

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

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Metro NABI 8460 at the Central Maintenance Facility in August 2011.

— Ty Angel Photo



Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

The October meeting has been moved to the 15th due to Yom Kippur holiday.

The speaker at our November 12th meeting will be Stephen Fox, Senior Regional Planner at the Southern California Association of Governments, regarding its draft Regional Transportation Plan.

Our holiday banquet will be held this year the evening of December 10th at Taix, on Sunset near Alvarado just west of downtown Los Angeles. More details will appear in next month's newsletter.

There will be a discussion about where we want to go for our annual Day After Thanksgiving Trip at the October meeting.

Starting in August 2011 Access Service is transitioning to a new Rider ID card, a TAP VISA ready card. ASI riders who use their ID Card to ride on participating Free Fare bus and rail systems need the new cards by November 30, 2011 as the current Access Rider ID card will no longer be accepted on these systems. Contact the agency at 1-888-404-4229 to request a replacement card; there is no charge to for this initial replacement card.

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. For more information on the museum visit: www.pacificrailroadsociety.org

Members in Action:



Andrew Novak attended the Pacific Bus Museum Marin County Excursion on September 24th.

Ken Ruben attended the San Gabriel Valley Service Council Public Workshop held August 8th. He reports about 80 people attended with about 16 of them making comments; the main topic was returning Metro's Route 30 or 31 to operate east of Indiana. Some also expressed displeasure with the Gold Line eastside extension that opened in 2009.

Ruben attended the September 12th meeting of the San Gabriel Service Council and also the annual AltCar Expo & Conference held on September 30th - October 1st at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. Ruben and Dana Gabbard attended the September 21st Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting. Gabbard, Ruben and Joe Dunn attended the September 14th Metro Westside/Center Service Council meeting.

Ruben and Bart Reed attended the groundbreaking ceremony for Phase II of the Exposition light rail project on September 19th. Ruben appeared in the background of a KABC news report about the event broadcast that evening.

Reed, Ruben and Jerry Martin attended the LOSSAN meeting on September 28th.

Ruben and Mark Panitz attended the September 28th workshops on improvements to the Culver CityBus system.  



Transit Updates

Downeylink

In August 2011 Downeylink rerouted their Southeast Route to serve the new Columbia Space Center built on a portion of the former Rockwell complex in Downey. The route now goes east of Imperial Highway from Brookshire to Columbia Way (formerly Clark), then north on Columbia Way to Lakewood Boulevard and then west on Stewart & Grey back to Brookshire.

Norwalk Transit Proposed Changes

Effective September 19th Norwalk Transit will be making the following changes.

Route 2: Eliminate the Firestone/Cirtus & King via Hoxie Boulevard segment.

Route 3: Cancel midday service between Pioneer/Telegraph to Whittier Depot from 9:15 AM to 1:54 PM. Cancel Saturday service on the same segment.

Route 5: Cancel weekday service from 7:40 PM to 9:26 PM. Cancel Saturday service.

Route 7: Cancel route.

Route 8: Eliminate segment between Gateway Plaza Mall and Whittier Depot. Also eliminate segment between the Norwalk Metrolink Station and Carmenita via Leffingwell and Imperial.



Omnitrans

On September 15th, Omnitrans consolidated all the stops on 4th Street in downtown San Bernardino. The new stop consolidations are on 4th Street between F and G Streets and on F and G Streets between 4th and 5th Streets. As part of the new sbX project a new downtown transit center will be built at Rialto and E Streets replacing the 4th Street Location. Below is a map of the relocated bus stops in downtown San Bernardino.



Omnitrans has also made the following changes to their service.

Route 63: The Time Point at Campus & Holt has been moved to Holt & Plum (Northbound) and Holt & Lemon (Southbound).

Route 365 OmniGo: Service was extended north to Riverside and Chino Avenues via Peyton and Eastend, providing connections to Foothill Transit Routes 291 and 497. Also, The time point at Chino Hills City Hall has been moved to Chino & Emerald.

(Continued on Page 6)

Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

AB 650, introduced by Assembly member Bob Blumenfield, would have created a blue ribbon task force on public transportation for the 21st Century. We supported it as perhaps providing a fiscal framework at the state level for transit service that was based on need which would no longer be endangered by every little economic blip and burp. The Governor vetoed it as unnecessary. I am disappointed but will concede even if something of value was produced there is no guarantee it wouldn't have ended up on the shelf, gathering dust, like many other similar reports by august panels of experts. This still leaves transit often at the mercy of the political ill winds of the moment.

At our September meeting we had a discussion of the continuing travails of Metro's TAP card and the gating of the rail stations. Mention was made of the glaring oversight by Metro of not providing TAP cards to sell on board buses for tourists and others boarding wishing to purchase a day pass but lacking a TAP card. Director J.K. Drummond caught us off guard when he informed us that TAP cards are now sold by drivers for day passes to be loaded on them.

A room full of advocates (myself included) were utterly unaware of this development caught my attention and I soon produced a scathing piece for Streetsblog ("The TAP Day Pass Solution That Snuck Beneath Our Radar") regarding that this has been so poorly marketed that few riders are aware of this option. This should have been an excuse for Metro to make a noise and gather some accolades for doing the right thing. Instead they stumbled and took what should have been a shining achievement and bungled the

opportunity to recover some of the credibility they have lost over the tap/gating fiasco. The best explanation for how the cards are being sold on board buses is in a Metro news release posted on the Mid City West Community Council's website (and strangely is nowhere to be found on the Metro website): customers who don't already have a TAP card [can] buy one together with their Day Pass for a one-time total of \$6, including a charge of just \$1 for the card. This program to buy a card for \$1 on the bus is a six month pilot program.

Like all TAP cards, those sold on buses can subsequently be reloaded again and again with any TAP product, including the \$5 Day Pass. In the past, customers needed to obtain a TAP card prior to boarding a bus in order to purchase a Day Pass. Best punch line of the month: "they're going to have to try this at rush hour sometime" (Damien Newton on Streetsblog regarding the gate tests at selected Red Line stations in mid-afternoons Metro will be undertaking this month).

More and more Metro seems to be edging toward admitting for various reason gating of the rail stations will require attendants being deployed to render assistance, handle emergencies. etc. Member Erik Griswold noted in a comment on Metro's blog The Source "Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond, around whose neck the albatross of TAP and fare gates currently hangs, says it would cost \$20 million a year to have station agents during all hours of Metro Rail operation, at all gated locations.

(Continued on Page 5)

PLAC Continued

So...\$46M for the turnstiles plus \$20M per year for staffing all to avoid a *estimated* \$6M in fare evasion?" [The \$20 million figure is from Kymberleigh Richard's write-up of the February Metro Board meeting posted on her blog mtableboardreport.blogspot.com].

Ben Baeder, formerly with the San Gabriel Valley Tribune, has started Downeybeat.com to cover Downey and the surrounding area. I was very intrigued at Ben's piece "Slow Train Coming" on the long stalled Orange Line project proposed for south Los Angeles county. The Orangeline Development Authority (ODA) [<http://www.olda.org/>] had a proposal for maglev that seemed mostly about facilitating development. And Baeder's piece makes clear this is still the case.

Michael Kodama, director of the ODA, is described as rhapsodizing that cities can zone for multi-level housing, dense office complexes, retail centers and other uses that would work near a train stop. Yesh! Meanwhile the project is underfunded and what technology they plan to use is no longer clear. Instead several politicians in the piece talk through their hat and try to substitute empty boosterish enthusiasm for knowledge or an actual goal. Yeow!

I'll conclude by noting the recent passing of John Meyer, former administrator of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority who died in August after a long battle with lymphoma. He had a long and distinguished career in the transit industry and I know was much respected. Our condolences to his family. 🚊 🚊

In Memory...

Russell J. Wong passed away on August 11, 2011 at age 51 after a brief illness and subsequent hospitalization. Until 2010 Russell had been on staff at the Metro Library. I had many conversations with Russell during my visits to the Metro Library. He will be missed. Born in Stockton, CA, Russell lived in Glendale and was preceded in death by father John S. Wong and is survived by his mother Bertie, brothers John Jr., Danny and Leslie and sister Michelle.

Vince Dawson passed away on August 26, 2011 at the age of 52. Vince had been in the transportation industry for many years with the Chicago Transit Authority, Greyhound Lines, and several private transportation companies. Vince was a wealth of knowledge of knowledge in the field of transportation. Vince lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico is survived by Carol, his wife of 20 years; his Aunt and Uncle, Marion (Corky) and Luther Harrison of Oceanside, CA; and his brother, David. A Graveside Service was held on September 29th at the Santa Fe National Cemetery in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Transit Updates Continued

Metrolink Quiet Cars

Starting October 3rd, Metrolink has begun offering Quiet Cars on weekday trains. The Quiet Car is the second passenger car located behind the locomotive.

Quiet Car Guidelines:

-No Talking
-Mute Your Device -Customers may not use any devices with audio features enabled or without headphones, including: cellular phones, pagers, handheld games, laptop computers, or portable CD or DVD players. Customers using headphones must keep the volume low enough so that the audio cannot be heard by neighboring passengers.

Metrolink personnel may ask passengers who fail to follow these guidelines to relocate to another car. Seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis and cannot be reserved. There is no additional charge to sit in a Quiet Car. Please do not use additional seats for personal belongings.



Happy Birthday
MTS!

SLO Transit Double Decker

San Luis Obispo (SLO) Transit has become the latest transit agency to purchase a double-decker transit bus. GO Transit (Toronto), RTC (Las Vegas), Unitrans (UC Davis), and Coast Mountain bus (Vancouver) have all placed similar Alexander/Denis double-deckers in transit service. The bus holds 81-Passengers and is used on various routes in the SLO system. The bus was placed in service in early September.



SocalMetro Photo/Flickr

LADOT MCIs

Below is a photo of the new MCIs being delivered to LADOT. The agency will be receiving 84 CNG MCIs for use on the Commuter Express Routes. 🚌 🚌



MCI Photo

Photos of the Month

Caltrain F40PH 911 leads Train 58 south through San Mateo on September 23, 2011.

-Andrew Novak Photo



Southland Transit NABI 7839 at Dodger Stadium during the contractors first Annual Bus Roadeo on July 16, 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 PM 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 : **Oct 8th** and **Nov 12th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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