

# ***THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE***

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates  
January 2012

Vol. 20, No. 01

ISSN 1525-2892



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*Santa Monica New Flyer 4075 wearing a holiday wrap on December 25, 2011.*

*—Russ Jones Photo*

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

### **Bulletin Board:**

Our January speaker is Rolando Cruz, Executive Director and Vice-President for Maintenance and Facilities at Long Beach Transit, discussing asset management. The meeting begins at 1:00 PM with the speaker scheduled for 2:15 PM.

December 10th we had our annual holiday banquet at Taix. Attendees included Chaffee Yiu and his wife, Andrew Novak, Edmund Buckley, Dave Snowden, Dana Gabbard, Perias Pillay, Mark Strickert & his wife Nancy, Juanita Dellomes & two guests, Robert Meinert, Joe Dunn, Eugene Salinsky, Charles Powell, Ken Ruben, Kirk Schneider, Pat O'Connor, Hank Fung, Jane Reifer, Nate Zablen, Adrian Mandese and Josh Thurman. The goodies and door prizes were donated by Steve Crosmer, Chaffee Yiu, Dana Gabbard, GET, Culver CityBus, Torrance Transit, Foothill, RTA, Omnitrans, MTD, Gold Line Authority and Gardena. A big thanks to Andrew Novak for handling the trinket receipt and bagging.

Dana Gabbard is a regular contributor to L.A. Streetsblog and links to his posts can be found at <http://la.streetsblog.org/author/dana-gabbard/>

### **Members in Action:**

Alek Friedman was quoted in the Transportation for America press release "Public transportation ridership continues to grow; agencies continue to raise fares and cut service" and his artwork was the impetus for the L.A. Streetsblog post "Is It Time for Metro Rail to Get a Face Lift?"

For the past few years J.K. Drummond has attended the Metro South Bay Service Council meetings on a regular basis. We note that

now Joe Dunn also is regularly attending them. Mr. Drummond also had a letter in the Christmas issue of the Daily Breeze "MTA ignoring the South Bay", noting the need for ticket machines at the Park and Ride lot at the end of the Harbor (110) Transitway.

Ken Ruben attended the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Board meeting on December 14th and its Technical Advisory Committee meeting December 8th. He also spoke at the Metro Westside/Central Service Council meeting on December 14th.

Andrew Novak was on the Pacific Railroad Society excursion on December 18th to San Luis Obispo. Nick Matonak was also on the trip and Ken Ruben joined the excursion in Van Nuys on the return trip. 🚆 🚆

### ***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](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com)



## Transit Updates

### ***Coach America***

On January 3rd one of the nation's largest tour and charter bus companies, Coach America, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Coach America has a large presence in southern California operating the LAX Flyaway service, several Amtrak California contracts, and most recently one of the LADOT Commuter Express contracts. Coach America is continuing to operate all services during the bankruptcy proceedings. For more information visit:

[www.coachamerica.com/restructure/](http://www.coachamerica.com/restructure/)  
[www.bmcgroup.com/coachamerica](http://www.bmcgroup.com/coachamerica)

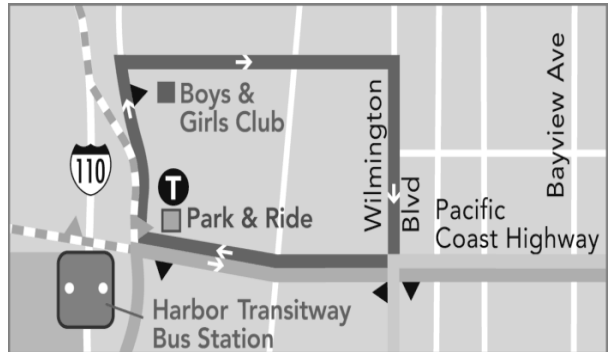


### ***Caltrans/Metrolink***

Recently Caltrans has added Metrolink and Amtrak travel times and departure information from Orange County to Los Angeles. There is one freeway message board on westbound State Route 91 that displays travel times and departure information for trains from Fullerton. A second message sign on northbound Interstate 5 displays information for trains from Anaheim. The train travel times are displayed on weekdays along with the freeway travel times. Caltrans displays similar train travel times on US 101 in the San Francisco Bay Area for Caltrain peninsula commuter service.

### ***LADOT - DASH***

Effective January 9th DASH Wilmington began serving the Boys and Girls Club at the corner of Figueroa and Q Streets. This new service operates Monday through Friday from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Below is a map of the new routing.



### ***LADOT - Commuter Express***

Recently LADOT posted an artist rendition of what the Encino Park-n-Ride lot will look like after the improvements are completed. The agency ensures riders that the new lot will be well worth the wait and inconvenience of the construction. Below is LADOT artist rendition of the remodeled parking lot.



*(Continued on Page 4)*

## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### ***Metrolink***

Effective January 9th Metrolink has made several changes to their schedules in conjunction with Amtrak Service changes. Below is a summary of the changes Metrolink has made. Changes to the weekend trains will occur on January 14th.

Metrolink has modified the San Bernardino line schedules to improve reliability for some of the reverse afternoon trains from San Bernardino. Train 337 will now connect with Train 223.

**Orange County Line (Weekdays)**  
Trains 600 and 602 will arrive at Oceanside later.  
Train 609 will arrive in Los Angeles later.

**Inland Empire/Orange County (Weekdays)**  
Trains 808 and 850 will depart Oceanside later and Train 850 will have an improved connection to Coaster service.

**San Bernardino Line (Weekdays)**  
Trains 319 and 331 will arrive in Los Angeles later.  
Trains 333, 337, and 387 will now depart San Bernardino at different times.  
Trains 330, 332, and 334 will now depart Los Angeles at different times.

**Antelope Valley Line (Weekdays)**  
Trains 282 and 285 will now stop at Sylmar.  
Train 222 will depart Lancaster later and arrive later in Los Angeles.  
Train 286 will also arrive in Los Angeles later.  
Trains 211 and 215 will arrive in Lancaster later.  
Trains 217, 219 and 223 have had schedule changes to improve reliability

**Riverside Line (Weekdays)**  
Train 408 will depart Los Angeles 2 minutes later.

**Orange County Line (Weekends)**  
Train 661 will depart Oceanside earlier.  
Train 663 will depart Laguna Niguel earlier.  
Train 664 will depart Los Angeles earlier.

**Inland Empire/Orange County (Weekends)**  
Train 860 will depart Oceanside earlier  
Schedule time have been changed for Train 859 at San Juan Capistrano, San Clemente and Oceanside.

For details and more information call Metrolink at 800-371-LINK or visit [www.metrolinktrains.com](http://www.metrolinktrains.com)



### ***Omnitrans***

Omnitrans has recently installed eight new shelters at the interim transit center on 4th Street. These new shelters join trash cans and restrooms that were opened when the center opened late last year.

Effective January 2nd Omnitrans made several service changes to their system. Details of those changes are on page 8.

*(Continued on Page 8)*



This month in Transit Topics we have a few things you might have missed from the world of transit.

**Ferry Boat Kalakala:** In December 2011 the former Washington State Ferry *Kalakala* was sold to an anonymous buyer for \$1 with plans to restore the streamlined ferry. The *Kalakala* began life as Key System Ferry *Peralta* and operated between Oakland and San Francisco. In 1933 an arson fire destroyed the *Peralta* and the hull was sold to the Puget Sound Navigation Company where she was rebuilt as a streamlined vessel *Kalakala*. She continued to operate in the Puget Sound until retired by the Washington State Ferry system in 1967. The ship then traveled to Alaska where she became a crab processing vessel. From 1967 to 1982 the *Kalakala* worked in Alaska as a crab processing vessel and was then abandoned in Alaska. Since 1982 various efforts to save the ship have failed and this is probably the ship's last chance. To follow the history of this classic vessel visit: [www.kalakala.org](http://www.kalakala.org)



*The Kalakala in Seattle in 2004.  
(Seattle PI Photo)*

**Escalator Transit:** In December 2011, the City of Medellin Colombia opened an escalator in one of the poorest sections of the city, Comuna 13. The escalator now allows residents to travel up a 1,260 foot hill replacing a set of stairs that the residence once use. The \$6.7 million escalator now shortens the 35-minute hike up the hillside to six minutes. The escalator is free to use and is divided up into six sections. There is a plan to eventually build a covering to protect users in inclement weather.



*(AP News photo)*

**Short Turns:** December 16th was officially the last day for the New Look buses in Toronto Canada. \* The Bay Area Rapid Transit District has signed an agreement with Skanska Construction to design and build the 10 mile extension from Fremont to San Jose. Work is set to begin in February 2012 and the extension is scheduled to open in Spring 2016. \* Finally the Las Vegas Monorail continues to struggle financially. The bankruptcy court judge has not approved the agency to exit bankruptcy and the company does not have the money to scrap the line. How long it will continue is anyone's guess.



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

I've now read the 60 page Title VI compliance review of Metro by contractor DMP Group for the Federal Transit Administration and have to say with a few exceptions it mostly comes down to Metro being ordered to be more careful in preparing paperwork, undertake outreach etc. to respond to regulatory mandates. Nothing earth shattering or likely to result in changes to fares or service hours operated. If the report results in improvements in the level of information provided for service change hearings that would be a positive development.

BTW, whatever faults Metro has not taking Americans with Disability Act complaints seriously isn't one of them considering (as revealed at the November 9, 2011 Westside/Central Service Council meeting by John Hillmer in the Director's Report, item #7): "We have one individual who generates close to 70-100 complaints per year; we take those complaints seriously and have been out to speak with him and our operators."

A friend informs me the narration on the Las Vegas monorail now gives the monorail credit for helping the city "be green" by removing vehicle emissions from the Strip. He was relieved that there was nobody else riding in his monorail cab because he was laughing so hard upon hearing this ludicrous claim.

In November CBS channel 2 revealed "Gold Line construction officials spending money on expensive hotels, questionable meals and fancy business-class travel" with Authority CEO Habib Balian having the most extreme free spending ways. Now you know

why at the December Metro Board meeting Metro Board member and Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich made a motion to review the expenditures made by the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority along with the Exposition Metro Line Construction and Alameda Corridor-East Construction authorities. This just reminds me again of why I had qualms when these entities started cropping up.

Here are two tidbits gleaned from staff reports presented at the October 19th Metro Board Finance, Budget and Audit Committee meeting:

In re Crenshaw light rail "the project schedule at this time includes a forecast for the Revenue Service date of December 2018" (item #20, p.3)

"Headway (frequency) improvement on Pasadena Gold Line is 70% complete. The goal is to attain five minute headways ... Staff working with South Pasadena and Pasadena cities to implement the more frequent service on the Gold Line by the third quarter in FY 12" (item #24, table on the last page).

I bust a gut laughing while reading the Metro Inspector General's Annual Activities Report, presented to the October 20th Metro Board Executive Management Committee as item #39, upon coming across this priceless bit of investigation:

Investigation of Alleged Misuse of Metro Assets for Personal Gain. This investigation found that a Metro employee was engaged in the business of buying and selling used automobiles. Specifically, the employee:

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

- Used a Metro computer and telephone to buy and sell cars and boats.
- Conducted personal business activity during duty hours.
- Parked cars for sale in the Union Station Gateway Building Parking Garage, where he showed the cars to potential customers.

I'll conclude this month by noting that at the November 29th meeting of the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District Board Assistant General Manger Jerry Estrada reported that MTD driver John "Chino" Vasquez has been chosen by the Santa Barbara Independent as a Local Hero for his barbeque charity work for fundraisers. Good food for good causes sounds like a winning combination--kudos to Mr. Vasquez! 🚗 🚗

In December Silver State Trailways increased service on their Los Angeles/Orange County to Las Vegas Service. Along with the expanded service they have lowered the price to \$25 one-way and are no longer offering a round-trip fare. Below is the new schedule and for more information or to make reservation contact Silverstate Trailways at 800-892-7979 or on the web at: [www.silverstatetrailways.com](http://www.silverstatetrailways.com)

### **Silver State Trailways**

#### **Las Vegas - Los Angeles - Orange County**

Daily	Daily	Daily				Daily	Daily	Daily
<i>Read Down</i>	<i>Read Down</i>	<i>Read Down</i>				<i>Read Up</i>	<i>Read Up</i>	<i>Read Up</i>
			DP	<b>Las Vegas, NV Korea Town Plaza</b>	AR	<b>1:45 PM</b>	<b>7:45 PM</b>	1:15 AM
10:00 AM	<b>1:30 PM</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>	▼	<b>North Las Vegas, NV Silver State Trailways</b>	▲	<b>1:30 PM</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>	1:00 AM
10:15 AM	<b>1:45 PM</b>	<b>7:45 PM</b>	▼	<b>Las Vegas, NV Korea Town Plaza</b>	▲			
10:30 AM	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>8:00 PM</b>	▼	<b>Las Vegas, NV Harrah's</b>	▲	<b>1:15 PM</b>	<b>7:15 PM</b>	12:45 AM
10:45 AM	<b>2:15 PM</b>	<b>8:15 PM</b>	▼	<b>Las Vegas, NV Planet Hollywood</b>	▲	<b>1:00 PM</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	12:30 AM
<b>2:30 PM</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>	12:00 AM	AR	<b>Colton, CA Futura Net</b>	DP	9:15 AM	<b>3:15 PM</b>	<b>8:15 PM</b>
<b>2:45 PM</b>	<b>6:15 PM</b>	12:15 AM	DP	<b>Colton, CA Futura Net</b>	AR	9:00 AM	<b>3:00 PM</b>	<b>8:00 PM</b>
<b>3:45 PM</b>	<b>7:15 PM</b>	1:15 AM		<b>East Los Angeles, CA</b>	DP	8:00 AM	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>
<b>4:15 PM</b>	<b>8:45 PM</b>	1:45 AM		<b>Los Angeles, CA</b>	Dp	7:30 AM	<b>1:30 PM</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
<b>4:30 PM</b>	<b>9:00 PM</b>	2:00 AM	AR	<b>Los Angeles, CA Aju Travel &amp; Tours</b>	DP	7:15 AM	<b>1:15 PM</b>	<b>6:15 PM</b>
<b>4:45 PM</b>	<b>9:15 PM</b>	2:15 AM	AR	<b>Los Angeles, CA Hana Tour</b>	DP	7:00 AM	<b>1:00 PM</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>
<b>2:45 PM</b>	<b>6:15 PM</b>	12:15 AM	DP	<b>Colton, CA Futura Net</b>	AR	9:00 AM	<b>3:00 PM</b>	<b>8:30 PM</b>
<b>3:45 PM</b>	<b>7:15 PM</b>	1:15 AM	AR	<b>Anaheim, CA Gray Line Tour Center</b>	DP	8:00 AM	<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>
<b>4:15 PM</b>	<b>7:45 PM</b>	1:45 AM	▼	<b>Garden Grove, CA Kaju Travel</b>	▲	7:30 AM	<b>1:30 PM</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>

## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### ***Omnitrans continued***

Minor changes were made to the following routes at Omnitrans: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 19, 20, and 61. Routes 3, 4, and 14 have been moved from G Street to H Street in downtown San Bernardino.

For more information or to get details on the above changes contact Omnitrans at 800-966-6428 or on line at [www.omnitrans.org](http://www.omnitrans.org)



### ***Riverside Transit Agency (RTA)***

On January 8th RTA made several changes to there system, many of them to improve on-time performance. Below is a list of those changes.

The following routes had changes made to their weekday schedules to improve on-time performance: 3, 7, 19, 22, 40, 53, 61, 208, 210, and 212.

Timepoints have been added at the Banning Wal-Mart for southbound Route 31 and Eastbound Route 35.

RTA also made changes to several other routes. Below are details on those changes.

Route 1: The Saturday service has been adjusted to improve on-time performance.

Route 7: The last northbound trip on week-ends has been adjusted for better connections with the Route 23.

Route 10: The weekday afternoon/evening schedules have been adjusted to meet passenger demand.

Route 11: The weekday schedule has been adjusted due to construction on Ironwood Avenue between Heacock Street and Perris Boulevard.

Route 13: The weekday westbound 6:04 AM trip has been adjusted to improve on-time performance.

Route 14: The weekday afternoon/evening northbound schedules have been adjusted to improve on-time performance.

Route 18: The weekend schedule has been adjusted to improve on-time performance.

Route 20: The first westbound weekday trip has been adjusted 10 minutes earlier for better connections with other routes.

Route 29: The first eastbound weekend trip has been adjusted for better connections with other routes.

Route 204: A bus stop has been added at University and Iowa avenues near the UCR Extension Center.

Routes 208, 210, and 212 have had weekday schedule adjustments to improve connections for passengers boarding Metrolink trains.

Route 217: A bus stop has been added at County Center Drive.

*(Continued on Page 9)*



## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### ***RTA continued***

Finally RTA anticipates an end to the detour routing on Magnolia Avenue between Central and Jurupa Avenues for Routes 1, 13, and 15. Rider alerts will be posted on the buses.

For more information call 951-565-5002 or visit: [www.riversidetransit.com](http://www.riversidetransit.com)

### ***Santa Clarita Transit***

Effective January 9th Santa Clarita made several changes to better meet passenger demand on their commuter routes. Below is a list of those changes.

Route 795: The 6:57 PM trip departing Santa Clarita Metrolink station has been discontinued.

Route 795: The 3:43 AM trip departing Lancaster Metrolink station has been discontinued.

Route 797: A new trip has been added departing Santa Clarita Metrolink station at 5:45 AM.

Route 797: A new trip has been added departing Century City at 3:45 PM.

For more information call 661-294-1287



### ***San Diego Vintage Trolley***

Recently the San Diego Vintage Trolley has started operating on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Previously the special service ran only on Saturday and Sundays. The service continues to operate on weekends from 11:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

For more information visit:  
[www.sdvintagetrolley.com](http://www.sdvintagetrolley.com)



### ***Thruway Bus Service (Amtrak California)***

In December 2011 Amtrak California added a new Thruway Bus Route from Fullerton to Indio. Stops on this new route include Fullerton, Riverside (Metrolink), Cabazon (Morongo Casino), Palm Springs (Airport), Palm Desert (Sun Line), La Quinta (Sun Line), and Indio (Highway 111 and Monroe).

Bus 4984 departs Fullerton at 6:20 PM and arrives in Indio at 9:15 PM. Bus 4969 departs Indio at 8:05 AM and arrives at Fullerton at 11:21 AM.

Bus 4968 departs Fullerton at 11:50 AM and arrives at Palm Springs Airport at 1:50 PM. Bus 4985 departs Palm Springs Airport at 3:10 PM and arrives in Fullerton at 5:25 PM.

A stop will eventually be added in downtown Palm Springs. Like other Thruway services, passengers must purchase travel on an Amtrak Train. These buses connect with various Pacific Surfliner Trains. 🚂 🚌

## *Photos of the Month*



*Once again the New York MTA operated several of their vintage buses during the holidays on various routes. Here we see FlixBus New Look 7340 on the M42 on December 14, 2011. These buses operate between the regularly scheduled buses.*

*-Wayne Doran Photo*

*Temple City Dial-A-Ride vehicle 0703 in front of the K-Mart in Temple City on January 6, 2012.*

*-Andrew Novak Photo*



## Photos of the Month

Former San Diego Transit 517 in Niles, California operating on the Niles Coach Lines. The bus was operating on a special shuttle from the Niles Canyon Railway "Train of Lights." This bus is owned by the Pacific Bus Museum

-Richard Silagi  
Photo



Torrance Transit Gillig 464 decorated for the holidays.

-Torrance Transit Photo via Facebook

**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.

**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 : **Jan 14<sup>th</sup>** and **Feb 11<sup>th</sup>** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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