of years back.

Even Director Zev Yaroslavsky's motion directing staff to analyze the possibility of moving the tunnel to avoid impacting Beverly Hills High didn't placate anyone, nor did the "revelation" that the subway currently operates underneath several miles' worth of businesses and residences with no adverse surface vibrations. The phrase "don't confuse us with the facts" comes to mind ...

Missing from the Locally Preferred Alternative in the draft EIR are Wilshire/Crenshaw Station and the West Hollywood branch. Included, though, is going as far west as the Veterans Administration hospital on the Santa Monica side of the 405.

And Then There's The Blue-Gold-Expo

Line Interface: Also approved, after the same multiple public hearings, was the draft EIR for the Regional Connector. This time, the public comment came from the Little Tokyo community, who wanted a number of concessions that they would have gotten anyway, and from those who wanted the now-deleted 5th/Flower station to be kept in the EIR, even though it's going to be hard enough to get the project funded even without that station (it already has a projected \$200 million project deficit due to the undergrounding of the 2nd/Broadway station). Staff has proposed that additional portals to 7th St./Metro Center be created to serve the area around the deleted station, but that didn't stop Chairman Don Knabe from putting forward a motion to keep it in the EIR for further study (which failed when staff pointed out that this would create an inconsistency with the federal funding application).

(Continued on Page 8)

Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

I file this under the heading "The ungrateful shall inherit the earth": the Pasadena Star-News reported that Metro will issue bonds to fund Phase 2A of the Gold Line Foothill extension (to Azusa) saving the Authority from attempting to entice private firms to go for a design-build-finance approach which frankly some of us had doubts would be pulled off. I understand the project has substantial regional benefit as it will facilitate the Gold Line finally having a decent maintenance yard. But since so many Foothill extension supporters were vehement Measure R opponents, often using exaggerated/inaccurate claims justifying their stance it slays me they are now among the first beneficiaries of R. Yesh. (source: "Metro to sell bonds, front funds for Foothill Extension Phase 2A" Star-News November 1st)

In Ken Ruben's monthly report to me of his activism for the month of August, he mentioned Eugene K. Skoropowski speaking about the LOSSAN corridor (the coastal route the Surfliner runs along) at a meeting. Somehow the import of this escaped me until weeks later. Skoropowski until recently oversaw the Capital corridor Amtrak California intercity line and by all accounts did a brilliant job of improving service and boosting ridership. Turns out he is now Associate Vice President and Director of Rail and Transit Services for the engineering firm HNTB and on behalf of it is now acting as Project Manager for the corridor. And he is already out and about (for example at the October 6th Santa Barbara Association of Governments South Coast Subregional Planning Committee meeting) speaking regarding the scope of work for LOSSAN's corridor-wide Strategic Implementation Plan. WOW!

I had been hearing mumblings that there were some upheavals in the works at Antelope Valley Transit Authority, and how! Amid allegations involving mis-use of credit cards, being

reimbursed twice (in cash and check) for per diems and other financial/travel spending irregularities AVTA Executive Director Randy Floyd and two other top officials resigned in late October. DOUBLE WOW!

Kudos to Foothill Chief Executive Doran Barnes for being elected chair of the Access Services Board (his second go-round in that position) and also American Public Transit Association vice chair—human resources.

I'll conclude with some memories of state legislator Jenny Oropeza of Long Beach who recently died after a long brave battle against cancer. Before going to Sacramento she was a Long Beach city council member and in that role back in 1998 was on the Metro Board. At a Board meeting she followed up on a complaint made during public comment about the information line being discontinued on Sunday. She requested Metro staff prepare a report on how much it would cost to have the line open seven days a week. It quickly became apparent that Metro staff was dragging their feet in hopes of being able to avoid dealing with the issue. Bless Oropeza, she persisted in her inquiries until the agency finally capitulated and restored Sunday information service. Oropeza cared about people and tried to make things better. Her passing is a true loss for us all. 🚌 🚌



LADOT Line 142 transfer acceptance testing

For the past 2 years and nine months we have received reports via Director J.K. Drummond of bus operators on Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) Commuter Express Line 142 refusing to honor machine printed Metro Interagency transfers from the Blue Line. Notices stating this as policy have been posted on some vehicles used on the 142. Drummond notes "It has been on-again, off-again with new bogus notices appearing early this year. At no time did I allow them to refuse me a ride, make me pay, nor allow someone else to pay for me. This is advocacy!" As part of our campaign to find out how to fix this situation we decided to engage in an informal ride test.

Ken Ruben and Dana Gabbard participated in the test held on Friday, September 24th, meeting up at 4:45 p.m. at 1st Street and Long Beach Boulevard in downtown Long Beach. This is a temporary stop due to the reconstruction of the transit mall which is slated to be completed in the Spring of 2011. While waiting they observed Metro Lines 232 and 577X plus Torrance Line 3 serve the stop.

At 5:09 p.m. a late Line 142 showed up, Gillig 87004 and a rather large group clustered and boarded the bus (was the previous run a miss out?). In hopes that some late comers would show up and join the trip it was decided to wait for the next bus. The next bus arrived at 5:33 p.m., Gillig 87023, and it departed with eight passengers along with Ken and Dana. They presented the transfers printed by the Blue Line station ticket machines which the operator accepted without any problem. Once on board the bus they saw lamented sheets on a pole behind the driver illustrating all the fare media that is accepted by LADOT. These sheets ap-

peared on the buses that week.

The trip was short and uneventful and when it arrived at 7th and Gaffey the pair met up with J.K. Drummond. Drummond suggested going to McDonald's instead of Bonnello's Pizza which would be uncomfortably warm due to the lack of air conditioning. Ruben countered with the nearby Jack in the Box and all three agreed to. Interestingly the door of the restaurant indicated both the drive thru and the dining area were open 24 hours. For the next 90 minutes the three engaged in a light dinner-gabfest session on various topics.

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Gabbard and Ruben returned on Metro Line 550 together. At Venice and Crenshaw Ruben got off to catch a Metro Line 33 while Gabbard continued on to Wilshire and San Vicente to catch the Metro Line 20.

My thanks to Ruben and Drummond for suggestions that improved this trip report. 🚌 🚗



Metro Board Report Continued

Seeing that private developer interests seem to be driving the demand to keep the station, Director Yaroslavsky asked a key question: Will the private sector pay for a study to evaluate keeping the station? A better question: Would the private sector be willing to pay the cost of constructing the station itself?

The Bell/Maywood Scandal Touches

Metro: It was revealed that the scandal-plagued cities of Bell and Maywood may not survive the required audits of their use of Measure R funding, which resulted in CEO Art Leahy being directed to impound not only those cities' share of Measure R local return funds, but also those of Propositions A and C, until there are assurances those cities will spend them on transportation.

Bye, Bye, 1-800-COMMUTE: Caltrans will be suspending the familiar number at the

end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2011) which has reportedly outlived its usefulness with the implementation of 511. Metro has established a new number, 323-GO-METRO, as the local replacement to reach the customer call center; the new number, being in the Hollywood exchange, is apparently a local (non-toll) call from most of Metro's service area. And 511 is toll-free ... if only anyone would use it.

Quote Of The Month: Director Richard Katz, during discussion of the subway draft EIR and the Beverly Hills opposition: "Why is it okay for an oil well to be on the Beverly Hills High campus, but not a subway underneath it?"

Good question, Richard. Let me know if you ever get a non-rhetorical answer from them. 🚌 🚌



Photo of the month

This is the new Oceanside Transit Store that was reported in September 2010 issue of our newsletter. This was originally the Greyhound Ticket office and now it is a combined NCTD and Greyhound sales location.

*This photo was taken on November 5, 2010.
-Andrew Novak Photo*



Torrance Transit Trip By Dana Gabbard

Continuing with our Torrance Transit Trip.

One passenger got off at Amie followed by three off at the Madrona turn. We arrived at Del Amo mall at 10:50 a.m. (10 minutes behind schedule). We had a long walk to the Line 3 stop, at least the Torrance Transit bus stop sign included a note "Line 3 only stop" so we knew it was the right stop. There were two benches clustered near the sign but no shelters or shade. Soon a Torrance Transit road mechanic pulled up in a van near the stop (parking lot side) that Paul turned out to know. The mechanic had brought hydraulic fluid to fix a leak in the bus we were waiting for. By now that bus was already 15 minutes late. After a hasty conference we decided to drop the ride on the Line 3 from Del Amo to and from the Pier and decided to have our lunch break early and continue with the itinerary at 1 p.m.

Ken, Carlos and Paul decamped to nearby eateries while Dana and Kymberleigh shared a sack lunch while seated on the benches at the stop. During the break several people took advantage of a bathroom in the adjacent Macy's. Around 12:50 p.m. we boarded Line 3 (bus #489) at the mall and Dave Snowden suddenly turned up and joined us on this short hop. At Madrona Dana, Kymberleigh and Ken deboarded while Carlos, Paul and Dave stayed on the bus with their own errands to run.

We crossed the street to our stop for the next route we were riding which was Line 9. While waiting a Line 2 bus was spotted with headsign announcing "Congratulations to World Champion Lakers!"

At 1 p.m. our bus arrived, #424 a low floor. One passenger (with bike) boarded with us. Six more got on at Del Amo Circle East. Soon we passed the amusingly named stand "Y" Not Burgers, followed by a Ken Cranes with a "Going Out of Business" banner above its front

entrance and then we passed Torrance Memorial Hospital. One got off before the turn at Crenshaw and the guy with the bike got off at Lomita. We passed a streetlight pole that had a banner on it proclaiming "Lomita-the Friendly City".

Then we went by a mobile home park. At Walnut St. the operator noted someone was at the stop but hadn't noticed the bus was approaching; the operator waited until the patron realized what had happened and came to the curb and boarded. At Western five got off. We continued, passing another area composed of blocks of apartment complexes. Nearing the end of the line the bus emptied out until we got off at PCH/Vermont at 1:30 p.m.

Crossing PCH we soon caught Metro Line 232, bus #11009 a low floor Orion with 11 passengers. This is an odd bus with a rear seat they only takes up half of the back wall plus a seat facing backward, similar to buses we have seen operated by Santa Barbara MTD and OCTA during past SO.CA.TA study tours and our 2002 PCH study tour. Three got off at the stop for the PCH/Harbor Freeway Station (at Figueroa).

Continuing we passed a catering truck with a sign "Find us on Facebook". There was steady on/off activity as we made our way through Wilmington, including eight boarding at Avalon. At one bus stop we saw a Metro bus service notice paper hat askew atop a bus stop pole that had no sign. One got on at Santa Fe followed by two off at Magnolia. Next we passed a Cisco Burger stand with a banner proclaiming "Sorry, we're open". One got off at Chestnut then ten deboarded when we made our turn onto Long Beach Bl. Continuing we spotted a bus stop that still had the OCTA Night Owl decal (at Anaheim and Long Beach Bl.).

(Continued on Page 10)

Torrance Trip Continued

OCTA hasn't run buses into downtown Long Beach after midnight since March 8, 2009 due to the ongoing budget crisis afflicting transit agencies all over the state. Subsequently I reported the anomaly to member Mark Strickert whose day job is in the stops and zones department of OCTA. He investigated and e-mailed me the results: "I looked for that stray OCTA "Night Owl" logo at Long Beach & Anaheim, and found them on every Long Beach Transit multi-agency bus stop I passed that was served by Metro Line 60 (Long Beach Blvd. between 7th Street and Hill Street both directions). My counterpart at Long Beach is having them all removed today [Sept. 21st]." Continuing down Long Beach Boulevard one got off at 10th Street, two off at 5th and another two off at 3rd.

At 2:17 p.m. we reached the Long Beach Transit Mall. Like many bus drivers this one seemingly had an allergy to curbs and it was a yawning gap we faced between the exit door and the sidewalk.

While waiting for our next bus we began discussing whether it is time to re-think our approach to the study tours, having them more focused on corridors and specific concerns. We also noticed the new Long Beach Transit buses have a display on the back panel that shows the route number and direction of the bus.

At 2:31 p.m. we boarded Torrance line 3 #308 with five passengers. Eight boarded at Pacific Ave., with two more coming aboard at 7th Street then another three at Anaheim. Two got off and nine got on at PCH. Then six got on at Magnolia. Two got off at Oregon Ave. At Santa Fe one got off and five got on. Continuing through the harbor area we witnessed first hand the goods movement aspect of the facility with huge loading yards filled with railcar containers waiting to be loaded with cargo and to begin journeying to the far reaches of the

country. Four got off at Blinn while one got off and one got on at Watson.

We passed another community fundraising car wash, followed by another cemetery. The due to an auto accident we went on a detour around Banning Park. Six got off at Wilmington Bl., then two more at Q. Then one got on and two off at 232rd followed by one off at 228th. Now we were passing Carson High School. We had one person board at 220th/Avalon and another person join us at Carson City Hall. Continuing we passed Carson Elementary School. One got off at Main Street. We passed another mobile home park. Two got off at Vermont. Then two boarded/two deboarded at Normandie. At Western someone who had a bike boarded. Also we spotted the aftermath of a collision where a car had hit a motorcycle. We passed Torrance High School and passed continued through classic suburbia. At Crenshaw six got off, including the guy with the bike and several skateboarders. Finally at 3:27 p.m. we arrived at Carson and Madrona.

This is around the corner (and a fair schlep) from the Del Amo Mall. We again pondered why the various stops are so widely separated at the Mall, which seems a huge disconnection and passenger inconvenience to transfer between lines.

Ken Ruben took Route 1, continuing on the Green Line and the westside. Kymberleigh and I caught Route 2 at 4 p.m., #300. The bus had a light load with minimal on and offs (except at South Bay Galleria where 14 boarded, including one wheelchair with a dog) before we got on the Harbor Freeway and then on to downtown Los Angeles arriving at 5:15 p.m. From there we separated and made our ways home. My thanks to Kymberleigh Richards for suggestions for this trip report and Mark Strickert for his follow-up on the OCTA owl signs in Long Beach. 🚌 🚌

Before we go...



The Los Angeles Business Council (LABC) will hold their 9th annual Mayoral Sustainable Housing and Transportation Summit on November 17 from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the UCLA Anderson School of Business' Korn Convocation Hall.

This year's Summit will include a comprehensive discussion addressing the relationship between housing, transportation and jobs as sustainable developments. As such, there will be a focus on transit oriented development, as well as better connectivity between affordable housing and well-paid jobs.

Invited speakers include Metro CEO Art Leahy, and Metro Board members Richard Katz and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. SO.CA.TA. is pleased to again be a cooperating organization this year.

For those members who would like to attend, registration information is available at the LABC website: <http://labusinesscouncil.org/programs.php>

Proposition 22, the Local Taxpayer, Public Safety and Transportation Protection Act of 2010, was approved by voters on November 2nd by a margin of about 20%. The measure supports previous decisions by California voters to restrict state raids of local government funds, as well as to dedicate gasoline taxes to transportation and public transit improvements and services. Despite the voter mandate, State politicians exploited loopholes in the law and used legally questionable tactics to borrow and raid approximately \$5 billion in local government, transit and redevelopment funds in the 2009/10 budget cycle and billions more in past years.

"With Prop. 22, the loopholes allowing Sacramento to steal our gas tax funding are closed once and for all," said Josh Shaw, Executive Director of California Transit Association and Co-Chair of the Yes on 22 Campaign.

SO.CA.TA. was involved in the signature gathering process to qualify Prop 22 for the ballot.



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 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.

Opinions: Unless clearly marked as "Editorial" or "Position Paper", all written material within, including all inserted flyers and postcards, are the expressed opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates.

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NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Nov 13th** and **Dec 11th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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