

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates
January 2014 Vol. 22, No. 1



Inside This Issue:

- Bulletin Board (pg. 2)
- Transit Updates (pg. 3)
- Transit Topics (pg. 5)
- Public/Legislative Affairs (pg. 6)
- The Way Forward (pg. 7)
- Thanksgiving Plans... (pg. 9)
- Photos of the month (pg. 11)

One of VVTA's new El Dorado buses en-route to the agency's yard from the El Dorado plant in Riverside on December 18, 2013.

—Craig Barnes Photo

ISSN 1525-2892

Bulletin Board

Bulletin Board:

At the December meeting the officers for 2014 were elected:

President -- Nate Zablen
Vice-President -- Ken Ruben (January-June)
and J.K. Drummond (July-December)
Secretary -- Dana Gabbard
Treasurer -- Dave Snowden

The result for Vice President was due to a tied vote. Thanks to Election Committee members Hank Fung, Craig Weingarten and Andrew Novak.

The turnout for the holiday banquet was disappointing so we will likely do a less formal pizza party this coming December. Our thanks to Andrew Novak who organized the goody giveaway and our thanks to Linda Culp of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency for an informative presentation at our December meeting.

We would like to thank the following individuals and transit agencies who provided trinkets and door prizes for our 2013 Banquet.

Steve Crosmer
Dominick Falzone
Andrew Novak
Dave Snowden
Dana Gabbard

Omnitrans
Torrance Transit
Riverside Transit Agency
Golden Empire Transit
Foothill Transit
Gardena Municipal Bus Lines
Metro

Thank You!

Saturday January 11th we will undertake a trip that will have several purposes: explore bus and rail services for San Bernardino and environs, visit the San Bernardino History and Railroad Museum at the historic Santa Fe Depot plus have lunch at Molly's, a 50s style café. The two departure options from Union Station on the San Bernardino Metro-link route are 9:00 AM and 10:35 AM.

The earlier group will do some bus riding after disembarking while the latter will ride straight to the Depot. After meeting up circa 12:20 PM there will be a museum tour followed by a short bus trip to have lunch than there will be an option to do further riding on Omnitrans before returning on Metrolink. Those who wish to come back earlier can take trains departing at 3:35 PM and 4:55 PM. Metrolink weekend day passes are \$10. An Omnitrans day pass is \$4 (\$1.85 for senior/disabled). We will meet up at the fish tank in the east portal building at Union Station.

Saturday February 1st we will have a informal work session to prepare comments on service changes proposals for Metro bus service proposed for implementation in June 2014. These will be presented at the February 8th public hearing to be held at the Metro headquarters. We will request a block of time and have copies on hand of the comments to submit formally along with sharing them with reporters, interested members of the audience, etc. It is asked that members not fixate on minutiae or allow the session to be prolonged.

(Continued on Page 10)

Transit Updates

Airport Valet Express (Bakersfield)

Effective December 19th the Airport Valet Express began operation of a new airport bus service from Bakersfield to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) with four daily round trips. Fares for the new service are \$49 one way and \$89 round trip and free for active military with proper ID. The service departs Bakersfield from a terminal at 201 New Stine, Suite 120 (north side of San Joaquin Valley College campus.) Currently the service is using 12-seater vans and they eventually plan to use full size buses from Classic Charters. For more information contact AVE at 661.363.5000 extension 1 or online at: www.airportvaletexpress.com

Big Blue Bus

Effective January 1st Big Blue Bus officially retired local transfers. New fareboxes and a new "Azul" smartcard will be introduced in the spring and these new cards will give riders flexibility with fare payments. Big Blue Bus will continue to offer Interagency Transfers at the current prices. The hours for the Big Blue Bus store in Santa Monica have also changed. The store is now open Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM and will no longer offer Saturday hours. For more information contact Big Blue Bus at 310.451.5444

Bolt Bus

On December 12th Bolt Bus began offering service from Los Angeles to Las Vegas, Nevada. In Las Vegas buses stop at the Greyhound Station in downtown Las Vegas. Bolt Bus also added a new stop in San Francisco at the Temporary Transbay Terminal to their Los Angeles to Oakland service which began in October 2013. For more information or to book fares visit www.boltbus.com

Culver City Bus

In late December Culver City Bus made minor schedule changes to Lines 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7. For more information contact Culver City Bus at 310.253.6500 or online at: <http://www.culvercity.org>

Foothill Transit

On December 16th Foothill Transit reinstated the 4:45 AM westbound Line 492 trip from Montclair Transit Center, Monday through Friday.

In January Foothill Transit will begin operation on new express Line 495. The new route will begin at the new City of Industry Park & Ride Lot and will operate direct to Los Angeles making discharge only stops starting at the Cal State LA bus way station. There will be eight trips from the Park & Ride Lot into Los Angeles on weekday mornings and will run approximately every 30 minutes. Fares on the new line will be \$4.90 one way and \$9.80 round trip. No exact start date has been set for the route and passengers are encouraged to check the Foothill Transit website at: www.foothilltransit.org

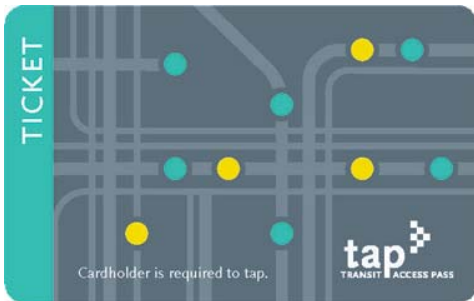


(Continued on Page 4)

Transit Updates Continued

Long Beach Transit

Starting December 11th, Long Beach Transit (LBT) passengers are no required to purchase a paper TAP card transfer from the coach operator when transferring to the Metro Blue Line at the Artesia and Del Amo Stations. On January 13th passengers transferring to the Green Line at Norwalk will also need to purchase the same TAP card transfers. This change is in response to Metro's new locked fare gates at these stations. Below is a sample of the new transfers required.



Metro

Metro has launched a new on-line store selling a variety of Metro branded trinkets including shirts, caps and other miscellaneous items. To view the items for sale visit: <http://www.metro.net/about/metro-store/>

Riverside Transit Agency (RTA)

Effective January 12th RTA will be making the following changes to their service.

Route 1: An extra bus will be added to the weekday schedule to accommodate increased ridership. The addition of the bus will increase the frequency to approximately every 10 minutes. The 6:12 AM westbound trip on Saturday will begin at UC Riverside and all schedules will be adjusted to improve on-time performance.

Routes 7 and 8: Seven days a week the schedules will be adjusted to improve connections between each route and route 22 at the Lake Elsinore Outlet Center.

Route 10: On weekdays, the eastbound 3:31 PM trip departing the Galleria at Tyler and the westbound 1:51 PM trip departing Big Springs and Watkins. The 7:00 AM westbound trip departing from the Riverside Downtown Terminal will be extended to the Galleria at Tyler.

Route 11: The weekday clockwise 6:35 AM trip departing the Moreno Valley Mall will now depart at 6:25 AM to improve connections with Route 35 at the mall.

Route 14: Service on Iowa Avenue resumes and the route will no longer detour on La Cadena Drive.

Route 16: Weekday schedules will be adjusted to improve connections with Route 19 at the Moreno Valley Mall.

Route 19: On weekdays a new southbound trip will be added from the Moreno Valley Mall at 4:49 AM and one at 9:43 PM. The later trip will be extended to the Perris Station Transit Center.

Route 22: The Saturday and Sunday schedules will now be the same.

Route 30: The route will no longer travel along Ruby Drive and Mildred Street. The Perris and Nuevo timepoint will be moved to Nuevo and Ruby.

Routes 31, 32, 74 and 79: Will be adjusted to improve connections with other routes at the Hemet Valley Mall.

(Continued on Page 8)

Transit Topics By Andrew Novak

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

CTA Auction: In early December the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) sold a variety of items on an on-line auction site. This was the first time CTA has offered memorabilia for sale to the public. Items in the sale included bus stop signs, crossing signals, fare-boxes, elevated car doors, seats, rail, railroad ties, and a variety of other items. The two biggest items in the sale were two 1969 built Budd Elevated cars in the 2200 series that were recently retired. All items in the sale started at the low price of \$0 and winner bidders had to be able to pick up the items in person. This was a way for the agency to test the market for selling these items to collectors and fans. If the CTA sale was successful, other agencies may follow.



Etiwanda Station: In January the former Pacific Electric (PE) Station in Etiwanda turns 100! The building was designed by architect Irving J. Gill, a pioneer in concrete building construction, and was a passenger stop on PE's line from Los Angeles to San Bernardino. The station served the PE from

1914 until 1951 when the line was dieselized (regular passenger service ended in 1941). During the 1970s the station began a new career as office space for a variety of lumber yards. In the 1990s the Southern Pacific abandoned the last remnants of the PE line through Etiwanda and the station was last used for a lumber yard in 2002. There is a plan to restore the depot which is located along the Pacific Electric Trail. To celebrate the 100 anniversary there will be a celebration at the depot from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on January 25th. The station is located on the eastside of Etiwanda Avenue between Base Line Road and Saddleridge Street in Rancho Cucamonga.



Lodi Grapeline: I will conclude this month with a note about a holiday bus service I recently read about.

On December 19-20, 2013 the Lodi Grapeline once again offered their annual tour of lights trips around the city of Lodi California. For the low price of \$1.25 passengers could enjoy a tour of holiday lights in the city of Lodi from the comfort of a Grapeline bus. Probably one of the best buys of the season!



Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

Sorry but I had a busy holiday season so I am brief this month.

There has been at least one local activist who wondered out loud what stance the Bus Riders Union would take during the impending fare hearings Metro is edging up to launching soon.

Well, I think we now have our answer.

Some months ago I spotted some young people board a Wilshire bus in City West wearing shirts with the slogan "Fight for the Soul of the Cities". Since Eric Mann doesn't spend money unless something is important I did a Google search to find out more about this new campaign. The initial website had rhetoric but no specifics. Then at the December SO.CA.TA meeting a member brought flyers for this campaign he obtained from somewhere that showed now the campaign has specific goals:

No Cars in L.A. No Fare-Free Public Transportation, No Policing of "Fare Evasion" * Free student bus pass 5,000 Zero emission buses Moratorium on rail and freeway expansion.

This is rather breathtaking agitprop. I think Mann has seen the handwriting on the wall -- the anti-rail sound bite has run its course and he just is interested in squeezing whatever he can from the remnants of what arguably is his signature issue. He'd like to fulfill his national ambitions, which is likely the motivation for this new campaign (in line with past initiatives that bespoke of such ambitions). But a serious attempt to offer realistic positions seems to not be in the cards. So expect lots of protest in service of an agenda that is beyond DOA. 🚌 🚌

The Exciting Way To Travel !

Let M-T-A Whisk You

VIA *Swift Modern*

FREEWAY FLYERS

Complete M-T-A Information
Richmond 7-4455



The Way Forward By Dana Gabbard

As we face the New Year and changes in the group, I will be honest and state that things are in flux and how the shape of this group evolves isn't set in stone except that the status quo is not an option. Those with proposals must expect to be asked to assist in making them possible. Expecting others to do the work is not an option.

Here are some ideas that I and other have suggested:

-Forum on having signal priority for the Blue Line in Long Beach along Long Beach Boulevard

-Tour of the BYD electric bus manufacturing plant in Lancaster

-Transit training program for new users

-Public event with Metro CEO Arthur Leahy

-Explorations of bus and rail services in various areas of the region

-Charter or vintage bus excursion to Orange Empire Railway Museum festival; perhaps also the annual festival at Fillmore & Western (if they survive)

-Digital show on rail and its role in shaping urban landscapes by Paul Casey of Santa Monica Big Blue Bus at the Ken Edwards Center as that city prepares for the extension of the Expo Line slated for 2016

-Panel on rail station design

-Discussion of the challenges for journalists (traditional and bloggers) face covering transportation in Los Angeles

-Possible visits to transit agency properties

-Preview tour on the Omnitrans sbX

-Visit the OCTA Access Certification Center in Anaheim

If any of our members have ideas or suggestions and our willing to help undertake some of these proposals we encourage you contact SO.CA.TA. With your help some of these proposals make take place this year.

We also will be seeking assistance from Nation Builder <http://nationbuilder.com/> to reinvigorate the group and assist fundraising. Input and suggestions are welcome. 🚌 🚆

Are you interested in getting your SO.CA.TA newsletter in PDF?

We now offer the SO.CA.TA newsletter in PDF format to our members. The PDF newsletters are available a week before the meeting and are in full color. If you would like to get the PDF newsletter instead of the printed version email us at: rtd1121@yahoo.com

At our November 9th meeting the membership voted to increase limited income dues as of January 1, 2014.

The new dues are: \$18 for members who receive the newsletter in hardcopy which reflects the cost we incur to print and send the newsletter. Limited income members who receive the newsletter in PDF format as an e-mail attachment can still renew at the \$12 rate. Regular membership dues are still \$30 per year.

Transit Updates Continued

RTA Continued

Route 40: Service on Newport Road between Evens and Bradley has been discontinued and will now service Evans Road and La Piedra Road. The route will no longer enter the Kay Ceniceros Senior Center and the nearest bus stops will be located on Newport Road and Evans Road.

Route 41: The 4:05 PM weekday westbound trip will be adjusted to 4:10 p.m. for improved connections with employment centers.

Route 61: The weekday schedules will be improved with enhanced frequency in the afternoon with buses departing from stops every 75 minutes instead of every 100 minutes. Route will begin serving Bradley, La Piedra, Evans and Newport roads. The bus will no longer enter the Kay Ceniceros Senior Center.

Route 204: The 6:59 PM southbound trip will now wait at the Montclair Transit Center for the 6:37 PM Metrolink Train to arrive.

Route 206: The southbound schedule will be adjusted to better connections with trains at the North Main Corona Metrolink Station.

Route 208: The weekday northbound trip departing the Promenade Mall at 6:41 AM will now depart at 6:46 AM to improve connections with Route 206.

Route 217: The weekday northbound 5 p.m. and southbound 2:54 p.m. trips departing from the Escondido Transit Center and Hemet Valley Mall, respectively, will be adjusted for improved on-time performance.

The following routes will have adjustments to improve on-time performance:

Weekdays: 10, 19, 20, 22, 27, 31, 32, 74,

206 and 216



Weekends: 10, 16, 22, 27, 32 and 216

For more information contact RTA at 951.565.5002 or online at: www.RiversideTransit.com

Quartzsite Trolley

Effective December 2nd, the town of Quartzsite Arizona began operation of new Trolley Service connecting Quartzsite Town Park with various destinations within Quartzsite, including Main Street, Main Event and special event sites along Kuehn Road and the La Posa Campground. The service operates seven days a week (no service on Christmas Day and New Years Day) and fares are \$2.00 for a single ride and \$5.00 for a day pass.

The service is part of a 62 day demonstration project and is funded by advertising sponsorships. Service is subject to cancellation if performance measures are not met by February 2, 2014.

For more information contact Quartzsite at 928.927.4333 or online at: <http://www.ci.quartzsite.az.us>  



Thanksgiving Plans got derailed by Alexander Friedman

Cross-country train travel is something I have done yearly for over a decade; this year was no exception. During the Thanksgiving holidays I decided to take, for the first time, Amtrak's most southern route – The Sunset Limited. Then, after visiting New Orleans for a day, I planned to transfer onto the Crescent – for a trip straight to Washington, DC. Ultimately I wanted to visit my father, who lives just west of our nation's capital, for a nice Thanksgiving celebration.

I was truly excited about those two routes, the few remaining ones that I haven't traveled yet. So, the day of the trip has finally come! On the eve of November 20th I came to Los Angeles Union Station, and boarded the Sunset Limited. The train departed a half-an-hour behind schedule, and stopped on the bridge over the Los Angeles River, just outside of downtown. After losing nearly an hour, the Sunset Limited left our beloved City of Angels, heading east full steam!

Overall, the trip aboard Sunset Limited was uneventful; a smooth train ride, decent service, and quite boring scenery around. Thankfully, the not-so-picturesque landscapes allowed me to take care of lots of business on the way, to catch-up on other tasks, and to get much-needed rest after a stressful year.

Two days later our train successfully pulled into New Orleans terminal, and I was in the hotel in no-time. New Orleans truly impressed me! Beautiful architecture, safe walkable environment, pedestrian-oriented overall infrastructure; and of course – the famous French Quarter was the most magnificent part. It was quite sad to leave this amazing city, rich in its history and architecture.

Early next morning I boarded Amtrak's "Crescent," the second and final leg of my cross-country journey. The train departed on schedule, at exactly 7:00 AM. I stayed in a Viewliner sleeping car roomette; our car was the very first passenger car from the front, following the baggage car. Unlike most U.S. long-distance trains – comprised of double-decker Superliners – the Crescent carries single-level cars, including anti-quoted 40 year-old coaches and a bit newer 20 year-old Viewliner sleepers. Our car attendant David was very friendly and professional. We had interesting conversations with him and Steve (attendant from the next sleeping car) throughout the whole trip.

The first long day aboard the Crescent went well; the scenery was exciting comparing to the Sunset Limited route. Landscapes of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia were more interesting than Texas, Arizona, and southern California combined. Indeed, dense forests, plenty of lakes and creeks, as well as dramatic mountains, were far more interesting than naked sandy plains of the South. So far, the Crescent left positive impressions.

The only peculiar thing I noticed was strange swinging of the train at high speeds; it almost felt like riding a horse – the rough up-and-down swinging was so untypical. But at that time I did not pay attention to this minor (or not so minor?) factor. Overall, I was happy with the journey; and just past 10:00 PM I started getting ready for a good night's sleep, not imagining what was about to happen in just a couple of hours...

(Continued on Page 10)

Bulletin Board Continued

We should focus on significant issues and need not have an opinion on every proposal, just those that deserve or warrant a response. This will be held at the Macy Plaza food court (Flower and 7th Street in downtown Los Angeles) beginning at 1:00 PM and the hearing on the February 8th and it starts at 9:00 AM.

Eco-Rapid Transit eco-rapid.org/ is the new name of what was formerly known as the Orangeline Development Authority. As its website states it is "a joint powers authority (JPA) created to pursue development of a high speed, grade separated transit system that is environmentally friendly and energy efficient".

Eric Smith is a southern California native and career railroader who is doing artwork of the classic rail era that can be seen on a Facebook page he has created:

www.facebook.com/EricSmithRailroadArt  

Thanksgiving Plans got derailed Continued

At first, it was impossible to fall asleep due to our locomotive's horn that kept signaling constantly. On the one hand, the engineer is obliged by law to sound the horn before every intersection (including late night hours). And on the other hand, our car was in the very front – thus the horn was heard even louder!

Eventually, I did fall asleep. But not for long. At 12:10 AM a sudden, violent jolt woke me up. It was not strong enough to throw me off the bed, but it was noticeable; it felt like the train "dived" into the ground, with a loud grinding, "bang" sound... Throughout my life I've ridden on many trains, in different countries, on all types of tracks, switches, crossings, and joints; so I knew right away – this particular jolt felt nothing like an expanded joint of a rough track. The bump was sudden and strong. Immediately following the jolt our car had softly "jumped up" – thanks to the suspension – and then "landed" (hopefully) on the track. But the ride suddenly became bumpy, even though it did not feel like we landed on railroad ties.

Then the train began stopping, quite suddenly... Undoubtedly, emergency brakes have engaged. Something has happened...

Without knowing exactly what was going on, passengers realized something has gone terribly wrong; it was a very unpleasant moment of silence, to say the least. Everybody has awakened, and opened their sleeper doors, with only one question in mind, "What the heck did just happen?" Our car attendant David was the first one in the hallway, calming everybody down. Passengers and our car attendant at first did not realize the train has derailed. Only after getting out of our car and jumping onto the ground – in the middle of a cold night, with sub-zero temperatures – the car attendants learned first-hand: practically all cars jumped the track! Indeed, our train #20 "The Crescent" has derailed, on a cold wintery night of November 24th, near Spartanburg, South Carolina.

To Be Continued...

Photos of the Month

Metro NABI 8356 at Westfield Topanga on December 13, 2013 during the "Spark of Love" Toy Drive event.

*—Phillip Cegielski
Photo*



*New York MTA
Orion 3859 in
Times Square in
April 2013.*

*—Richard Silagi
Photo*

Yearly Dues for SO.CA.TA:

Individual Members: \$30.00 (Print or PDF)

Low Income: \$18.00 (Print Newsletter)

Low Income: \$12.00 (PDF Newsletter)

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 at 6:00 PM Pacific Time on the first Friday of the month 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 SO.CA.TA.

Copyright: © 2014 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, 2014

President:	Nate Zablen
Vice President:	Ken Ruben
Secretary:	Dana Gabbard
Treasurer:	Dave Snowden

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

Next SO.CA.TA Gatherings:

Jan. 11th, Metrolink trip to San Bernardino plus Omnitrans exploration. 8:30 AM at Gateway Fish Tank

Feb. 1st, Macy Plaza Food Court, discussion on proposed Metro Changes. 1:00 PM

January 2014 — Issue 254



Southern California Transit Advocates

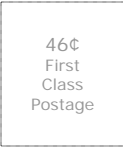
3010 Wilshire #362

Los Angeles, CA 90010

213.388.2364

<http://www.socata.net>

dgabbard@hotmail.com



FIRST CLASS MAIL