

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates
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RTC Wright Streetcar 027 travels along a bus only lane in downtown Las Vegas on March 5, 2011
— Andrew Novak Photo



Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Due to a last minute bit of mis-communication, the presentation by Gordon Robinson of the Orange County Transit Authority on its Transit System Study has been rescheduled for our April 9th meeting.

Metro has activated the nextbus GPS-based arrival time system for bus riders waiting at stops. It is available via handheld electronic devices at:

<http://www.nextbus.com/predictor/stopSelector.jsp?a=lametro>

Metrolink CEO John Fenton has a bi-weekly e-newsletter, Making Headway, that you can subscribe to via a form on the agency website:

<http://metrolinktrains.com/e-newsletter/>

Fenton also has an e-mail address that comments and concerns can be submitted to: johnfenton@scrra.net

Thursday May 12, 2011 at 7:00 PM the Glendale Historical Society is sponsoring a free program with historian Paul Ayers: Ride the Red Cars to Glendale, a slideshow on the history of P.E. service in Glendale. It will be held at the Central Library Auditorium, 222 East Harvard Street in Glendale. Further information: 818-548-2042.

Members in Action:

Ken Ruben, Dana Gabbard, Bart Reed, Jerry Martin, Nick Matonak and Nate Zablen attended the RailPAC/NARP Steel Wheels in California Annual Join Conference held at the Metro building on March 19th. At the meeting Chris Flescher was re-elected as a Director and Ken Ruben as an Associate Director. Jerry Martin is now an Associate Director.

Martin, Ruben and Reed attended the LOS-SAN Meeting in the Metro building on March 30th.

Ruben attended the Westside/Central Metro Governance Council meeting on March 9th and again presented SOCATA's positions on proposed Metro service changes.

Ruben and Joe Dunn made comments at the Westside Subway extension meeting held on March 21st.

John Ulloth's letter on Metrolink appeared in the March 18th issue of the Daily News.

Thomas Rubin contributed to a recent Financial Plan Assessment of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project prepared for the Hawaii Department of Transportation.

Andrew Novak had a photo in the February 2011 issue of Western Transit.

Alek Friedman was quoted in the March 31st Beverly Hills Weekly article "Beverly Hills subway route discussed at Metro meeting."



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

Dodger Stadium Express

Once again Metro is providing express bus service to and from Dodger home games during the 2011 season. Buses will depart Gateway Plaza at Bay 3, 90 minutes before the game starts. The service will run every 10 minutes through the 3rd inning. A limited amount of service will operate throughout the game and return service continues for 45 minutes after the final out. Regular Metro fares apply and same day Dodger game tickets are valid. Southland Transit is once again operating this service for Metro.



Metrolink late night service

In conjunction with Metro's Dodger Express service, Metrolink is offering 11 PM departures from Union Station to Ventura, Lancaster, and San Bernardino for weekday home games.

Metrolink Angels Express Trains

Effective April 8th, Metrolink will begin operating special trains to Angel Stadium for 7:05 PM home games. There is a special \$7 round trip (\$6 senior/disabled) fare for the Angel Express Trains.

Schedule for special Trains:

Train 6502: Union Station to Anaheim
Departs LA - 5:50 PM
Departs Norwalk - 6:11 PM
Departs Buena Park - 6:17 PM
Departs Fullerton - 6:24 PM
Arrives Anaheim - 6:33 PM

Train 6501: Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo to Anaheim

Departs Laguna Niguel - 5:50 PM

Departs Irvine - 5:59 PM

Departs Tustin - 6:07 PM

Departs Santa Ana - 6:13 PM

Departs Orange - 6:18 PM

Arrives Anaheim - 6:22 PM

Train 6503 to Union Station and Train 6500 to Oceanside will depart 30 minutes after the game ends.

Tickets for the Angels Express trains can be purchased at:

- www.octa.net/angelsexpress

- By calling 714-560-5932

- At Metrolink Ticket Machines under the "Special Ticket Option"

- By visiting the OCTA Store at:

550 South Main Street Orange, CA 92868

New Metrolink Express Trains

Effective May 9th, Metrolink will begin operation of new weekday express trains on the Antelope Valley and San Bernardino Lines.

Antelope Valley Express Trains

Train 282

Departs Palmdale - 5:32 AM

Departs Santa Clarita - 6:18 AM

Departs Downtown Burbank - 6:45 AM

Arrives Union Station - 7:00 AM

Train 285

Departs Union Station - 5:25 PM

Departs Downtown Burbank - 5:39 PM

Departs Santa Clarita - 6:06 PM

Arrives Palmdale - 6:53 PM

Trains 282 and 285 only stop at the above mentioned stations.

(Continued on Page 4)

Transit Updates Continued

Metrolink Express Trains continued

San Bernardino Express Trains

Train 383

Departs San Bernardino - 5:45 AM

Departs Rancho Cucamonga - 5:58 AM

Departs Covina - 6:19 AM

Arrives Union Station - 6:45 AM

Train 384

Departs Union Station - 5:15 PM

Departs Covina - 5:44 PM

Departs Rancho Cucamonga - 6:04 PM

Arrives San Bernardino - 6:20 PM

Trains 383 and 384 only stop at the above mentioned stations.

Metrolink Station News

Fullerton Station: On March 15th a ground breaking ceremony took place for a new parking structure west of the Metrolink Station. The new structure will eliminate parking congestion at station.



Norwalk Santa Fe Springs: Monthly parking fees at the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs station were raised on March 18th. The parking lot on the Santa Fe Springs side of the station has also been expanded. The new parking rates are below.

Monthly Permit (Residents): \$25.00

Monthly Permit (Non-residents): \$35.00

Single Day Permits: \$10.00

For more information on the parking fees at the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs station visit:

www.ntsfspringparking.com

Norwalk Transit

Norwalk Transit has proposed several system changes that may take effect on May 1st if approved by the city council. Below is a summary of the changes that may occur.

Route 3*: Service between Pioneer Boulevard and the Whittier Depot will be eliminated mid-days from Monday thru Friday and on weekends.

Route 5: Evening service from 7:40 PM to 9:26 PM will be eliminated.

Route 7: Mid-day service will be eliminated.

Route 8: Service to the Norwalk Metrolink station will be eliminated.

*The service change on Route 3 will be made on a 180-day trial basis. If Norwalk Transit determines this reduction should become permanent, a public hearing will occur in Fall of 2011. For more information contact Norwalk Transit at (562) 929-5550 or via e-mail: transit@ci.norwalk.ca.



(Continued on Page 5)

Transit Updates Continued

Palos Verdes Transit

PV Transit will be operating summer school service to Ridgecrest and Palos Verdes Intermediate Schools between June 20th and July 15th.

Service to Palos Verdes High School will be operated between June 15th and July 27th. Service will be operated on the White, Blue, Silver, Green, and Orange Routes.

No service will be operated on the Gold and Green Western Routes.

New schedules and pass information will be available in April.

Thousand Oaks Transit

Effective April 1st, Thousand Oaks Transit made several changes to their dial-a-ride service. Below are a summary of those changes.

Dial-a-Ride and ADA service hours were Expanded. The new hours are from 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM Monday - Friday and from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM on weekends. The reservation staff will be available 30 minute before to 30 minutes after the scheduled hours.

The Dial-a-Ride service area has been expanded to include the unincorporated areas of Newbury Park, Lynn Ranch, Rolling Oaks, Hidden Valley, and Lake Sherwood. Residents can now travel outside the city limits to these areas at no additional charge. Residents living in these unincorporated areas will now have their service provided by Thousand Oaks Transit.

Dial-a-Ride and ADA reservations policies have been modified in an effort to promote more advanced reservations. On Demand and Same Day reservations are still avail-

able but restrictions will be placed on the number and time of day these reservations can be made.

Thousand Oaks Transit has adopted a new No Show and Late Cancellation Policy for Dial-a-Ride and ADA. Riders who have patterns of canceling reservations with little or no notice or who are not ready when their ride arrives may have their reservation or riding privileges curtailed.

Torrance Transit

Torrance Transit is the one of the most recent agency's to join Google Transit by including bus stop and schedule information to the website.

Expo Line Testing

Effective April 4th, Metro has begun a limited amount of testing on the new Expo Line between Los Angeles and Culver City. For more information on construction and light rail testing visit: www.BuildExpo.org



Metro LRV 213 performs clearance tests on the new Expo Line on April 4, 2011.

-Photo by Jose Ubaldo/Metro

In going over Metro's budget assumptions for an L.A. Streetsblog piece ("Metro Budget Planning Document Contains Some Revelations") I was puzzled to see heavy rail (the Red and Purple Lines) is slated to get a 13.1% increase of an additional 33,680 revenue service hours in the upcoming fiscal year. Which makes one wonder what anticipated headway on our heavy rail does this significant increase reflect? These numbers are from the March 17th Metro Board Finance & Budget Committee agenda - item #7 "Budget Planning Parameters and Rationale". BTW, for planning purposes Metro has Expo light rail phase I as starting service on November 15th of this year. But of course that is not set in stone.

So what is the main beef of a gentleman named John Mirisch regarding our current mass transit planning ("Just what is Jewish mass transit?" Jewish Journal Feb. 23, 2011)? "None of the stations between Western and the Veterans Administration have park-and-ride lots planned..." As if riding a bus to the rail station is a concept beyond the pale, which he dismisses out of hand by dubbing it an "underdeveloped network of bus lines serving the residential areas on the Westside". Underdeveloped? I guess he doesn't know the Westside actually has some of the heaviest used lines with the shortest headways. Yesh!

In the wake of the news that the Federal Transit Administration is undertaking a Title VI compliance review of Metro, the Bus Rider's Union has been making statements that this constitutes a "significant step" and "tactical victory" for their claim that a pattern of discrimination underlies Metro's service change program of the past few years.

Interestingly Metro Librarian Matt Barrett at the March 23rd Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting noted these reviews are routine and generally result in remedies on the order of suggestions how to improve outreach. Also interestingly the 9th Circuit just handed down a ruling in *Darensburg, et. al v. Metropolitan Transportation Commission* rejecting similar equity claims involving the way funding is allocated in the Bay Area. I suspect this hubabaloo will as too often happens with the BRU turn out to be much ado about little.

Kudos to Ben Beader of the San Gabriel Valley Tribune for his eye-opening expose "Lid blown off simmering rift between ACE and San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments" (February 19, 2011). This is a jaw-dropping blow-by-blow account of a feud between the chief executives of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments and the Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority. If you have a chance Google this one and be ready for some riveting reading.

I'll conclude by noting at the Access Service Community Advisory Committee meeting on February 8, 2011 the minutes state "Mr. Greg Cuneo opened Public Comment stating that his daughter, a customer of Access, has been experiencing long shared rides from San Pedro to Claremont, often lasting between 3 – 3½ hours long. He added that he spoke with Janine in Customer Care, who explained that Access travel times are comparable to Metro travel times to/from the same locations and are not considered excessive unless they exceed Metro's travel times. Mr. Cuneo does not agree with the travel time comparability standard that Access follows and

PLAC Continued

is considering filing a complaint with FTA." I should note to travel from one end of the county to the other Mr. Cuneo's daughter pays a fare of \$3 and does so while transported in a single vehicle, albeit in a shared ride mode with other Access users. Frankly I would experience a trip of comparable duration if I was to travel via transit between the same two points plus have to transfer at least once to boot. Mr. Cuneo evidently is unaware that the travel time comparability standard that Access follows comes straight out of the Americans with Disabilities Act and various regulations. His threat therefore is toothless and uninformed.

My, lots of angst in the column this month. Let's hope May is calmer. 🚗 🚗

-In Memory of Cameron Beach -

On March 18, 2011, 62 year old Cameron Beach died of cardiac arrest at his home in San Francisco. At the time of his death Cam was on the San Francisco MTA Board of Directors, a position he had held since 2007. From 1981 to 2006 Cam worked for Regional Transit (RT) in Sacramento and is considered the father of Sacramento's Light Rail System. Cam joined RT in 1981 as a labor relations consultant and two years later was put in charge of the developing light rail network. After successfully starting the service in 1987, Cam was promoted to Chief Operating Officer for RT in 1991. Cam was still COO in 2006 when he retired from RT and returned to his native San Francisco. Cam was a true transit advocate making decisions about service based on the users perspective. He would often travel on buses and light rail vehicles while at RT in order to have a better understanding of the system. He always put the customer first.

Cam was also a member of the Market Street Railway and the Western Railway Museum at Rio Vista Junction. He was an avid photographer and transportation historian.
He will be missed by all.



TAP Questions and Answers

At our January meeting Vanessa Smith, System Projects Manager for TAP Operations at Metro, made a presentation on the status of the Transit Access Pass (TAP). In a few cases issues were raised that called for further research before a response could be made. A few questions were submitted after the meeting by an interested member who couldn't attend. Ms. Smith has kindly provided the following responses to the questions requiring a follow-up:

Questions from our January meeting:

Q: Is the work around active or not?

A: Yes, the work around Metro implemented for the Day Pass is still the current procedure.

Q: At the Wilshire/Vermont station if you want to transfer between rail lines for a TAP user does that entail going to the surface to TAP the appropriate TAP machine? Can one TAP and go from one platform to the other without having to go to the surface?

A: We are in the process of planning for the relocation of some of the Stand Alone Validators (SAVs) between these two platforms in order to avoid patrons from having to go out of the station to TAP.

Q: At the Harbor Green Line array to TAP is midlevel. Can one be placed at the platform?

A: This is also part of our planning and evaluation for the relocation of SAVs.

Here are some questions a member sent in:

Q: My Foothill Transit issued TAP card's purse works fine on both Metro Rail and Bus, right?

A: Yes, the Stored Value (purse) feature will work on Metro, Foothill and all other participating TAP enabled transit agencies.

Q: I've only done it a couple of times (I am usually carrying a Metrolink Ticket with EZ Pass stamp when I travel on LA Metro), but I wonder if my TAP card would have been read as valid by a fare inspector and if LA Metro ever saw the money I "gave" them from Foothill's pot.

A: Yes, when validating your TAP card, a Fare Inspector can verify store value.

Q: Why is taptogo.net still only in English?

A: There are current plans to have the taptogo.net website translated into Spanish. The estimated time line is May 2011.

Q: Why is there no ability to interact with someone (one-on-one) about TAP except by phone or by the aforementioned taptogo.net?

A: There is a TTY/TDD option available

Q: Is this not an ADA violation? How does a quadriplegic "TAP in" anyways?

A: Metro is currently looking at options used by other transit agencies on the types of accommodations provided to person (s) with such disabilities. 🚗 🚘

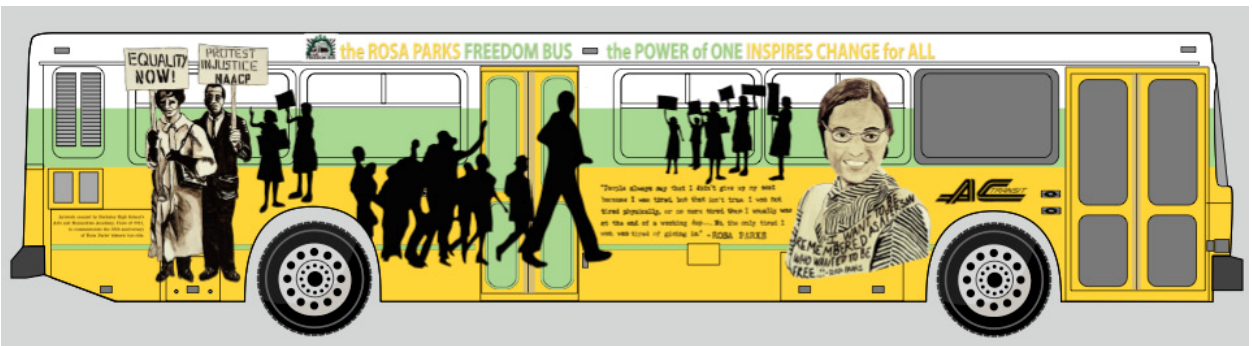


AC Transit's Freedom Bus

To celebrate the 55th Anniversary of Rosa Parks's historic bus ride in Montgomery, Alabama, AC Transit in conjunction with the Alameda County Office of Education, West Contra Costa Unified School District and *Art IS Education* created the Freedom Bus Project.

Students from the Berkeley High School Arts and Humanities Academy created the Civil Rights themed artwork on the side of the bus. The base colors of the bus patterned after the National City Lines yellow, green, and white scheme that was on the bus Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on. For more information on the Freedom Bus Project visit:

<http://www.freedombusproject.com/>



Getting to know Local Transit by Andrew Novak

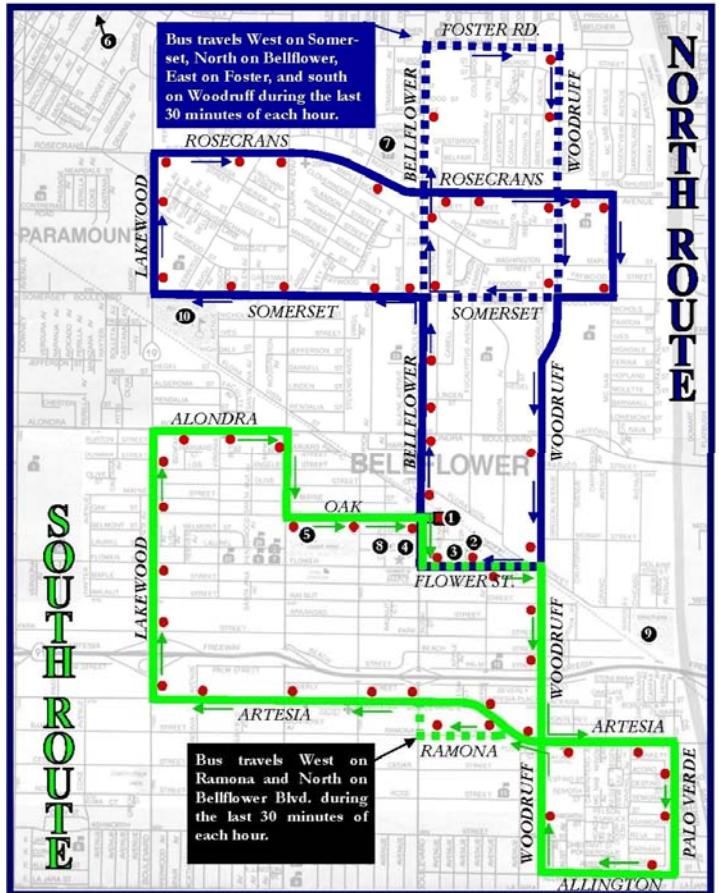
Bellflower Bus

This fixed route system operates within Bellflower City Limits. Hours of service are Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Fares are 50¢ (25¢ senior/disabled) and kids 5 and under are free. Routes begin and end each half hour at the Bellflower Transit Center, located on Oak Street east of Bellflower Boulevard.

For more information on Bellflower bus you can call at 562-865-RIDE or 562-804-1424, ext. 2267 or by visiting the website at:

<http://www.bellflower.org/home/index.asp?page=286>

“Getting to know Local Transit” is a new semi-regular feature where 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. 🚌 🚌



Photos of the Month

RTC New Flyer 919 approaches Las Vegas Boulevard on Tropicana Boulevard while operating on the Westcliff Airport Express Route. The photo was taken on March 4, 2011.

(Andrew Novak Photo)



This painted of a Pacific Electric PCC was recently discovered on the wall of the Floyd's 99 Barbershop in Burbank. The image is an accurate portrait of a Pacific Electric PCC. Photo taken on March 19, 2011

(Andrew Novak 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. 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 : **Apr 9th** and **May 14th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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