

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates
December 2010

Vol. 18, No. 12

ISSN 1525-2892



Inside This Issue:

- Bulletin Board (pg. 2)
- Members in Action (pg. 2)
- Transit Updates (pg. 3)
- Metro Service Changes (pg. 4)
- Get to know Local Transit (pg. 5)
- Public/Legislative Affairs (pg. 6)
- Big Blue Bus wins award (pg. 7)
- Photos of the month (pg. 11)

Coaster Train 648 arrives at the San Diego Station on November 5, 2010.

— Andrew Novak Photo



Find us on
Facebook

Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Our thanks to Conan Cheung of Metro for an informative discussion at our November 13th meeting on concepts shaping service changes at the agency in the next year and a half. For those who missed it Dana Gabbard did a write up on Cheung's remarks ("Metro's Conan Cheung Updates on Next 18 Months of Service Planning") for L.A. Streetsblog: <http://la.streetsblog.org>

The December 11th meeting has been cancelled. We will still hold our annual Holiday Banquet on that date, beginning at 4 p.m. at Wood Grill Buffet in Norwalk (12241 E. Imperial Hwy). Good food and camaraderie are on the menu plus the usual transit trinkets and as door prize an Amtrak teddy bear!

The results of the election for 2011 Officers and Directors:

President - Nate Zablen
Vice-President - Kent Landfield
Recording Secretary - Dana Gabbard
Treasurer - Edmund Buckley
Directors - Ken Ruben, Dave Snowden, J.K. Drummond

A Metro representative will be our January 8, 2011 meeting speaker, giving a status report on TAP. The February 12, 2011 speaker will be a representative of OCTA making a presentation on their comprehensive transit plan.

Henceforth all updates for the calendar should be sent to dgabbard@hotmail.com

Co-founder Steve Crosmer reminds members: Don't drink and drive New Year's -- take a bus or a train.

Website Status:

We are currently experiencing some problems with our website. We hope to get these issues resolved soon. We apologize for the inconvenience and ask for your patience in this matter.

Members in Action:

Participating in the day after Thanksgiving trip were Armando Avalos (who was also the trip planner), Lionel Jones, Carlos Osuna, Kymberleigh Richards and Ken Ruben.

Riding the special trip (from L.A. Union Station to Moorpark and back) held December 6th introducing to the public Metrolink's Crash Energy Management Cars were Ken Ruben, Jerry Martin and Bart Reed. During a press event in Glendale on the return Erik Griswold boarded with other members of the public to tour the train.

Ruben attended the Exposition Authority presentation at the Culver City Senior Citizens Center on November 18th and he attended the San Gabriel and Westside Governance Council meetings on November 8th and 10th respectively. 🚗 🚗

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

Transit Updates

Amtrak California

Amtrak California recently unveiled their new website. Passengers can book passage on Amtrak California train and also check on train stats. To view the new site click on: <http://www.amtrakcalifornia.com/>

On November 8th Amtrak discontinued the following Thruway Bus Stops, Lebec, Baker, Beaumont, Rosamond, Thousand Palms, and the Van Nuys FlyAway stop due to low ridership. The buses that previously stopped at Van Nuys FlyAway stop will now stop at the Burbank Airport Amtrak Station.

Daily Service to Las Vegas

In November Silver State Trailways began daily bus service between Los Angeles, Orange County and Las Vegas. The service leaves southern California and Las Vegas in the morning. Fare for the service is \$40 one-way and \$70 round trip. For more information on pick-up locations or to make a reservation contact Silver State Trailways at: 800 812-7979 or visit them on the web at: <http://www.silverstatetrailways.com/dailyscheduleservices.html>



Gold Coast Transit

On December 1st, GCT announced the installation of newly designed, easy-to-use, way-finding information panels at 275 bus stops strategically placed along highly traveled streets or "Transit Corridors" within Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme and Ojai. The new panels feature color-coded bus route diagrams and corresponding schedule information. The panels also display cumulative travel times for each route, showing passengers how much time they will spend on the bus.

(At left is a sample of the new and improved bus stop signs being placed in service by Gold Coast Transit. Information and graphic courtesy of GCT.)



Santa Clarita Transit

On January 1, 2011, school tripper Route 641 serving Saugus High School will be discontinued.

For more information,



please contact (661) 294-1287

OCTA Long Range Plan

OCTA has recently released the 2010 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for public review and is asking county stakeholders for feedback. See the project website at: http://www.octa.net/lrtp_overview.aspx

(Continued on Page 8)

Metro Service Changes for December 2010

Metro will be making the following service changes on December 12, 2010.

Line 42 will now operate as a branch of Line 40. Line 42A via La Cienega Blvd. will only operate evenings and nights.

Line 71 will no longer serve the outpatient clinic behind County-USC Medical Center. Service will operate direct via Marengo Ave.

Line 121 will now operate interlined with Line 120.

Line 165 will operate direct via Empire Ave. in the vicinity of Bob Hope Airport (the deviation via Hollywood Way-Thornton Ave.-Ontario St. will be eliminated). This reroute was done to accommodate the wider turning ratio of the new compo buses.

Line 168 will be canceled. Parallel service operates within a half-mile on Lines 158 and 167 (west end of line) and on Lines 233, 761 and 902 (east end of line).

Line 177 will operate weekday peak-hours only until March 2011 to give staff time to develop a plan to transfer service to another agency. Midday service will be discontinued.

Line 202 shortline trips (those not traveling south of Del Amo Station) will be eliminated, reducing service level to hourly on northern part of line. The interlined Line 55-202 owl service is unchanged.

Line 206's turnaround loop in Hollywood will be realigned. Southbound passengers will need to board at the layover zone on Vermont Ave. at Sunset Blvd. (facing north) or on Hollywood Blvd. at New Hampshire Ave. (facing west).

Line 214 will be canceled. Parallel service

operates within a half-mile on Lines 45 and 52/352 and on Torrance Route 1.

Line 220 will continue to operate weekdays only (Saturday service discontinued). Further action will be considered as part of the Expo Line bus-rail interface.

Line 256's turnaround loop in Altadena will be realigned. Service will now operate direct via Washington Blvd. and Lake Ave. to the layover at Lake Ave. & Mendocino St. (service north of Washington Blvd. on Hill Ave., Holliston Ave. and Mendocino St. will be canceled).

Line 287 will be canceled west of Montebello Towne Center. Parallel service to both branches (First St. and Floral St.) operates within a quarter-mile on Lines 68 and 770. Service between Montebello Towne Center and East Los Angeles College will be replaced by an extension of selected Line 68 trips.

Line 312 will now operate only northbound in morning peak hours, southbound in afternoon peak hours; reverse-direction limited-stop service and midday service will be canceled. Shortline Line 212 trips (terminating at Hollywood/Highland Station) will be scheduled to replace the canceled Line 312 trips.

Line 439 will operate only weekday peak-hour service between downtown Los Angeles and Fox Hills Mall (all other times of day discontinued, service south of Fox Hills Mall canceled). The line is proposed to be replaced with an extension of Line 217 to La Cienega Station when the Expo Line begins operation. Replacement service between Washington/Fairfax Transit Hub and downtown Los Angeles is available on Lines 35 and 37; replacement service south of Fox Hills Mall is available on Culver City Line 6 and Rapid 6.

(Continued on Page 9)

Getting to know Local Transit by Andrew Novak

This month we have a new section of the newsletter called "Getting to know Local Transit." In this semi-regular feature we will profile some of the smaller, lesser known transit agencies in southern California. If you know of an agency you would like to see profiled here, please contact the editor with your ideas.

City of South Gate "The GATE"

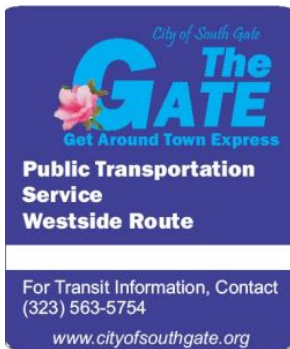
The GATE or Get Around Town Express began operating in the City of South Gate in May 2010. This new bus service operated by the City is designed to serve the West side of South Gate and assist residents in reaching important local destinations as well as connecting with several Metro Bus Lines and the South Gate Park.

The service operates every 20 minutes between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday and between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. At this time there is no service on Sunday. The fare is 50¢ per ride.

The City of South Gate received a federal grant to purchase two 22 passenger buses that operate on Compressed Natural Gas. The rest of the service is paid for by Los Angeles County Proposition A money.

For more information on The GATE you can call the city transportation office at (323) 563-5754 or by visiting the transportation office at 9520 Hildreth Avenue in the South Gate Park.

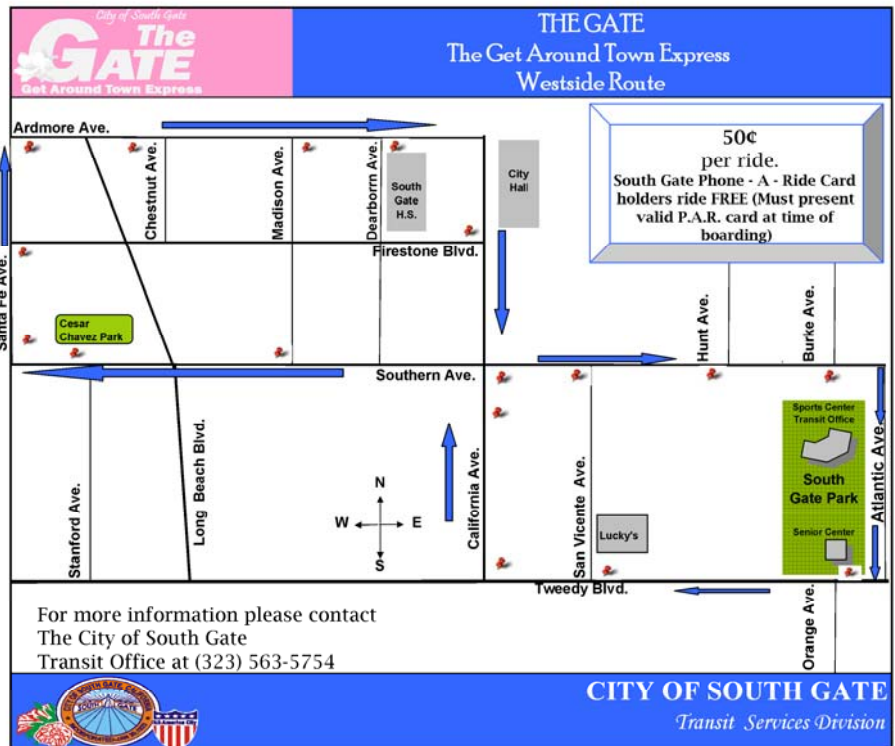
A map and stop list can be downloaded on the City of South Gate website at: www.cityofsouthgate.org



Above is a sample of a GATE bus stop sign located around the city.

At right is the map of The GATE route.

(Both from the City of South Gate.)



DCist reports in a November 5th post, "John Catoe: He's Back...Kind Of" the former Metro Deputy CEO John Catoe has returned to California and started the Catoe Group, a transit consulting firm:

<http://catoetransitgroup.com/>

The latest news from Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) is that Julie Austin, former executive director of Foothill Transit and more recently director of policy and strategic planning for the North County Transit District, has been hired to serve for six months as interim CEO while a job search for a new CEO gets underway. AVTA Board members are quoted in local media as promising to provide more oversight of agency management in the wake of a scandal involving financial/travel spending irregularities that drove AVTA Executive Director Randy Floyd and two other top officials to resign.

Is the westside turning into a hotbed of NIM-BYism? Last month hysteria swept Beverly Hills over the possibility of the Purple Line extension passing underneath a few homes and a high school. Now residents of the "condo canyon" stretch of Wilshire (between the L.A. Country Club and Westwood) are agitating to have their section of the Boulevard excluded from the long delayed peak hour bus lane project. Sadly L.A. County Supervisor (and Metro Board member) Zev Yaroslavsky who represents the area is pandering to this nonsense. As I noted last June in "Wilshire Bus-Only Lanes Move [to] the Environmental Review Stage" (a L.A. Streetsblog commentary): "The project matters for practical and symbolic reasons. Having dedicated bus lanes will allow service to be faster and more reliable. And by dedicating lanes

during peak hours exclusively to buses along such a prominent street our region will send the message that transit as a priority is no longer getting only lip service." 🚌 🚌

In memory of Harold L. Katz 1933-2010

On November 22, 2010, Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Harold L. Katz passed away. Aside from being a profession CPA, Katz was also a community advocate and below is a list of some of his accomplishments:

He was a founding member of the Century City Chamber of Commerce and its president for 1972 and 1973

Director of the Los Angeles Business Council - Chairman of Transportation and Planning

Chairman of the Los Angeles Citizens Advisory Redevelopment Project Committee

Director and founder of the Skid Row Development Corporation, a non-profit corporation

Director and former Vice President of the Variety Club Children's Charities; Co-Chairman of five Telethons and Pre-Telethon Dinners

Named Century City Man of the Year in 1972 and 2007

Starbright Pavilion Foundation - Site Selection Committee

Member of the Advisory Board to the Community Relations Committee of Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles



Big Blue Bus wins award

Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus has won the 2010 Project of the Year award from the Southern California chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) for the agency's maintenance facility expansion which was completed in the fall of 2009. The 66,000 square-foot expansion is seen as an environmentally significant project for the community. "Each year, the APWA recognizes public agencies for their outstanding achievements, and also for the wealth of good ideas they share with others," said George Alvarez, president of the Southern California chapter of the APWA. "The Big Blue Bus facility expansion project has earned this recognition for its demonstrated awareness of the need to protect and enhance the environment, while also contributing positively to the community it serves."

The \$60 million project was financed entirely by public transit funds and was a collaborative effort between the Big Blue Bus and the City of Santa Monica Department of Public Works. The building has 21 bus service bays and has the latest technology for maintaining the various alternative fuel vehicles operated by Big Blue Bus. Two bays in the new facility will be dedicated for repair of Santa Monica Fire Department vehicles, something Big Blue Bus has done for many years. There are also long bays for the servicing of new 60-foot articulated buses that will be arriving at Big Blue Bus in the near future. The building contains a variety of eco-friendly and energy efficient features. There are 600 roof-mounted photovoltaic panels, minimum energy water heaters to help reduce operating costs, and an urban runoff system to filter storm water. The building

was built with a variety of recycled content that included concrete, structural steel, carpeting, gypsum board, finishes and insulation.

A highly visible feature of the facility is the 200-foot long programmable glass art wall situated along the perimeter, which contains special translucent panels that change colors and patterns to simulate movement along the glass skin. The wall helps provide privacy for the expanded bus yard, and also incorporates a bus stop at one end.

The Big Blue Bus maintenance facility is located at 1620 7th Street in Santa Monica. For more information about the Big Blue Bus, visit www.bigbluebus.com. For information about the American Public Works Association, visit www.apwa.net.

Thanks to the City of Santa Monica for providing the information and photos for this story. 🚌 🚌



Above is a photo of the 200-foot Art wall taken by Gary Kruger. Courtesy of Big Blue Bus.

Transit Updates Continued

San Diego MTS

On November 1st, MTS began operation of new Route 830 the Murph Express. This is a new Premium Express bus service from Murphy Canyon military housing to Naval Base San Diego. SANDAG, MTS, and the Navy are collaborating to implement this pilot bus service. If successful, the program could be extended and possibly expanded to other areas. This service is open to the public and can be used by anyone who purchases a Premium Express Pass. If you are not active duty military or a DOD civilian employee, you will need to exit the bus at the stop across from the Pacific Fleet Trolley Station before the bus enters the base.



Google Honors Rosa Parks

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama when the driver requested her to move to the back of the bus. Her actions that day lead to the Montgomery Bus Boycott and is consider a significant symbol of the modern Civil Rights Movement. To honor Parks, Google created the bus graphic below that was used on their home page on December 1st.



Special Holiday Service

Metro (Los Angeles): Rides on buses and rail will be free Christmas Eve, December 24th, from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. December 25th, and New Year's Eve, Dec. 31 from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. January 1st, 2011.

RTA (Riverside): is offering free rides on New Year's eve after 6 p.m. on all fixed route buses.

NCTD (Oceanside): is offering free service New Year's Eve after 6 p.m. on the Sprinter and Coaster

Downey Link is operating special holiday service on Saturday December 4th, 11th and 18th between 7:15 a.m. and 5:45 p.m.

Torrance Transit is operating its free Hawthorne Blvd. Shoppers' Shuttle. The shuttle runs on Saturdays and Sundays only from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with a 45 minute headway. The bus makes 5 stops between the Del Amo Fashion Center and the South Bay Galleria. For more information visit: <http://www.ci.torrance.ca.us/120.htm>

OCTA (Orange County) will be offering free rides on New Year's Eve beginning at 6 p.m. Friday December 31, 2010 until the close of service around 2 a.m. on Saturday January 1, 2011.

Thousand Oaks Transit will not be operating its Holiday Weekend Bus Service due to budget issues. They hope the service will be reinstated next year. 🚍 🚍

Metro Service Changes Continued

Line 607 will now operate as a one-way clockwise loop; counter-clockwise service will be eliminated.

Line 608 will be canceled. Portions of the route are duplicated by Lines 40/740, 42, 102, 105/705, 206, and 209, and by DASH Crenshaw and DASH Leimert Park.

Line 620 will continue to operate hourly service (dropping from a 20-minute headway) for six months and will be reevaluated then.

Line 626 will be canceled. Line 625 will operate selected trips to the Superior Court House.

Rapid Line 711 will be canceled. New limited -stop Line 311 will operate weekday peak-hours, with the east terminal at Norwalk Green Line Station.

Rapid Line 714 will be canceled. Weekday service will be increased on local Line 14.

Rapid Line 715 will be canceled. Weekday service will be increased on local Line 115.

Rapid Line 750 weekend service will be

discontinued. Weekend service will be increased on local Line 150.

Rapid Line 753 will be canceled. Weekday service will be increased on local Line 53.

Rapid Line 762 Saturday service will be discontinued. Saturday service will be increased on local Line 260.

Rapid Line 780 weekend service will be discontinued. Weekend service will be increased on local Line 180.

Line 902 will continue to operate until the June 2011 service changes, at which time it is expected to be replaced as part of a service reconfiguration on Van Nuys Blvd.

Rapid Express Line 920 will be canceled. Weekday peak-hour service will be increased on Rapid Line 720.

The reconfiguration of Line 167 and Rapid Line 741 to the new Cal State Northridge transit center, originally approved for the December 2010 service changes, has been put on hold until September 2011 due to delays in construction. 🚌 🚌

(Both photos below by Josh Thurman)



Big Blue Bus Photos



The exterior of the new Big Blue Bus maintenance facility. (Photo by Lawrence Anderson, courtesy of Big Blue Bus.)

Big Blue Bus NABI 4028 is on a lift inside the new facility. (Photo by Gary Kruger, courtesy of Big Blue Bus.)



Photos of the Month

San Diego Trolley Siemens U2 car 1054 leads a Blue Line train at the Santa Fe Depot on November 5, 2010. The classic U2 cars will soon be retired from service as MTS takes delivery of new low-floor LRVs. Several of the U2s will be going to South America after retirement for continued service.

(Andrew Novak Photo)



The New York City MTA will once again be operating historic buses at special times during the holiday season. The buses are scheduled to run during the week only and are scheduled to be on the following Lines: B1, B65, S61, Q46, Q13, M34, M42, BX7, and the BX30.

The photo of 3758 at left was taken by Joe Caronetti on December 1, 2010.

©j.caronetti photo 12/1/10

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.

Copyright: © 2010 Southern California Transit Advocates. Permission is freely granted to reproduce/reprint ORIGINAL articles from the Transit Advocate, provided credit is given to both the author and the Southern California Transit Advo-

cates. In all other cases, permission must be secured from the copyright holder.

Disclaimer: The Southern California Transit Advocates is not affiliated with any governmental agency or transportation provider. Names and logos of agencies appear for information and reference purposes only.

SO.CA.TA officers, 2010

President:	Lionel Jones
Vice President:	Charles Hobbs
Recording Secretary:	Kymerleigh Richards
Executive Secretary:	Dana Gabbard
Treasurer:	Hank Fung
Directors at Large:	Ken Ruben
	J.K. Drummond
	Nate Zablen

Newsletter Editor:	Andrew Novak
Newsletter Prod. Mgr:	Dana Gabbard
Webmaster:	Charles Hobbs

NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Dec 11th** and **Jan 8th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

December 2010 — Issue 217



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

213-388-2364
<http://www.socata.net>
dgabbard@hotmail.com

44¢
First
Class
Postage

FIRST CLASS MAIL