

# ***THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE***

**Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates**  
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## **Inside This Issue:**

- Transit Updates (pg. 2)
- TAP and Transfers (pg. 3)
- SFV Rail Projects (pg. 4)
- Save SB1! No on Prop 6! (pg. 6)
- Santa Barbara Commuter Rail (p. 7)
- Flixbus (pg. 9)
- Photos of the month (pg. 10)

*Flixbus comes to Southern California!*  
*Andrew Novak photo*

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## ***Transit Updates***

### **METRO**

Changes to Metro bus lines, effective June 24:

The Metro Orange Line will no longer loop through Warner Center. Instead, all trips will run through Canoga Station.

A new shuttle, #601, will connect the Orange Line with Warner Center. It will run at all hours that the Orange Line provides service.

Metro Bus routes #150,161,164,169,245 and 750 will be rerouted to serve Canoga Station.

Elsewhere in the Metro system: #60 has been extended in Downtown LA to serve 7th/figueroa/. Other minor changes (terminal loops mostly) for #45,177, 206, 605, and 720. Line #745 has a new stop at Adams and Venice; all-door boarding is available on Line #754.

### **METROLINK**

On May 14, Metrolink added a new station, Burbank Airport North, on its Antelope Valley Line. All trains (except the express runs) will have their schedules adjusted by approximately seven minutes to accommodate the new station.

The existing Burbank Airport station (on the Ventura Line) will be renamed Burbank Airport South.

All fares on the San Bernardino Line (except for the weekend passes) will be discounted 25%. This fare reduction, sponsored by Metro and by San Bernardino County, will last at least six months.

### **LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

Minor changes to the Topanga Canyon Beach Bus, eff. Aug 10. Also note that the route has been extended to serve the Metro Expo Line terminal. (Those going to the Pier should use the stop near Colorado Bl.)

### **SANTA MONICA (BIG BLUE BUS)**

Metro tokens will no longer be accepted on Big Blue Bus eff. July 1

Passengers using TAP cards will pay a discounted fare of \$1.10 (cash fare is \$1.25)

Big Blue Bus will also offer an annual pass for \$500, offering a savings of \$100 over buying 12 monthly passes. The annual pass is also valid on #10 Express to Downtown LA, without having to pay any additional fare.

The agency is also holding public hearings for the possible modification of bus routes, including reducing service on #10 to three round trips per day, and replacing weekend service on #5 and #15 with a demand-response service. Visit [www.bigbluebus.com](http://www.bigbluebus.com) and click "News" for details.

### **FOOTHILL TRANSIT**

Line #196 will provide special service between Azusa Gold Line Station and the Los Angeles County Fair, every weekend between Aug 31 and Sept 23. (This also includes Sept 3, Labor Day.)

*(continued on pg. 8)*

## ***From The President***

Hello all transit advocates and other transportation users and employees who receive the Transit Advocate newsletter!

- Please be sure to vote against, and to advocate against, Proposition 6 on the November 2018 ballot. "Prop 6" would cancel Senate Bill 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017. SB1 has already helped start many needed transportation infrastructure repairs, improvements, and additions.
- I would like to propose an informal SO.CA.TA member gathering on some Saturday in September. I'm thinking let's meet up for lunch at the Orange train station's Ruby's, any Saturday except the 15th. Thoughts? E-mail me at busnrail at yahoo.com. 📧

## ***TAP Your Transfers!***

Starting July 15, interagency transfers between Metro bus/rail lines and selected Municipal\* bus lines will be handled entirely on TAP cards:

- Paper interagency transfers will no longer be used
- The "Stored Value" on the TAP Card will be used to pay for transfers
- Upon boarding to a Municipal bus, the transfer fee (generally 50 cents) will be deducted from the Stored Value on the TAP Card
- Passengers have up to 2 hours and 30 minutes to transfer, before the transfer expires
- A transfer to a Municipal bus is only valid for one use. Upon transferring to a third bus (either Metro or Municipal) a full fare will be paid, either via Stored Value or a pass loaded on the TAP Card.
- Stored Value (up to \$60 per transaction) can be bought on the Metro bus.
- Metro no longer sells Day Passes on the bus, but they are available at ticket machines and other TAP outlets.

\* The selected Municipal bus systems are the following: Beach Cities Transit, BurbankBus, Carson Circuit, Culver CityBus, Foothill Transit, GTrans, Glendale Beeline, LADOT Transit, Long Beach Transit, Metro, Montebello Bus Lines, Monterey Park Spirit Bus, Norwalk Transit System, Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority, Pasadena Transit, Santa Clarita Transit, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Torrance Transit.

When transferring to agencies outside of Los Angeles County, the following applies.

OCTA: TAP cards accepted as transfer where Metro and OCTA routes meet.

Foothill Transit will issue paper transfers for connections to OCTA and Omnitrans routes.

# Valley Transit Projects

Even after Los Angeles County voters supported building a rail system in 1980 (Proposition A), many Valley residents were still vehemently opposed. During the late 1980s and 1990s, the Valley became “NIMBY Central” as homeowners’ groups near the former Pacific Electric line opposed various projects (a subway, a light rail line, and even a monorail over the Ventura Freeway). The Metro Orange Line busway, which opened in late 2005, was the result of political actions that banned both light rail and subways along the right of way.

The Valley’s attitude towards rail transit has changed immensely since those tumultuous days. The success of the Metro Orange Line busway (about 25,000 daily boardings), along with that of the two Metrolink lines that cross the Valley, have made Valley residents more interested in having rail transit in their neighborhoods.

## Metro Orange Line Upgrade

On July 26, the Metro Board of Directors approved several improvements to the Metro Orange Line to improve service. A mile-long bridge would be built spanning Van Nuys and Sepulveda Boulevards. Thirty-five other intersections along the Orange Line will receive railroad-crossing style gates, enabling buses to travel faster and avoid collisions. Finally, improved traffic signal synchronization would also help speed service. Construction of these upgrades would begin in 2019 and be completed in 2025, just in time for the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Metro is also discussing extending the busway from NoHo to Burbank, Glendale and Pasadena.

Eventually, Metro plans to upgrade the Orange Line to light rail. While this upgrade was originally scheduled to be completed in 2051, a proposed public-private partnership may make it possible to complete this project earlier.

## East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor

Metro also plans to build light rail on its East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor, consisting of Van Nuys Blvd and San Fernando Road. Buses on this route have 20,000 daily boardings, making this the second busiest transit corridor in the Valley (after the Metro Orange

Line). On June 28, the Metro board selected a 14-station, surface light rail line as the technology for this project. Construction should start in 2021 and completion by 2027, again in time for the Olympics.

## Sepulveda Transit Corridor

After 5 years of construction, and \$1.1 billion spent, carpool lane on the northbound I-405....failed to appreciably reduce rush-hour commute times, transportation officials began to take another look at developing rail transit service in the corridor.

For the Sepulveda pass project, Metro is considering a matrix of routes and technologies

- Heavy rail transit (like the Red/Purple Lines) in a tunnel
- Light rail transit in a tunnel
- Monorail or rubber-tired trains on an elevated structure over the freeway

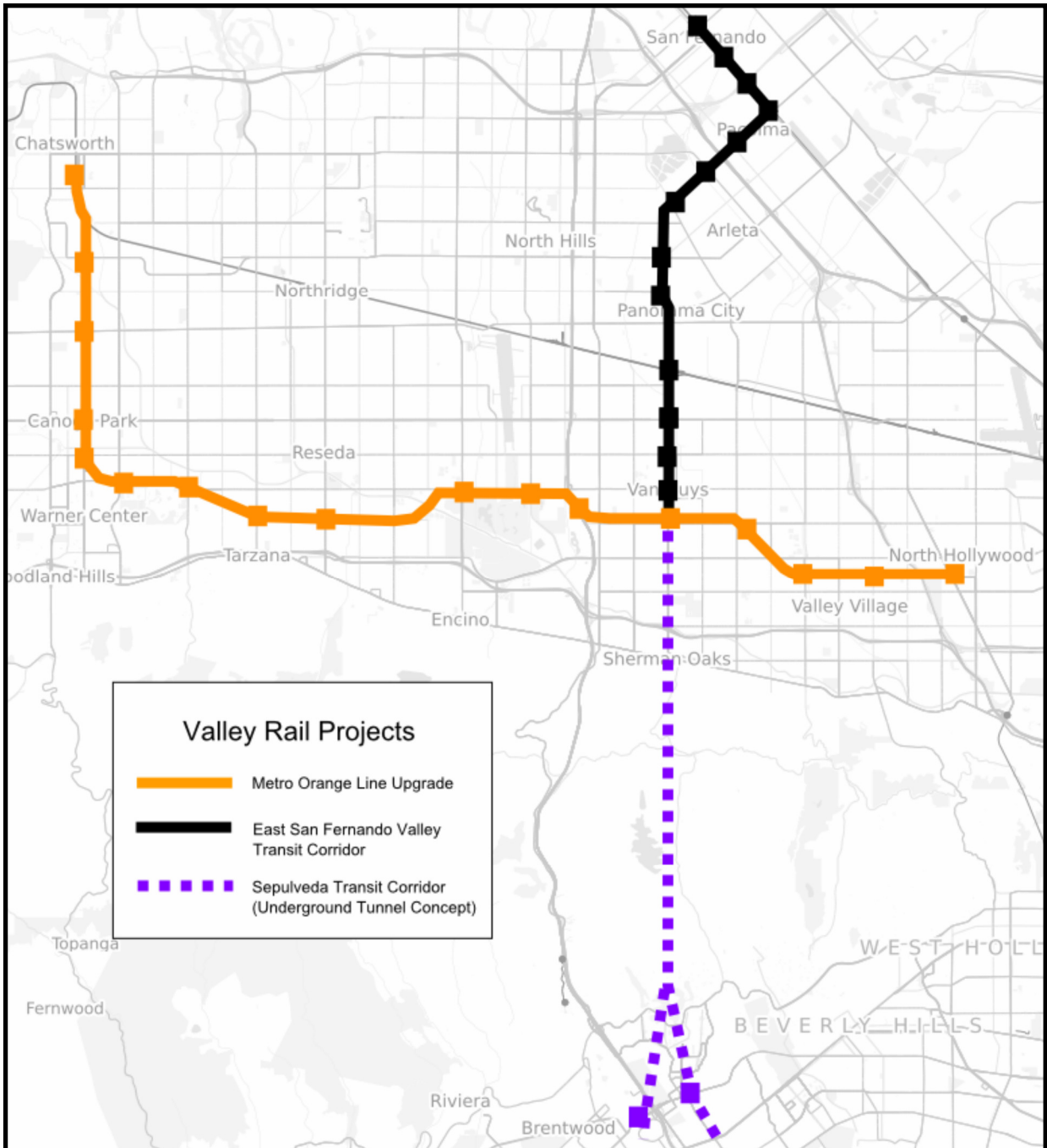
This rail line would link with the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor in Van Nuys, and with the Purple Line in Westwood (at either the Wilshire/Westwood or Brentwood VA station). An additional station on or near the UCLA campus is also a possibility. Metro is also developing concepts for an extension further south from Westwood to Los Angeles International Airport.

Originally scheduled for completion in 2030, the Valley-Westside rail is on Metro’s list of projects to complete by 2028. The extension further south to LAX will take longer to complete, perhaps by 2051, but hopefully, earlier than that.

## Putting it All Together

One question is whether the Sepulveda Pass line will be heavy rail or light rail. Heavy rail can carry more passengers and can be run as a branch of the Purple Line, providing a one-seat ride from the Valley to Century City and downtown Los Angeles. On the other hand, since Metro is apparently committed to light rail on the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor, using heavy rail for the Valley-Westside route will require passengers to transfer at Sherman Way to travel north-south across the Valley. 🚆

## Valley Transit Project Map





## Save SB1! No on Prop 6!

On April 6, 2017, the California State Legislature passed SB 1, a bill to raise funds for transportation improvements in California. The bill was signed by Governor Jerry Brown on April 28 of that year.

The bill would raise \$52.4 billion over the next ten years, and would be funded by increases in fuel taxes (gas taxes would be about 30 cents per gallon), a fee on new vehicles, and a \$100 annual fee on zero-emission vehicles.

Statewide, about \$26.2 billion would go to improve the roads and bridges of the state highway system. The other half would be used to implement or improve local transportation projects, including local streets, bus and rail transit, and "active transportation" (pedestrian and bicycle projects.)

In Southern California, projects to be funded with the new revenues include:

- Gold Line Extension to Montclair,
- East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor,
- West Santa Ana Corridor,
- Green Line Extension to Torrance, and the
- North Hollywood to Pasadena Bus Rapid Transit Connector ). Includes support for the development of a
- Vermont Transit Corridor Project and

- Regional network integration with Metrolink, Amtrak, and additional transit services. Increased speeds and frequencies for both Amtrak Pacific Surfliner and Metrolink, including "run-through" tracks at Union Station.

- Purchasing zero-emission electric buses for Long Beach Transit, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, Antelope Valley Transit, and LADOT DASH.

These projects will add over 120,000 additional riders per day by 2028.



Unfortunately, not everyone is supportive of the new tax. Last June, opponents collected enough signatures on petitions to place a proposition on the November ballot. Proposition 6, if passed, would repeal the taxes collected by SB 1. It would also amend the state Constitution to require that any future gas tax increases be approved by the voters.

In July, the SO.CA.TA Executive Board voted to oppose Proposition 6.

For more information:

<https://noprop6.com>

<http://rebuildingca.ca.gov>

## ***Commuter Rail to Santa Barbara***

Starting on April 2, 2018, commuters living in Ventura County and working in Santa Barbara or Goleta enjoyed commuter rail service for the first time.

Santa Barbara is a major employment center. However, housing is expensive due to high demand. Therefore, people working in Santa Barbara commute from Ventura, Oxnard, and Camarillo, all in Ventura County. Traffic on US-101 between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties has increased dramatically over the past few decades, leading transportation officials to implement alternatives to solo driving. Buses such as the Clean Air Express (1991) and the Coastal Express (2001) are popular with commuters, but get stuck in the same traffic as auto drivers.

As early as 1998, transit officials began to explore the possibility of commuter trains linking Ventura and Santa Barbara, similar to the Metrolink system running from Oxnard to Los Angeles.

Measure A, passed by Santa Barbara County voters in 2008, promised a commuter rail system along with expansion of US-101. Union Pacific, which owns the tracks north of Ventura, flatly refused to

allow more passenger trains, citing possible interference with its freight operations. Therefore, transit officials rescheduled an Amtrak intercity train to accommodate commuters.

Before April 2, Amtrak's first train of the day arrived in Santa Barbara at 10:30 AM, far too late in the morning for most workers. Transit officials made an agreement with Amtrak to reschedule this train to arrive in Goleta by 7:16 AM on weekdays, giving passengers plenty of time to arrive at their jobs. In the afternoon, the train leaving Goleta at 4:25 PM carries passengers back to Ventura County. (Weekend service to Santa Barbara is not affected.) Single-ride tickets are available at regular Amtrak fares; discounted 10-ride and monthly passes are also provided.

Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District provides "last mile" shuttle service between the train stations and workplaces, such as city and county offices, hospitals, and the industrial area along Hollister Avenue.

For more details visit <http://www.trafficsolutions.org/Train>.



## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### **ANTELOPE VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (8/20)**

Effective August 20, AVTA will operate a new Line #8, between Antelope Valley College in Lancaster and their Palmdale campus.

Also, the first two #786 trips leaving Lancaster/ Palmdale in the morning, as well as the first two trips leaving West LA in the afternoon, will serve the VA Hospital in Westwood, providing transportation for veterans.

### **OCTA (OC BUS) eff. June 10**

Line #1 will no longer serve the Laguna Beach bus station, but will remain on PCH, stopping at Viejo (northbound) or Cliff (southbound)

Detour routes on #701 and #721 in Downtown Los Angeles have been made permanent.

### **RIVERSIDE TRANSIT AGENCY**

Free rides on Rapidlink Gold until September 3.

The “Beach Bus” (midday and weekend service on #202, Temecula-Oceanside) is also back until September 3.

### **OMNITRANS (SAN BERNARDINO CO.)**

#208 received two additional trips in May: leaving San Bernardino at 6:18 AM and leaving Yucaipa at 5:00 pm.

### **MOUNTAIN TRANSIT**

New Route #13 provides service between Big Bear Lake and Victorville via Lucerne Valley. Three round trips are provided on weekdays; two on weekends.

### **VENTURA COUNTY**

VCTC Transit schedules will have minor changes (to address on-time performance) effective Aug 20. 🚌



Metro Rapid #720  
C. P. Hobbs photo



## Flixbus

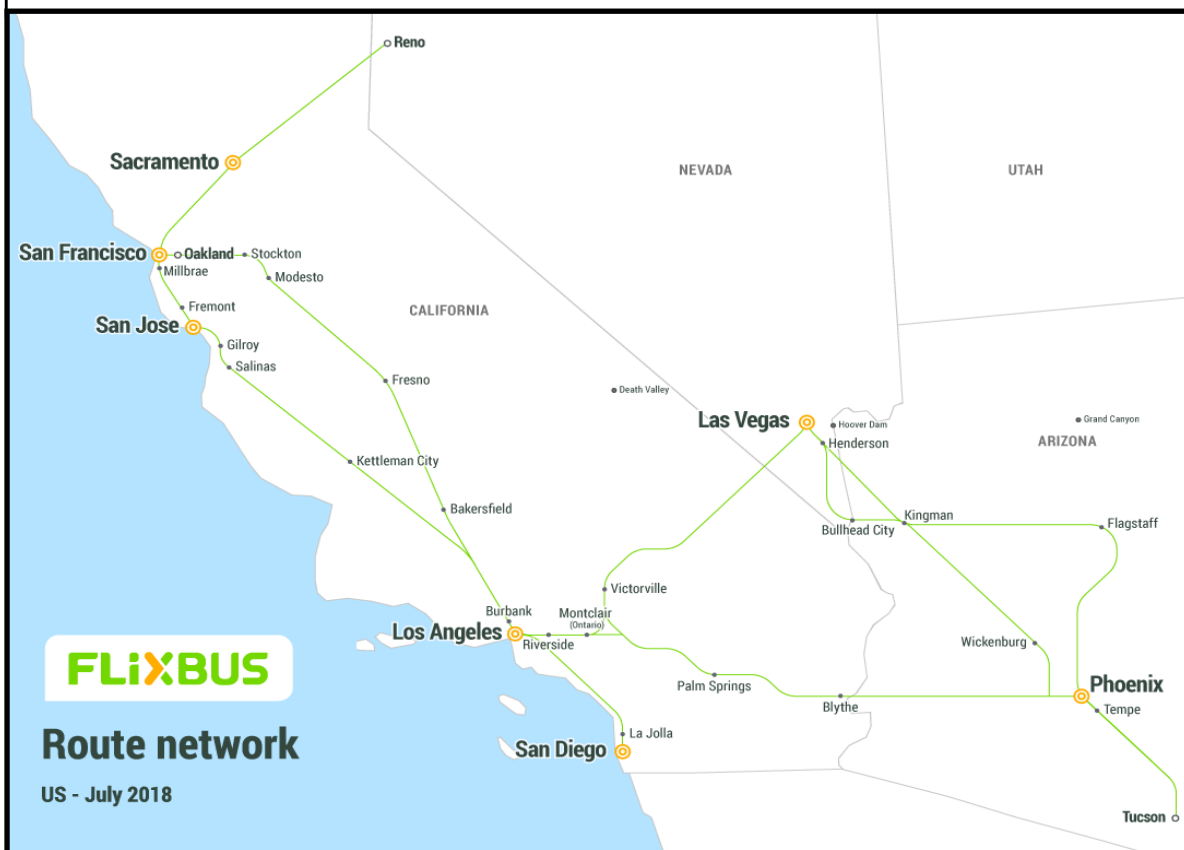
Greyhound, BoltBus, and Megabus now have a new competitor; the green and orange buses of Flixbus.

Flixbus started in 2013, after the deregulation of the intercity bus market in its native Germany. By 2015, it had expanded to serve most of Western Europe. It even acquired two train routes in Germany.

Flixbus came to the USA on May 31, with the first runs connecting Los Angeles with Las Vegas, San Diego and Phoenix. July 20 brought service to San Jose, San Francisco, Sacramento and Reno.

Interestingly, Flixbus neither owns nor operates any buses directly. Instead, like LADOT or Foothill Transit, it contracts with local bus operators, while providing branding, marketing, and fare collection.

Tickets, which can be as cheap as \$9.99 for a trip from LA to Las Vegas or San Francisco, can be bought online at [www.flixbus.com](http://www.flixbus.com) or on their smartphone app. 🚌



## ***Photos Of The Month***



**Got Photos?  
Email them to  
[cph1776@yahoo.com](mailto:cph1776@yahoo.com)**



*Above: AVTA deadheading on the I-210 near Sylmar*

*Below: Foothill Transit #188, Foothill Bl/I-210, La Verne (Both: C.P. Hobbs)*

## ***Photos of the Month***



*Above: Gardena GTrans at Crenshaw/Redondo Beach (El Camino College)  
Below: Torrance Transit, same location (Both: C. P. Hobbs)*



**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:** We prefer email to cph1776@yahoo.com. Print materials can be sent to 3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010.

Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope for returns. Submission are used at the discretion of the editor and may be edited for space constraints.

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Next SO.CA.TA Gatherings:

**April 7:** Meeting (Angelus Plaza, 255 S. Hill, L.A.)

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