

# *THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE*

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*VVTA Cutaway 2007 on the new BV Link service on January 19, 2011. — Craig Barnes Photo*



## ***Bulletin Board / Members in Action***

### **Bulletin Board:**

Gordon Robinson of OCTA will be our speaker at the March 12th meeting, making a presentation on their draft Long Range Plan. The meeting begins at 1 PM with the presentation slated to start at 2:15 PM.

The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) has posted tips on its website on how to effectively lobby legislators.

<http://www.narprail.org/lobby>

NARP and the Rail Passenger Association of California are having a joint annual conference (Steel Wheels in California) on March 19th in the Metro Board Room from 9 AM to 5 PM Details at <http://www.railpac.org/steelwheels/> or 415-787-2252.

The Pacific Railroad Museum located at 210 West Bonita Avenue in San Dimas, along Foothill Transit Line 492, has recently undergone several improvements including adding more to the collection. The museum is operated by Pacific Railroad Society (PRS) and is open Wednesday from 1 PM to 5 PM and Saturday from 10 AM to 4 PM and admission is free. Donations gladly accepted. There is still space available on the PRS excursion over Tehachapi on April 2nd and 3rd. For more information on the museum and the excursion visit: [www.pacificrailroadsociety.org](http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org)

**Save the date:** August 16-18, 2011 the Greyhound Bus Museum in Hibbing Minnesota is hosting a "Gathering of Buses", an event featuring modern and vintage buses displayed by bus enthusiasts from all over the U.S. There will also be a flea market, a dinner with presentations and motor coach tours of area attractions. For more information visit: <http://www.greyhoundbusmuseum.org/>

**Save the date:** The Motor Bus Society will be having its Spring 2012 convention in

Los Angeles (April 27-28-29, 2012). The convention will include tours of various bus yards and a mini-convention. Members who have attended past conventions have reported the tours and chance to meet bus fans from all over the U.S. makes it well worth the effort to attend.

New Foothill Transit busbook will be available on board buses and at Transit Stores for two weeks after the effective date, free of charge. Starting April 3rd they will only be available at the Transit Stores for purchase (\$1).



### **Members in Action:**

Transit Advocates of Orange County's recent meeting with OCTA CEO Will Kempton and agency staff to provide input about OCTA projects and services was reported in the February 14th edition of Weekly Update of Orange County Transportation, an OCTA e-newsletter.

Ken Ruben and Nate Zablen attended the February 22nd Transit Coalition meeting featuring Art Leahy, CEO of METRO.

Ruben along with Dana Gabbard, Mark Panitz, Joe Dunn and Jerard Wright attended the METRO all regions Public Hearing on February 1st. Ruben attended hearings held February 9th by the Metro Westside/Central Governance Council and February 14th by the Metro San Gabriel Valley Governance Council, providing testimony on our behalf regarding service change proposals for those areas. Jerry Martin and Ruben attended the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee meeting held on February 16th.

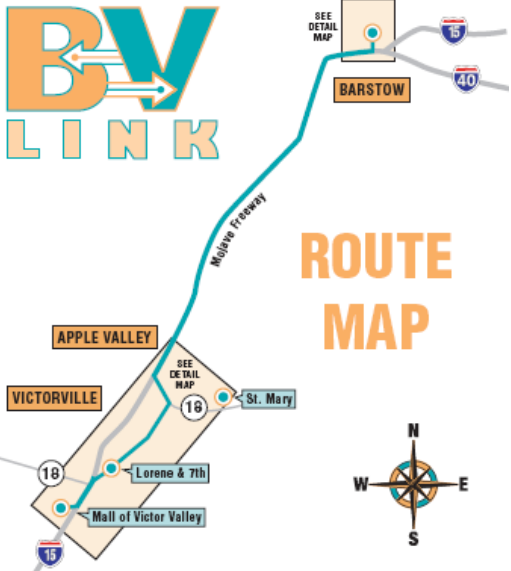
A photo of Big Blue Bus 5300, a NABI 60 foot artic, taken by Russ Jones appeared in the December 2010 issue of Western Transit.

Andrew Novak and Charles Powell were on the 4th Anniversary Norcal Bus Fans excursion in San Francisco on January 22, 2011.  

# Transit Updates

## **BV Link (VVTA)**

On January 19th, the Victor Valley Transit Authority (VVTA) began operation of a new Barstow to Victorville service named the BV Link. The new service operates Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday with three trips in each direction. The BV Link serves a variety of locations including the Mall of Victor Valley, St Mary Medical Center in Apple Valley, The Barstow Transit Center and the Barstow Hospital. Fares for the new service are \$6.00 one-way and \$12 round-trip. For more information visit: [www.vvta.org](http://www.vvta.org) or by calling 760-948-3030



## **AVTA**

Effective February 14th, AVTA made minor changes to the Westwood Stops on Line 786 based on user comments. In the morning, Line 786 still serves UCLA at Gayley and Strathmore, then continues south on Gayley making a left on Le Conte, a right on Westwood and continuing on to Westwood and

Wilshire. In the afternoon, the new bus stop is located on the Southeast (near side) corner of Westwood and Wilshire, the bus continues north on Westwood, making a left on Le Conte, right on Gayley and then service the bus stop on Strathmore (UCLA).

## **Omnitrans**

Effective February 14th, OmniGo routes 308 & 309 were changed between Wildwood Canyon and Avenue H. Route 308, from Bryant Street, the route turns left onto Avenue H and then right onto California Street where it resumes regular routing. A bus stop at the northeast corner of Wildwood Canyon and California has been moved to California Street. Route 309 continues south passed Wildwood Canyon on California Street making a left onto Avenue H and then a right onto Bryant Street. No stops will be impacted on Route 309. These changes were made to improve travel times on both lines.

## **Botanic Garden Tram**

The South Coast Botanic Garden on the Palos Verdes Peninsula is once again offering tram tours of the 87 acre facility. Tram rides are \$4 each and run on Saturdays from 11 AM to 1 PM. For more information visit: <http://www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org/>



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

I was glad to see Metro was rated #7 by U.S. News and World Report in its overview of the 10 Best Cities for Public Transportation in the U.S. Also gratifying is the agency's successful sealing of a deal to purchase L.A. Union Station, the prospect of which I mentioned last month.

BUT (you knew there was a but about to occur, didn't you?) why can't Metro get its act together when it comes to public outreach? The effort for the February block of service change proposal hearings was pitiful, with "additional details" and maps mostly AWOL spurring my complaints in two separate LA Streetsblog commentaries ("Memo to Metro: 'Additional Details' on Bus Cuts AWOL" and "Memo to Metro (the sequel): Service Change Proposal Details Still Lacking"). As I noted at the February 1st "all regions" hearing this is the 21st Century, we are living in the world of The Jetsons not The Flintstones and stone age level outreach is unacceptable.

The proposals themselves also received significant pushback from the public at the hearings and Metro staff are already having to make adjustments before the final presentations to the Governance Councils. In my opinion there were a number of fruit-loop ideas (the 460 truncation is a prime example) that should have been dropped during the internal screening process and never seen the light of day. To my surprise Metro CEO Art Leahy felt compelled to issue what was termed "A message to our customers and taxpayers" defending the proposals. I really think Metro service planning is in need of some serious reflection upon whether they are trodding the wrong road

pursuing service concepts that are structurally flawed.

As I have long predicted the legal effort of the westside NIMBYs (aka Neighbors for Smart Rail) against the Expo light rail project is fizzling, with Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Thomas McKnew dismissing their challenge of the project's environmental review. Yeah, they'll appeal but these folks surely know that has little chance of success; in fact they knew from the get go this suit was a likely loser but they were stuck having to go through the motions after they spent the past decade loudly proclaiming they would stop the project. Despite failing they can save face (sob! sob!) by blaming the judge and what to them are dastardly advocates. All in all it has played out just the way I suspected it would.

Zone redux? Really? From a tipoff I went net searching and found this nugget ("The Top Legislation on VICA's Radar for 2011" San Fernando Valley Business Journal January 17, 2011) in re the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, the business booster group for the San Fernando Valley: VICA's 2011 Legislative Priorities include "Push for the re-instatement of a Metro Valley Transit Zone that would foster a greater connection between Metro and the community it serves in the San Fernando Valley and to improve the quality of service to Metro constituents. This local voice in transportation planning is crucial for the efficient and effective use of resources." Huh? What a bunch of empty double speak!

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## PLAC Continued

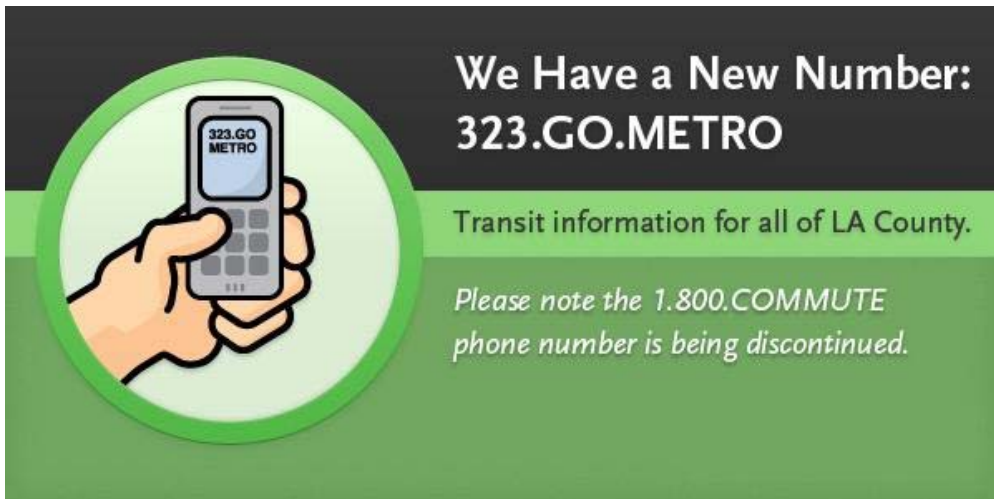
These folks have with few exceptions shown their real motive is grabbing power with improving bus service never anything but a red herring they had little sincere interest in. They had their chance years ago to prove their case, wasting something like \$100,000 of L.A. city funds in pursuit of their zone mania. It never proved out and fizzled when then Metro CEO Roger Snoble called their bluff by creating sectors. Hopefully this empty plank will soon fade away.

Given all the ruckus the Wilshire bus lane proposal has been receiving is it any surprise now I've learned Omnitrans' similar sbX bus lane project is as the San Bernardino Sun reported in its February 2nd article "hitting a snag" with business owners and some local residents? Yesh!

Blogs covering the hysteria of Beverly Hills residents and officials regarding the Purple Line alignment reveals just how out of reality the situation has become. Neon Tommy ("Beverly Hills Residents Fight Westside Subway Extension Stop) reports one local at

a Metro sponsored meeting declaring "I have a 3-year-old son, and his life is at stake". Meanwhile Curbed L.A. ("Awkward! Subway Complicates Beverly Hills Council Meeting") has a council member at a council meeting declaring "... would go so far as to oppose the Metro going through Beverly Hills if they do not take the preferred route that the city agreed to. I would consider an injunction to stop it and they can take Pico for all I care... There are terrorist aspects of this going under the high school right into Century City that I totally disagree with". Words fail me...

I'll conclude by noting Mel Wilson, who at various times served on the Metro Board and the San Fernando Valley Sector Council, has again been appointed to the Metro Board replacing LADOT head Rita Robinson (whose appointment many of us long saw as a placeholder). I remember him as a voice of reason during the years I attended Board meetings, and we could sure use some of that these days! Welcome back, Mr. Wilson!



The advertisement features a dark green background with a light green horizontal band. On the left, a circular graphic shows a hand holding a smartphone with "323.GO.METRO" on the screen. To the right, the text "We Have a New Number: 323.GO.METRO" is displayed in white. Below this, "Transit information for all of LA County." is written in a smaller white font. At the bottom, a note in white italicized text states: "Please note the 1.800.COMMUTE phone number is being discontinued."



## *Photos of the Month*

*Montebello Bus Lines New Flyer 2901 at the Montebello Metrolink Station on February 25, 2011.*

*(Andrew Novak Photo)*



*Santa Monica Big Blue Bus NABI 5303 while visiting VTA in San Jose on February 16, 2011.*

*-Don Lewis Photo*

**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](mailto: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 PM Pacific time, unless otherwise announced.

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Newsletter Prod. Mgr:	Dana Gabbard
Webmaster:	Charles Hobbs

NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Mar 12<sup>th</sup>** and **Apr 9<sup>th</sup>** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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