

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates

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*First outbound Metrolink
91/Perris Valley Line
train at Downtown Perris
station, 6/6/16*

Mark Strickert Photo

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Mobility 21 is seeking volunteers for their October 21st Summit at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim. Information and link to registration forms at http://wfc2.wiredforchange.com/o/8721/t/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=46853

As noted last issue, John Ulloth has volunteered to chair a transit photo contest to generate interest in our group. "The purpose of this contest is to capture images of transit operations to be used to promote transit use & ridership throughout Southern California (ranging everywhere in California from San Luis Obispo south to the Mexican Border)," and to promote SOCATA. John prepared an information flyer, which will be included as a separate attachment to this e-mail.

Mr. Ulloth has also prepared call-to-action letters for mailing to officials involved with the new Metrolink Perris Valley line. These too are attached, to print out and mail.



The SOCATA newsletter "headway" is every other month, with deadlines for the rest of 2016 on Wednesdays, September 7th and November 2nd. Mailing address for newsletter items is Mark Strickert, PO Box 1171, Rialto CA 92377. E-mail still goes to busnrail@yahoo.com, and texts to (909) 685-1977.

Contributors to this issue include Alek Friedman, Dana Gabbard, Charles Hobbs, Russ Jones, Andy Novak, John Ulloth, and James Washington. 

TRANSIT UPDATES

Antelope Valley AVTA

AVTA's board has approved purchase of Wireless Advance Vehicle Electrification (WAVE) battery chargers, part of their plan to switch to a zero emission bus fleet by 2018. The WAVE chargers will be set up at transfer centers such as Lancaster City Park and Palmdale Transit Center, so buses can recharge during layovers.

Arcadia Transit

The new Fixed-Route plan has been fully implemented. Three routes cover the city, replacing the former general public dial-a-ride service.

Blue Line - runs east-west along Duarte Road and north-south along Holly Avenue, connecting southwest Arcadia to many local activity centers and the Gold Line Arcadia Station.

Green Line - new designation for the route that had been operating since March. Serves the Metro Gold Line Arcadia Station, Santa Anita Park, City Hall, Methodist Hospital, Westfield Santa Anita Mall and Los Angeles County Arboretum.

Red Line runs north-south along First Avenue and Sixth Avenue connecting east Arcadia to many local activity centers and the Gold Line Arcadia Station.

Fare is 50¢ for the general public, ages 5 to 61, with one free transfer between Arcadia fixed-route lines. Seniors (62 & older), persons with disabilities, and children (under 5, with an accompanying

adult) are free.

Dial-a-ride service is now restricted to seniors 62 years or older, or to persons with disabilities. Advance registration is required for all dial-a-ride users.

Information for all Arcadia Transit services is on the city website, at <https://www.arcadiaca.gov/government/city-departments/development-services/transportation/arcadia-transit>

Foothill Transit

Foothill is now operating the former Metro 190 and 194, and the former Metro 270 north of El Monte station.

The 190 map and schedule pamphlet is at: <http://foothilltransit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Line-190-Schedule-and-Map-Pamphlet-sm.pdf>

Line 194: <http://foothilltransit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Line-194-Schedule-and-Map-Pamphlet-SMALL.pdf>

Line 270: <http://foothilltransit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Line-270-Schedule-and-Map-Pamphlet-Small.pdf>

Laguna Beach Transit

The annual free summer city-wide parking shuttle system has been further supplemented by a new "Summer Breeze" service, from a new park-and-

ride lot at the 405 freeway and the 133 toll road to the Festival of Arts, Art-A-Fair, and Sawdust Festival in Laguna Beach.

Los Angeles World Airports

Flyaway bus service from Santa Monica to LAX will be discontinued, effective September 6th, 2016

Norwalk Transit

Route 1 - the north end has been cut back to Rio Hondo College

Route 7 - Norwalk Transit's replacement service for the south end of former Metro Line 270, operating Monday to Saturday from Norwalk Green Line station to El Monte Station. Map/schedule is at <http://www.ci.norwalk.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=10242>

Redlands Passenger Rail Project

The Redlands rail project is moving forward. The new line is scheduled to begin service in 2020, using existing rail right-of-way between San Bernardino Transit Center and the University of Redlands. SANBAG's Board of Directors approved issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for obtaining rolling stock, in the form of Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs) much like for NCTD's Sprinter Line from Oceanside to Escondido. To obtain community input and to publicize the project, they have had booths at several community events and staged a series of focus group sessions involving people who have in the recent past expressed an interest in the project. Information from the focus groups will also help in the marketing/branding process. Project information is at www.redlandsrailproject.org

Riverside RTA

RTA will soon begin to implement a Downtown Riverside Bus Stop Improvement Project. Project goals are to close the Downtown Transit Center, open new and upgrade a total of 26 downtown bus stops, and open a new bus layover/parking area on Vine St. across from the Metrolink station.

<http://www.riversidetransit.com/index.php/downtown-riverside-stop-improvement-project> includes a link to detailed bus stop improvement plans, and a stop list for the proposed Rapid bus

route 1R.

With opening of the Metrolink Perris Valley line, routes 13, 20, 61, and 74 have been adjusted to serve new stations. Also, new route 26 connects the March Field station with Moreno Valley Mall, and new route 52 connects the Hunter Park station with the UC-Riverside campus, about a mile away.

Route 51 (UCR Crest Cruiser) - on summer hiatus, resuming service when the UCR fall term begins on Monday, September 19th.

Route 55 (Temecula Trolley) - will resume service on Tuesday, August 9th.

CommuterLink Route 202 - two trips were added each direction, effective July 1st, to improve connections with Coaster trains at Oceanside Transit Center. In addition, "Beach Bus" trips to and from Oceanside have been added for the summer on weekdays and weekends through September 5th. All buses will have wi-fi, and most also have USB charging ports. Round-trip fare for "Beach Bus" is \$6, with discounted rates for seniors, disabled customers and veterans. Students in grades 1-12 ride for only 25 cents, a special youth fare that is available on all RTA service until September 10th. Go-Pass, U-Pass and CityPass are also accepted.

Norco College has been added to the list of schools taking part in RTA's Go-Pass program, allowing students to use their college IDs for unlimited RTA rides. Go-Pass student ride programs are already offered at Cal Baptist University, La Sierra University, Moreno Valley College, Mt. San Jacinto College, Riverside City College, and UC-Riverside. A similar program for City of Riverside employees, the "City Pass", has been renewed until 2021.



San Diego MTS

The MTS Transit Store moved from its longtime Broadway/1st Avenue corner to the MTS building at 12th & Imperial Transit Center, 1255 Imperial Avenue, effective 6/20/16. Hours will remain 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM weekdays only.

Santa Monica Big Blue Bus

A new "Blue @ Night" dial-a-ride service offers late-night rides to/from certain parts of Santa Monica from/to the 17th St./Santa Monica College Expo line station. Cab rides cost \$3, and are available from 8:00 PM to 3:00 AM. Details are at <http://www.bigbluebus.com/Newsroom/News/Blue-at-Night-Your-Late-Night-Connection-to-Expo.aspx>



Last day of BBB Line 12—Russ Jones photo

Victor Valley VVTA

Route 200-Needles Link debuted June 17th, offering Fridays-only service to Barstow and Victorville. Trips leave from the G & Broadway Needles Area Transit bus stop at 6:15 AM, arriving at 7th & Lorene Transit Center 10:30 AM. Return trips leave 7th & Lorene 2:30 PM, arriving Needles 7:15 PM. Advance reservations are recommended, especially if a pick-up or drop-off is needed elsewhere in the City of Needles. This is important since the route leaves too early and returns too late to connect with local Needles Area Transit service.

Route 15--B-V Link began Saturday service on July 2nd, with 4 round trips each Victorville-San Bernardino and Victorville-Barstow. <http://vvta.org/bus/route-15/>

Mall of Victor Valley management has requested removal of all VVTA buses from their property, effective September 6th, 2016. The mall stop is a transfer point between routes 21, 44, 52, 53, and 54, and has been well used by mall employees and patrons for over 25 years. A public hearing will be held August 15th, 9:30 AM at VVTA, 17150 Smoke Tree Street, Hesperia. Comments can also be e-mailed to dlorrah@vvta.org.

City of Huntington Beach

The annual summer Surf City USA® Shuttle is back in operation, Fridays and weekends until Sunday, September 4th. Route, stop list, and live bus tracking are available at <http://www.surfcityusashuttle.com/>

City of Oxnard

The city-operated "Oxnard Harbor & Beaches Dial-a-Ride" ended on 6/30/16. The city's brochure (<http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/HABDAR-flyer-FINAL.pdf>) noted other existing services, including Gold Coast Transit routes and VCTC's Access paratransit.

City of Westlake Village

Westlake Village Trolley circulates 3:00 to 10:00 PM Fridays and Saturdays through September 3rd. All trips originate at City Hall/Library. Schedule and map at <http://www.wlv.org/documentcenter/view/513>

County of Los Angeles Public Works

Marina del Rey Waterbus and Beach Shuttle operates Friday, weekends and holidays through Labor Day. The Waterbus also runs on Thursdays. Schedule and map at http://file.lacounty.gov/dbh/docs/cms1_146916.pdf

The county's Topanga Canyon Beach Bus now operates "Year-round, 7 Days a Week" to Topanga Beach and Santa Monica. Brochure is posted at http://ladpw.org/PDD/Beach_Bus/TOPANGACANYON_2016.pdf



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

St. Louis LOOP Trolley: Recently the LOOP Trolley in St. Louis, Missouri took delivery of two from Melbourne Trams that they purchased from Seattle. The two cars numbered 482 and 518 had served on the Seattle Waterfront Trolley from 1982 to 2005 when the line closed. The cars have been in storage since the line closed. A third car from Seattle, 512, will also join the LOOP Trolley after work is completed on the car by Gomaco of Iowa. These three ex-Melbourne call will be joining former Portland Replica cars 511 and 512 and will operate on a new heritage street car line in the Del Mar area of St. Louis. Track work is well under way in St. Louis and work is also progressing on the maintenance facility for the LOOP Trolley. The hope is to have the new line in service in 2017. Two former Melbourne Trams, 272 and 605 remain stored in Seattle.



Tram 518 is seen in front of the Seattle Waterfront car barn in May 1991. This was before the line close and the car barn raised for an art park. – Harold L. Elmore Photo

Marin Water Taxi: The Tideline water taxi which currently offers water taxi service and a hop

on and off service around the San Francisco Bay Area has filed an application with the California State Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to operate a commuter ferry service from Berkeley to San Francisco. They are also looking to start a commuter ferry from Belvedere in Marin County to San Francisco. The new services would not compete head to head with existing services, but rather act as supplemental service. The Tideline is also looking to offer water taxi service to Napa in 2017 once the Napa River has been dredged. (Info from *Marin Independent Journal*)

Rapid Transit Press : Our friends at Rapid Transit Press have completed a great issue on the PCCs of Toronto, Ontario. Toronto had the largest fleet of PCCs in North America and the June 2016 issue is the first of several issues on this 745 car fleet.



For more information contact Rapid Transit Press at:

Andrew Novak - Post Office Box 2383 - Downey, CA 90242 or at rtd1121@yahoo.com



Kenosha Transit 4615, an ex-Toronto PCC, still had TTC interior markings in June, 2001

Photo by Mark Strickert

For a region famed for the automobile being the dominant form of transportation it is fascinating to witness the swift transformation Southern California is undergoing as the rail network expands and as more and more proposals for further expansion proliferate. Here is a status report on the most recent developments.

The extension of the Metrolink commuter train service between Riverside and Perris began operation on June 6. The 24 mile extension includes 4 stations and initially operates only on weekdays. More details are at the project website, <http://www.perrisvalleyline.info/>

The next Metrolink extension will open next year, extending one mile from the current San Bernardino station (the historic Santa Fe Depot) to a station in downtown San Bernardino at the new transit center. This is a precursor to a further nine mile extension to Redlands slated to open in 2020. More details are at the project website, <http://www.redlandsrailproject.org/>

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) meanwhile continues to coordinate a study of rail service between Los Angeles and the Coachella Valley (where Palm Springs and the famed music festival are located). This is being done in partnership with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, California Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration. Per the project website "Due to the trip length (141 miles from Los Angeles) and the approximate three-hour ride, Amtrak is viewed as the most appealing option for commuting and leisure travel. Although stops and station locations are yet to be determined, the initial service plan would be for two daily round trips along the corridor." The full process from initial planning to opening is expected to take seven years. More details are at the RCTC website, rctc.org.

As I reported in our last newsletter there has been slow but steady progress in implementing a rail option for commuting between Ventura County and Santa Barbara, north of Los Angeles along the Pacific coast. This involves an adjustment to the schedule of the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner and is currently at the stage of intense negotiations among the key players with the announcement of agreements hopefully to soon be forthcoming.

Streetcars are becoming a national phenomenon,

with numerous cities undertaking or considering it as a component of urban revitalization. Four projects are being given serious consideration in Southern California.

The one that has received the most attention (including at the panel I moderated at the Annual Rail Users' Network Conference last year) would be in downtown Los Angeles, linking the Convention Center/LA Live entertainment district with the historic Broadway corridor, the Civic Center and Bunker Hill (location of the Music Center and Walt Disney concert hall). More details are on the project website, <http://streetcar.la/>.

In Orange County, south of Los Angeles, two projects are being considered. One would link the Anaheim Amtrak/Metrolink station with Disneyland and the Anaheim Convention Center. It is currently in the environmental review stage with the hope to have it operating by 2018. More details at the project website, <http://aconnext.com/arc/>. The other would link the Santa Ana Amtrak/Metrolink station and a multi-modal transit center in adjacent Garden Grove through downtown Santa Ana along Santa Ana Blvd. and a portion of a historic Pacific Electric Red Car right-of-way. The project is being overseen by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and is currently in the design and engineering stage with the hope it will begin operations in 2020. More details can be seen on the OCTA website, octa.net.

Riverside, east of Los Angeles, also is considering a streetcar for its downtown district along with serving the University of California, Riverside. A feasibility study is currently being prepared, with release anticipated later this year at which point the city will decide whether to go forward with the project. Further details are on the city's website at <http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/riversidereconnects/>

Construction of the 11 mile mid-coast extension of the San Diego trolley linking Old Town and the University of California, San Diego along the I-5 corridor with nine new stations is to begin later this year with service to commence in 2021. More details can be found at <http://www.keepsandiegomoving.com/Midcoast/midcoast-intro.aspx>

The most significant element of the rail revolution is in Los Angeles county and the burgeoning Metro

Regional Rail Expansion *continued*

Rail system. March 5th the 11 mile foothill extension of the Gold Line light rail between Pasadena and Azusa opened. This was followed in turn on May 20 with the opening of the 6.6 mile Phase 2 of the Expo line light rail between Culver City and Santa Monica. The regional connector, a 1.9 mile project through downtown Los Angeles, will link the Gold Line and Expo and Blue lines. This will facilitate one seat rides between Pasadena, East Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Long Beach, USC, Hollywood and many points in between. It is slated to open in 2020.

The 8.5 mile Crenshaw light rail project is currently under construction. This will link the Expo and Green line light rail lines and also serve LAX (via a People Mover that will run from the rail station into the terminal area). This includes eight stations and is slated to open in 2019. Also under construction is the nine mile extension of the Purple Line heavy rail subway along Wilshire Blvd. with seven new stations linking Westwood (near the UCLA campus), Beverly Hills and the Miracle Mile district.

Phase 1 is due to open in 2023. Phases two and three are currently being planned while funding is being secured to hopefully accelerate construction.

Part of the effort to accelerate involves an effort to augment local funding. A draft plan by Los Angeles Metro has been released proposing that the local transit sales tax Measure R be extended along with an addition 1/2% sales tax. Extensive outreach is being done to shape the final proposal. MoveLA, an advocacy non-profit, is leading the effort to build community support to secure the 2/3 majority the measures will need to pass. The current plan is to have the tax measures on the November ballot. I am hopeful that unlike 4 years ago when a similar effort just fell short by less than a percentage point that this time we will succeed.

Not so long ago the only rail in this region was a few Amtrak trains. The explosion of Southern California rail services and enthusiastic efforts to expand rail is remarkable, notable and gratifying. Kudos to the advocates, officials, stakeholders and agencies that are making it possible. 🚆

Members in Action

Friday, May 20th, SOCATA President Zablen attended as an invited guest the VIP ceremony for the opening of the Exposition light rail line extension to Santa Monica. The President also (through persistent effort) secured for us a booth the following day at the community celebration held at the Culver City station. Besides Dana Gabbard and the President, Perias Pillay and Hugh John also assisted in staffing the booth along with Charles Hobbs who had on display his book Hidden History of Transportation in Los Angeles (two copies of which were sold). Members who came by the booth to say hello included Dominick Falzone and Warren Quon. Santa Monica councilmember (and former Metro Board member) Pam O'Connor came by our booth also. The other transit related exhibitors at the event were Culver CityBus and RailLA. We handed out material about our group along with Passenger Train Journal and the Rail Users' Network. As always we answered questions and engaged in a dialogue with attendees. Our thanks to President Zablen for arranging this.

Monday, May 23rd Dana Gabbard along with Presi-

dent Zablen, Secretary Pillay and members Hugh John and J.K. Drummond attended Move LA's annual conference in downtown Los Angeles. A quarter page ad in the event program promoted our group and it was a useful opportunity to network and share information with fellow attendees. The depth and breadth of the stakeholders participating was heartening and speaks well for the prospects for the Los Angeles County transit funding measure that will be on the November ballot.

John Ulloth and James Washington staffed an unofficial information table at the Downtown Perris station on June 6th, the first day of Perris Valley Metrolink service. Charles Hobbs and Mark Strickert rode on the first southbound trip from Downtown Riverside, and Mark and kids found Metrolink staffers greeting midday riders at South Perris station. We all noted some confusion about where trains were to stop at Downtown Perris station, with one door opening at an unfinished piece of platform where a ramp for the track-crossing path was apparently being hastily installed. 🚆

New Metrolink Line Opens, Twice John Ulloth and James Washington

Metrolink's Perris Valley Line carried its first riders in a soft opening June 6th. As far as we know, no one from SoCaTA, PRS, ERHA, TRAC, or RailPAC was onboard the first inbound trains from South Perris to Los Angeles. At least there were "take-one" materials from all those organizations available at both of our booths.

The first inbound train left South Perris at the wicked hour of 5:40 AM to reach Union Station by 7:38 AM. Our Charles Hobbs and Mark Strickert did make the first outbound run from Downtown Riverside that morning, and Mr. Hobbs relayed us postcards promoting his book *Hidden Transit of Transportation in Los Angeles* for our unofficial table at Downtown Perris station.

Despite trackside train stop markers, two or more dayglow-vested Metrolink personnel, and Metrolink ticket machines on the south end of the platform, several locomotive engineers decided to stop their trains in front of the bus bays and RTA ticket vending machines on the Downtown Perris platform's north end, causing plenty of dashing around. The most common visitors at our table were RTA bus passengers, who wanted to see the schedule and try checking out prices on the vending machine. Most concluded RTA was better in frequency, price, and convenience, though most of them weren't going as far as Los Angeles.

Mr. Washington bagged the 4th and 5th trains of the day from Downtown Perris to Riverside and back, and he reported only a very few passengers

per car.

On Saturday, June 12th, Metrolink brought a train-set on static display for the official community celebration at Hunter Park/UCR station. Ironically, there is no weekend service on the Perris Valley portion of the 91 Line. Despite e-mails weeks in advance, and phone calls up until Friday, we had no answer to whether we could have "official" community space there. Hearing about our request attempts on event day, the sponsors hastily located a table, chairs, and a tent for us, positioning us next to a local radio station remote installation. According to Metrolink, and verified by us, a crowd of approximately 150 braved triple-digit temperatures to come out. Officials urged everyone to stay in the air conditioned bus or on Metrolink equipment. A Carl's Jr. food truck served free lunch to everyone who collected 3 punches in a ticket issued at the entry gate. One of the most important of these booths with a punch was Operation Lifesaver, as for decades these tracks have seen no passenger rail and only occasional freight train traffic. We met with a local representative's office, finding a UCR-area resident urging an expedited Quiet Zone (no blowing of train horns), which was supposed to be a condition of the legal settlement that allowed the project to proceed. 🚂

[Editor's note: when I lived near the Spruce/Watkins crossing in 1999-2000 and 2008-09, the most common time for a freight train on this track was 4:30 AM. The loud horn served as an effective wake-up alarm -- Mark]

SOCATA prorated dues, from now to end of 2016:

Individual Members: \$15.00 (Print or PDF)

Low Income: \$6.00 (PDF Newsletter)

Submission of materials: ALL materials for the TRANSIT ADVOCATE newsletter go to Mark Strickert, busnrail@yahoo.com, texts to (909) 685-1977, or mail to PO Box 1171, Rialto CA 92377

Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope for returns. Submissions are used at the discretion of the editor and may be edited for space constraints, or for grammar, or spelling.

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 individual authors and not necessarily that of the SOCATA.

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SO.CA.TA officers, 2014

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Secretary:	Perias Pillay
Treasurer:	Dana Gabbard

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