

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates



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Newsletter of the Southern
California Transit Advocates

Volume 22, Number 5
July/August 2014
Issue 258

<http://www.socata.net>

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On the cover: Metrolink F59PH 851 brings
up the rear of Train 689 at the Fullerton
Station on April 25, 2014.
—Andrew Novak Photo

ISSN 1525-2892

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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 en-
velope for returns. Submission are used at
the discretion of the editor and may be ed-
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Next SO.CA.TA Gatherings:

Aug 16th: Visit to the Metro TAP Lab from
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Gateway.

Aug/Sep: SOCATA Owl Excursion - Date to
be determined.

Bulletin Board

Bulletin Board:

July 12th Hillary Norton of Fixing Angelenos Stuck in Traffic presented the mobility hub concept that FAST is promoting (in partnership with Famima, Bike Nation and Zipcar). The members overall liked the idea and we will be doing what we can in support of it being implemented.

Saturday August 16th we will make a return visit to the TAP Lab from 10:00 AM to Noon, learning what the status of the program is and how it is progressing with the changes needed to implement the Metro fare change that will occur September 15th. Thanks to Ken Ruben for organizing this event and David Sutton of Metro for offering us the opportunity.

There is a possibility of our having a tour of the Big Blue Bus yard in the fall. If anyone would like to take the lead in planning this just contact us the usual ways:

213.388.2364 or dgabbard@hotmail.com

As always the best way to keep track of transit related meetings and events is via our online calendar --

www.brownbearsw.com/freecal/socata

If you hear of something you think should be added contact Dana Gabbard at:

213.388.2364 or dgabbard@hotmail.com



A word from the editor:

By now some of you have heard the news the news that the November/December 2014 issue of the newsletter be my last issue as editor. After six years in the editor's seat I have decided it is time to move on and pursue other interests.

I want to thank all of the member's past and present of SO.CA.TA. Without your support this would not be possible. I also want to mention some folks who helped contribute to the newsletter in various ways during my tenure as editor. First of all Dana Gabbard; Dana has been the newsletter production manager and also contributes the PLAC column, the Bulletin Board and until recently the Members in action. Kymberleigh Richards; Ms. Richard's provided the interesting Metro Board Report for the first two years I was editor. Even after leaving the group she would on occasion share information for the newsletter. Hank Fung has often provided information on the smaller, lesser known, shuttles in Los Angeles. Finally I want to thank all of those who have contributed photos over the years, Joshua Thurman, Craig Barnes, Russ Jones, Wayne Doran, Albert Novak, Joe Caronetti, Richard Silagi, Mark Strickert, Dave Snowden and Dana Gabbard. Thanks to everyone else who contributed and my apologies if I have forgot anyone.

At this point I do not know if anyone will take over the newsletter, but if there is I will be glad to work with them on a temporary basis. As always I can be reached at rtd1121@yahoo.com or at Post Office Box 2383, Downey, CA 90242. 🚗 🚗

Transit Updates

AVTA

On July 14th the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) made several service changes. Below is a summary of those changes.

Route 7: Schedule adjustments for improved connections and an additional morning trip with 6:20 AM departure from Palmdale Transportation Center to help with early morning passenger loads.

Route 10: Running time slightly increased between scheduled stops to improve on-time performance along heavy corridors.

Route 11: Service extended to Avenue J and 20th Street East to provide a direct connection to shopping centers and a safe location with ample lighting and bus stop shelters for the end of the line. The new terminus at J and 20th Street East will connect with Routes 4, 12 and Lake LA Express. Schedules adjusted for both weekday and weekends with new scheduled stops at Lancaster Boulevard & Valley Central Way and Lancaster Boulevard & Sierra Highway.

Route 12: Now terminates at Avenue J and 20th Street East, providing safer transfer point with ample lighting during the evening times. Route 11 will continue to serve between Avenue J & 20th Street East and Avenue I and 40th Street East. Schedules adjusted for both weekday and weekends with a new time point at Lancaster Boulevard & Valley Central Way.

Route 790 (TRANSporter): Schedule adjustment between Newhall, Metrolink, and the McBean Regional Transit Center.

For more information contact AVTA at 661.945.9445 or online at:

<http://www.avta.com>

Big Blue Bus

On August 24th the Big Blue Bus (Santa Monica) will be making the following service changes.

Route 1: The trip from UCLA to downtown Santa Monica at 12:12 AM will be discontinued due to low ridership. Weekday service between California Avenue & Lincoln Boulevard and Venice Circle will be reduced to hourly before 10:00 AM. Schedule adjustments will also be made to improve on time performance.

Route 3: The route will be split into two routes. Route 3 will continue to service the south end of the Line from the Aviation Green Line Station and 4th Street in downtown Santa Monica. New route 3M will serve the northern end of the line from downtown Santa Monica to UCLA. Service levels on both lines will be maintained, however there will be significant adjustments. The bus stops at Aviation & 111th Street and Lincoln & Palms will be removed.

Route 3M: New route 3M will begin and end in Santa Monica at 7th Street and Olympic Boulevard. Weekday peak service will operate every 20-30 minutes and after 8:00 PM it will operate hourly. Weekend service before 9:00 AM and after 7:00 PM will operate hourly. New bus stops will be added at 7th Street & Olympic Boulevard and 5th Street & Colorado Avenue.

Rapid 3: Northbound service between 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM will now operate every 10 minutes. The 9:10 AM northbound trip will be discontinued. Also the afternoon service will be moved 5 minutes earlier to improve on-time performance.

(Continued on Page 5)

Transit Updates Continued

Big Blue Bus Continued

Route 4: There is new routing in the Civic Center area. Buses will travel south on 4th Street through downtown, turn right on Pico Boulevard and right on Main Street terminating at the new Civic Auditorium. Select weekday and weekend trips are being discontinued due to low ridership. The bus stop at Olympic Boulevard and Avenida Mazatlan will be discontinued and new bus stops added at 4th Street & Northbound Civic Center Driveway, Pico Boulevard 9& 4th Street and Main Street & Civic Auditorium.

Route 5: Buses will now terminate at 7th Street & Olympic Drive and will no longer serve 4th Street and Arizona. A new stop will be added on 5th Street south of Colorado Avenue. There will be other schedule adjustments and added running time to improve on-time performance.

Route 6: Service resumes on September 2nd when Santa Monica College classes begin.

Route 7: Eastbound service on weekday mornings before 6:45 AM will be adjusted by 14 minutes. Evening service westbound will now operate every 30 minutes between 8:00 PM and 9:00 PM.

Rapid 7: Eastbound service will now operate every 10 minutes between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM and after 9:00 PM service will operate every 20 minutes. Other service changes will be made to help improve on-time performance.

Route 8: The first westbound trip leaving Pico and Westwood on weekends will be discontinued. A new stop will be added northbound at 5th Street and Colorado Avenue.

Route 9: There is new routing in the Civic Center area. Buses will travel south on 4th Street through downtown, turn right on Pico Boulevard and right on Main Street terminating at the new Civic Auditorium. Several trips will be added and others reinstated for the new school year. Other schedule adjustments will be made.

Rapid 10: Eastbound service on weekdays will now operate every 20 minutes between 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM. Westbound service will now operate every 30 minutes between 6:00 PM and 7:30 PM. Passengers will now be allowed to board and alight at Pico and Bundy and ride locally in Santa Monica. Passengers will still be required to pay a \$2.00 fare. Several bus stops will be discontinued including northbound Figueroa & 6th, southbound Grand at 7th & 8th and Santa Monica & 22nd.

Routes 12, 14 and Rapid 20: Will all have various schedule adjustments.

Route 41: Before 9:00 AM service will operate every 20 minutes and the 6:25 PM trip from SMC to Montana & Euclid will be discontinued.



(Continued on Page 6)

Transit Updates Continued

Metrolink

On July 5th Metrolink began weekend service on the 91 Line between Los Angeles and Riverside via Fullerton. Trains 751 and 753 depart Riverside at 7:40 AM and 9:00 AM respectively and Trains 752 and 754 depart Los Angeles Union Station at 3:15 PM and 7:15 PM respectively.

With this new weekend service San Bernardino Line Trains 351, 364, 367 and 376 will no longer serve Riverside.



Omnitrans

Effective September 2nd, fares at Omnitrans will increase. One-way fare will now be \$1.75, day passes \$5.00 and 31-day passes \$55. Current prepaid passes will be honored after the fare increase.

Also on September 2nd, the agency will be making several service changes. Below is a summary of those changes.

Routes 3-4: Will now operate every 15 minutes after 8:00 AM.

Route 5: Buses will now travel on Waterman between Gilbert and Barton no longer serving 4th Street or Goodwill. The frequency will also be increased to every 30 minutes.

Route 7: The terminal at the southern end of the line will be moved to 5th and F Streets.

Route 8: This route will be divided into a Short 8 and a Long 8. The Short 8 travels from downtown San Bernardino to the Redlands Mall. The Long 8 travels from downtown San Bernardino to Crafton Hills College. The route will no longer service the

Yucaipa Transit Center.

Route 9: Will be eliminated.

Route 14: The tripper that currently serves Almeria will be moved to Live Oak the new location of the ISS workshop.

Route 19: This line will be extended to the Yucaipa Transit Center along the alignment of former Route 9 from the VA Hospital to Yucaipa.

Route 20: Buses will now operate every 60 minutes and will operate on Juniper to and from the Fontana Transit Center, eliminated service on Sierra.

Route 22: Buses will now utilize Valley Boulevard to/from the Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. Service on the San Bernardino and Wild Rose "loop" will be eliminated.

Route 61: The schedule will be modified and the transfer at Ontario Mills Mall eliminated.

Route 215: The frequency on weekends will be increased to every 30 minutes for most of the trips.

Route 365: A tripper will be added between Butterfield Ranch and Chino Hills High School.

OmniLink: Service will be eliminated. 80% of the OmniLink service area is covered by OmniGo.

For more information contact Omnitrans at 800.966.6428 or online at:

www.omnitrans.org  



OC Trolley Company



The OC Trolley Company operates three routes in and around the Garden Grove Resort Area using cutaway buses.

The Green Line operates from the resort area to Garden Walk in Anaheim, The Outlets at Orange and the Christ Cathedral (formerly the Chrystal Cathedral).

The Red Line operates from the resort area to Historic Main Street in Garden Grove and the Garden Grove Costco.

The Orange Line operates from the resort area to Huntington Beach.

The Green and Red Lines are Free while the Orange Line is \$18 for adults and \$9 for children, round-trip.

For more information contact OC Trolley at 213.364.1121 or online at:

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



Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

The collective bargaining agreement between Metro and the United Transportation Union representing bus and rail operators expired June 30th. A new tentative agreement was reached between the agency and union but the rank and file turned it down, 887 no to 826 yes, which means only about a third of the membership bothered to vote. This has brought to the surface long simmering discontent among some operators regarding what in their view were shortcomings of past agreements and a sense the UTU leadership is out of touch with the concerns of its members. This has recently manifested itself in a petition drive for the operators to decertify the UTU. A video posted on YouTube titled "division nine petition drive union coercion" has video and audio from a mini-camera (peeking thru the pocket of a petition organizer's shirt) of a confrontation between a petition signature gatherer and a union official. The rejection of the agreement will provide fresh fodder for the dissidents to gather signatures. While the agreement had provided some wage increases (which operators have not had to any extent for some time) and addressed work rules regarding accidents which had been used in the past to terminate a rather large number of high seniority drivers. It failed to deal with two long-standing issues that operators are pissed off about: a two tier wage structure based on when one was hired and the use of on-board cameras justified for safety instead being used to gather evidence of minor infractions for disciplinary purposes (for example taking a sip of water while driving).

Stunned at the rejection the Union leaders are reportedly in talks with Metro to perhaps tweak the agreement before offering it again

to the members for ratification. That is how things played out in 2010. One problem with that scenario is the Metro Board goes dark (i.e. doesn't meet) in August so there will be two months for the dissidents to gather signatures and stir up discontent while the UTU leaders can only say "we are working on a better agreement and hope to have a vote on it soon". Do the UTU leaders have the savvy to address some of the issues I mentioned above in a tweaked deal? It likely would assuage the discontent and maybe get a yes vote (even if it isn't an overwhelming victory). Who do the dissidents hope to have replace UTU? One possibility is the Teamsters but other than OCTA they generally don't represent large transit agency employees. The other possibility rumored is the Amalgamated Transit Union, who currently represents Metro mechanics and service attendants. Is ATU at the national level aware of this and interested in swooping in and being the new union for Metro's 4500+ rail and bus operators? Unknown. Meanwhile in November 2011 UTU merged with a sheet metal union to become SMART, the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers. A justification for this was that this would give clout to the transportation workers via the long-standing political ties the sheet metal union had cultivated over the years. The first manifestation of this was when SMART help broker the pension deal with the state of California over federal 13(c) provisions. Will SMART sit on its hands while 4500 members jump ship? Unlikely. Obviously there are multiple factors at play in this situation and the outcome is very unpredictable. Stay tuned. UTU has not taken a strike authorization vote and at this time I see no likelihood of a strike. 🚊 🚗

BYD Bus Plant Tour By Hank Fung

On July 11th, SO.CA.TA visited the BYD electric bus factory in Lancaster. It was a long day for most members and guests, either taking Metrolink or driving in from Los Angeles. But the journey was rewarded with a behind the scenes look at an electric bus manufacturer.



BYD, which stands for Build Your Dreams, started out as a rechargeable battery company headquartered in Shenzhen, China. In 2003 it acquired a Chinese automobile company and began producing vehicles under its own name. Electric bus production began in 2009. Their flagship product built in the United States is the Battery Electric Bus, a standard 40 foot electric bus. Batteries are located above the wheel wells, in the back of the bus, and on the top, but otherwise the interior is that of a standard transit bus. To reduce weight, an aluminum body is used with welded connections which according to BYD increase stability. This makes BYD buses slightly heavier than diesel buses of the same length and comparable to that of natural gas buses. In our tour we saw buses being prepared for use by Stanford University.

The factory was originally home to Rexhall recreational vehicle and has been converted

into a bus manufacturing plant. Bill Rex, the president of Rexhall industries, also the general manager of the BYD facility in the United States. BYD employs 60 people and plans to grow to 200 people by 2015, when the plant is in full production. The nascent stages of an assembly line are visible, but not fully developed as key equipment has not been installed. BYD states that full assembly line equipment will be ready when full production begins. Still, BYD has taken care in redesigning the RV facility for bus manufacturing, with clean rooms, hoists, and a trolley system being developed to move parts through the assembly line. Sanding and painting is done in an enclosed facility to avoid dust from traveling outside.



Batteries are manufactured at a facility approximately two miles away. BYD uses lithium iron phosphate batteries for their vehicles, which allow for longer range and are less toxic than other battery types. BYD is the only manufacturer of long range buses in the United States, while other manufacturers such as Proterra use in-route charging technology.

(Continued on Page 11)

Transit Topics By Andrew Novak

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

Rutland Railroad: Have you ever heard of the Rutland? Recently I have discovered this 400 mile railroad that operated north and south of its namesake city in Vermont. The railroad can trace its origins to 1843. Aside from bridge traffic between other New England railroads the Rutland also hauled marble and milk. On the northern segment the railroad had a spectacular causeway across Lake Champlain. The railroad suffered from an economic downturn in the 1950s when dairy's and marble producers began shipping more by truck. In September of 1961 a labor strike ended the Rutland for good. In 1963 the state of Vermont purchased the remains of the railroad and continued operations as the Vermont Railway, although the Lake Champlain causeway is all but a memory. For more information on the Rutland visit the Rutland Railroad Historical Society at <http://www.rutlandrr.org/>



El Paso Street Car: Recently the Transportation Policy Board of El Paso's Metropolitan Planning Organization approved state funding, \$97 million, to resume the El Paso Streetcar Project. The streetcar would run

north from Stanton Street in downtown to the University of Texas at El Paso. The route would loop around the campus and return to downtown on Oregon Street. Plans include 27 stations along the route.

The city hopes to begin construction in a year and it is estimated to take three and a half years to complete. But the new line is not without controversy as some local leaders would like to see other, mostly highway projects, funded. From 1950 to 1974 the El Paso City Lines operated a fleet of former San Diego PCC on a line that operated from El Paso to Juarez Mexico. It is unknown if the new service will use new cars or the PCC's which are still owned by the city.



RTP News and Views: I will conclude this month with some shameless self-promotion. I have recently completed RTP News and Views Jr. Volume 12½, Issue 2. Celebrating my 20th year in the amateur newsletter business, this issue contains San Pedro Red Car at 10 Part, DowneyLINK at 20 and Amtrak's San Joaquin at 40. If you are interested in a print or PDF copy of this newsletter contact me at rtd1121@yahoo.com or via USPS at: Post Office Box 2383, Downey, CA 90242.



BYD Bus Plant Tour Continued

Long range bus technology allows for 155 miles per charge. BYD representatives claim that the batteries have been simulated to operate for the standard 12 year bus life-span and still retain over 80% of their capacity. Indeed, they indicated that one possible use of used batteries could be as portable generating stations in an emergency.

In a test ride both around the BYD facility, and a ride some members took from Lancaster to Palmdale, they found the bus to handle similarly to regular 40 foot buses. One member noted that the engine and vehicle noise was louder than that of the Proterra bus, although this could have been due to the air conditioner. BYD is currently demonstrating their buses to transit agencies, airports, and universities around the United States, and does not yet have a vehicle in regular revenue service here in this country, although Chinese electric buses have been operating in revenue service for the past three years.

Following the tour some members checked out some of the electric vehicle technology. Currently BYD cars are available for sale only to fleets in the United States but will be rolled out to the general public when the cost of batteries are reduced to make the car competitive with gasoline powered vehicles.

BYD staff invited us to revisit the facility in a couple of years when production for the larger orders begins.

Our thanks to Matthew Jurjevich, Bill Rex, Joanne Wei, and Viki Yang for arranging for this tour and greeting us in Lancaster.

Attending were members Craig Barnes, J.K. Drummond, Hank Fung, Dana Gabbard, Guillermo Merino, Andrew Novak, Perias Pillay, Josh Thurman, Chaffee Yiu, and guests Allan Alessio and Kyle McAdam. 🚌 🚌



*Above are photos of the BYD demonstrator that was used to give the SO.CA.TA members a short ride around the area of the BYD plant.
(Andrew Novak Photos)*

ART's New Digs!

On June 12th the Anaheim Resort Transportation (ART) dedicated their new office in Anaheim. The new facility is just south of the previous office on Anaheim Boulevard. This is a permanent home for the agency.



The front of the new ART building on June 12, 2014.

-Andrew Novak Photo

ART RE 1220 on display in front of the new office on June 12, 2014

-Andrew Novak Photo



Metro's Division 20

On July 27, 2014 a group of rail and transit enthusiasts were able to tour Metro's Division 20 in Los Angeles. Division 20 is home to the entire Metro subway fleet. A four car train is seen arriving in the yard from the yard tower.

-Andrew Novak Photo



A train of Red Line cars sits on one of the inspection tracks inside the shop at Division 20.

*-Andrew Novak
Photo*

Greyhound's 100th

On July 27th Greyhound's 100th Anniversary bus was on display at Chicago's Navy Pier along with several historic Greyhound Buses.



Greyhound 1937 is a 1937 built Yellow Coach bus on display at Chicago's Navy Pier.

-Melvin Bernero Photo

A rear view of the buses on display at the Navy Pier in Chicago. From left to right are: Prevost 86685, MCI 1984, MCI MC-7 1968, ACF-Brill 1948 and Yellow Coach 1937.

-Melvin Bernero Photo



Photos of the Month

*Marguerite Shuttle
BYD bus 3407
at the Palo Alto
Caltrain Station
in April 2014.
Marguerite Shuttle
serves the
Stanford University
Campus.*

*—Richard Silagi
Photo*



April 2014 - Richard Silagi



*Pacific Electric
PCCs layover at
the Burbank
Terminal on
June 4, 1955.*

*—Ted Damon
Photo/Pacific
Railroad Society
Collection*

Summer Beach Bus!



Jerry Squier Collection



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