

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

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*Amtrak Thruway Bus at Glendale Transportation Center
Marc Carran photo*

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Transit Updates

Note: For up-to-date information regarding transit agency changes in response to the coronavirus pandemic, please visit www.socata.net/covid19

Foothill Transit, effective March 1, 2020

Substantial changes to commuter routes in the San Gabriel Valley:

New Route #490 will begin at the Park/Ride lot at Base Line and Grand, then stop at Grand/Dawson, Grand/Gladstone, and Grand/Arrow before continuing to Downtown Los Angeles

Route #493 will begin at Colima and Fairway

Additional service (four round trips) will be provided on #495

Route #497 will be discontinued. Commuters may drive to Fairplex Park/Ride and use Route #699, or to Industry Park and Ride and ride #495

Route #498 will begin at Industry City Hall, and continue to serve West Covina City Hall Park/Ride. Service to Glendora is now provided by new #490

Orange County Transit Authority (OCTA) – effective February 9, 2020

New Route #123 will begin service between Anaheim and Huntington Beach, replacing portions of discontinued routes #21 and #24.

On Irvine iShuttle Route 404E, all northbound morning trips and southbound afternoon trips will be eliminated.

Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) - effective January 12th, 2020

- Route 8 - eliminate the school tripper
- Routes 16 and 19 - weekend frequency improved to 15 minutes between 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM

- Route 20 - eliminate all trippers
- Route 51 – time-point/stop at UCR Lot 30 will be closed
- Route 54 - route discontinued
- Route 204 - adding seven new morning and midday trips each direction; moving University & Market time-point to University & Lemon to reduce stop congestion at University & Market
- Routes 205/206 - adding six new northbound morning and midday trips, and four new southbound midday and afternoon trips
- Route 208 - adding five new trips each direction
- Route 217 - adding six new southbound trips and five new northbound trips

Also, schedule adjustments were made to all routes serving Perris Station Transit Center, to better connect with changes to the Metrolink Perris Valley Line schedule

Omnitrans - effective January 6th, 2020

- Route 15 - will be re-routed to stay on Merrill between Alder and Sierra. Arrow Hwy. portion is already covered by Route 12, but no substitute service on Alder
- Route 66 - cancel weekday trip leaving 5:45 PM
- Route 80 - cancel Sunday southbound trip leaving Chaffey College 5:57 AM

[Needs clarification: does this refer to the eastbound trip leaving Montclair Transit Center at 5:46 PM?]

[Perhaps also affecting the northbound short trip leaving Vineyard/Holt at 5:40 AM?]

Transit Updates (cont'd)

<p>Gold Coast Transit (Ventura/Oxnard), eff. January 26, 2020</p> <p>Route 22, between Oxnard and Saticoy, has been discontinued. Route 15 will be extended to serve portions of 22 in Oxnard and Nyeland Acres.</p> <p>Simi Valley Transit – Effective March 2, 2020</p> <p>The current four routes (A,B,C, and D) will be replaced with three new, numbered routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 10 serves Chatsworth Metrolink, Simi Valley Civic Center, Simi Valley Hospital, Simi Valley Town Center and Moorpark College, replacing former Route C and portions of Route D. • Route 20 – primarily serves Los Angeles Ave, with a loop serving the Civic Center. • Finally, Route 30 serves the Royal Avenue/ Cochran Street corridor. • The portion of former Route D, serving the Reagan Library will no longer have bus service. 	<p>Thousand Oaks Transit, eff. January 6, 2020</p> <p>Service will operate on all lines from 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM on weekdays and from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Saturdays. Fares will also increase, from \$1.50 to \$2.00.</p> <p>VCTC Transit – effective Jan 20, 2020</p> <p>Fares are increased from \$1.50 to \$1.75 for trips within Ventura County. Trips to Los Angeles or Santa Barbara County will cost \$4 (up from \$2)</p> <p>Routes #90 and #97, serving CSU Channel Islands, will be reinstated. Additional Coastal Express runs will link Camarillo (Metrolink) with Santa Barbara/Goleta. 🚌</p>
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Members in Action

<p>Mark Strckert spoke at the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority Transit Committee meeting of October 10th, 2019, regarding their seeking alternatives to an eventual Gold Line extension east of Pomona.</p> <p>He also spoke at the Omnitrans Board of Directors public hearing in February, 2020, attended the SCAG "Connect SoCal" workshop at San Bernardino Depot, and attended the Omnitrans West Valley Connector workshop in Rancho Cucamonga</p> <p>Charles P. Hobbs participated in a panel discussion "How Jitneys Drive Their Communities" at the Museum of African American Art, November 17, 2019. He has also published an article about the history of public transit in Santa Barbara, in the January-June issue of <i>Motor Coach Age</i>. (A read-only copy can be accessed at www.morethanredcars.com)</p>
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SB 742 and Amtrak Thruway Buses Charles P. Hobbs

Amtrak's *San Joaquin* train originally ran from Oakland to Bakersfield. To travel any farther (say to Los Angeles), it was necessary to take another carrier such as Greyhound. However, connections between Amtrak and Greyhound were not guaranteed; if a train were running late, the bus would still leave on time. These missed connections could add hours, if not an extra day, to a passenger's trip.

This changed in September 1980 when the first "Amtrak Thruway" bus started running between Stockton and Sacramento. Another Thruway bus route, linking Bakersfield to Los Angeles, was added in July 1981. These buses were scheduled to meet the trains, allowing about 10-15 minutes for passenger transfers. If a train arrived late, the buses would simply wait for it. Conversely, the trains would wait for a late bus, to the extent that railroad schedules would permit.

By the late 1980s, a network of connecting buses fanned out from both the northern and southern ends of the train route, providing connections as far north as Redding and south to Calexico. The buses became a popular way to access the San Joaquin trains; up to half of San Joaquin passengers used a Thruway bus for part of their trip.

Dedicated buses

Most of the buses used in Amtrak Thruway service were "dedicated"—officially, only

Amtrak passengers, connecting to or from a train, could ride the bus. This rule was not always strictly enforced, and some Amtrak agents began to sell bus-only tickets. In some rural areas, the Thruway bus was the only form of public transportation. In other cases, such as the Los Angeles-Bakersfield run, passengers preferred to use Amtrak buses and stations, as the Greyhound stations were in sketchier areas. Amtrak provided newer, nicer buses as well.

Since the Thruway buses were subsidized by the State, commercial bus companies, such as Greyhound, began to complain about unfair competition. The bus companies lobbied the state legislature, and, in 1999, State Senator Don Peralta wrote Senate Bill 804, which would prohibit passengers from riding an Amtrak Thruway bus unless they were connecting to or from a train. (Note that it didn't have to be an Amtrak train—connections to Caltrain or Metrolink would be acceptable).

The "Wasco Trick"

After Governor Gray Davis signed SB 804 on September 21, 1999, passengers who wished to use the Amtrak buses without taking a train trip found workarounds. One was the famous "Wasco Trick." A passenger bound for Bakersfield from Los Angeles would purchase a ticket to Wasco, the first station on the San Joaquin line after Bakersfield. Upon arrival in Bakersfield, the passenger would simply

discard the Bakersfield-Wasco portion of the ticket. However, this presented a potential problem for round trips: if the returning passenger didn't board the train in Wasco, their reservation for the Bakersfield-Los Angeles segment would be automatically cancelled.

Certain transit agencies also came to the aid of the passenger wanting a bus-only trip. For example, in 2004, Amtrak replaced its San Jose-Santa Cruz Thruway bus with an arrangement with Santa Cruz Metro to allow Amtrak ticket-holders to ride its "Highway 17 Express" commuter bus between San Jose and Santa Cruz. A similar contract was made with Monterey-Salinas Transit, providing a connection from San Jose to Monterey.

Greyhound Service Shrinks

Although SB 804 was arguably intended to "protect" Greyhound, apparently it was not enough to prevent the bus company from cutting back its services in the early 2000s. Stations were closed, buses ran less frequently, and some towns lost Greyhound service entirely. Meanwhile, Thruway buses along these same routes ran with empty seats because they could not legally pick up any new passengers after leaving the train station.

SB 742

in light of towns losing public transportation, State Senator Ben Allen introduced Senate Bill 742 in February 2019. SB 742 allows Amtrak buses connecting to trains operated by joint powers agencies (e.g., the *San Joaquin, Capitol Limited, and Pacific Surfliner*) to carry local, bus-only passengers along their routes. The bill also requires coordination with local transit operators; tickets between certain city pairs may not be sold if there is sufficient public or private transportation between those two cities. The bill was signed by Governor Gavin Newsom on October 8, 2019.

The first two Thruway routes to accept bus-only passengers will be Bakersfield-Oxnard-Santa Barbara and Bakersfield-Lancaster-Victorville. Tickets between bus stops will be comparable to Amtrak fares. While other Thruway routes are under consideration, Los Angeles-Bakersfield is less likely because that corridor is still served by Greyhound. But Thruway buses serving Pasadena, Van Nuys, or Palm Springs might be fair game for allowing bus-only travel. 🚌

Omnitrans Service Change Proposals Mark Strickert

Expected to be implemented by September, 2020

Route Cancellations

- Route 5 - 40th St./Electric to Mountain/Eureka will become part of a new Route 6, and much of the route south of Waterman/Rialto Ave. will be part of a new mini-bus Route 305 (below). Several sections will lose all service, including Waterman from 21st to Gilbert and from Rialto Ave. to 2nd St., and between Little Mountain/Northpark and Electric/40th St.
- Route 7 - Cal State San Bernardino to 40th St./Sierra, and Electric/40th St. to Mountain/Eureka will become part of a new route 6 (below), while Sierra Way north of Highland will lose all service
- Route 20 - no new or alternate service, save for a small portion of a re-routed Route 82 (below).
- Route 80 - Chaffey College to Vineyard/4th St. will become part of new route 87 (below), and Vineyard/Holt to Ontario Airport is served by Route 61. No new or alternate service between 4th St. and Holt
- Route 86 - section between 4th St./Baker and Vineyard/Riverside Dr. becomes part of new Route 87, and a small portion on Campus will be on new Route 383 (below)
- Route 308 - OmniGo Yucaipa counterclockwise. Most of the route is covered (clockwise only) by Route 309, which will be weekdays only
- Route 325 - OmniGo Grand Terrace. Sections on Washington and Barton from Waterman to Vivenda will be covered by new mini-bus Route 305 (below). 325 east of Barton/Washington will be covered by Route 19. All service is lost on Mt. Vernon including Grand Terrace Senior Center, and on Michigan St. including the connection to RTA Route 14

- Route 365 - OmniGo Chino Hills. All fixed-route service eliminated, save for existing Chino Hills HS trippers. To be replaced by what Omnitrans calls "MicroTransit Chino Hills: New technology enabled on-demand service." (below)

Service Cuts to Existing Routes

- Route 2 - further reduction in service, to every 70-75 minutes every day, including when sbX does not operate
- Routes 3 and 4 - weekend frequencies reduced to every 22-25 minutes
- Route 8 - the 30-minute short turn trips from San Bernardino to Redlands will only go to the VA facility at Redlands and Bryn Mawr Ave. in Redlands. Only every other trip continues to downtown Redlands and on to Crafton Hills College
- Route 14 - weekend frequency reduced to every 20 minutes
- Route 22 - introducing short turns. Weekday service south of Foothill Blvd. to remain every 30 minutes. Only every other trip will run north of Foothill. May be a prelude to setting up a "MicroTransit" zone in north Rialto
- Routes 61 and 66 - weekend frequencies reduced to every 20 minutes
- Route 81 - will stay on Haven instead of deviating to serve Ontario Mills or Rancho Cucamonga Civic Center. Southern terminus will be moved to East Ontario Metrolink station, eliminating service on Haven south of East Ontario Metrolink station and on Riverside Dr. west to Chino Transit Center
- Route 83 - service eliminated north of Euclid/Foothill. Service on 16th east of Euclid to Colonias Crossroads shopping area near Campus and I-210 will be covered by new mini-bus Route 383

(below), but otherwise no new or alternative service

- Route 84 - will be rerouted Mountain-7th-Central-Richton to Montclair Transit Center. All service eliminated north of Mountain/7th St., with no new or alternative service
- Route 290 - eliminate all trips between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM
- Route 309 - weekday frequency reduced to every 60 minutes, and all weekend service eliminated
- Route 310 - frequency reduced to every 60 minutes all day

Other Changes to Existing Routes

- Route 1 - rerouted north of Waterman/Gilbert, via Gilbert-Pacific-Del Rosa-Lynwood-Victoria-Pacific-Gilbert then back south on Waterman. This is all to cover Route 5 around Pacific HS, and add direct service to San Geronio HS, though this means service to St. Bernardine Hospital will be shifted to new Route 6 (below)
- Route 29 - Kaiser-area loop re-routed to Sierra-San Bernardino Ave.-Juniper-Marygold-Sierra, to serve the stop nearer to Kaiser Hospital on northbound Sierra/farside Permanente. Three stops on former Valley-Juniper-Marygold-Sierra loop would close
- Route 82 - rerouted south of Fontana Transit Center, via Orange Way-Juniper-Merrill-Citrus-Slover-Sierra, to cover a small portion of cancelled route 20. To save time lost with this re-route, service on Slover east of Sierra will be cut, including to the Palm Court shopping and medical office area

New Routes

- Route 6 - combines former Route 7 Cal State

San Bernardino to 40th St./Sierra with former route 5 from Electric/40th St. to Mountain/Eureka, Route 1 from Lynwood/Mountain to 21st St./Waterman, and Route 7 from Sierra/Highland to San Bernardino Transit Center. Peak weekday headway 30 minutes, unknown Saturday or Sunday service

- Route 87 - combines existing route 80 from Chaffey College to Vineyard/4th St. with the existing Route 86 between 4th St./Baker to Vineyard/Riverside Dr., and then extended south and east on Archibald Ave. and Ontario Ranch Rd. to Hamner where it can connect with RTA Routes 3 and 29. Peak weekday headway 60 minutes, and will also operate Saturday with unspecified frequency

- Route 305 - contractor-operated mini-bus route from San Bernardino Transit Center to City of Grand Terrace, combining existing Route 5 from Rialto Ave. to Barton and existing Route 325 from Waterman to Michigan St. Peak weekday headway 60 minutes, but no weekend service noted

- Route 383 - contractor-operated mini-bus route from Upland Metrolink station to Montclair Transit Center. Would run north mostly along Campus to the Colonies Crossroads shopping area, back south on Campus to 16th St., and Benson-9th St.-Richton to Montclair. Peak weekday headway 60 minutes, but no weekend service noted. This route was set up as a way for a bus to directly serve Upland Metrolink station, as full-sized 40 foot buses can not negotiate the streets of downtown Upland. However, the cost was cuts to routes 83 and 84, which also further degrades transit service in Upland north of the Metrolink San Bernardino line

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Next SO.CA.TA Gatherings:

**November 16:** "Rail and Transit in Orange County"  
1 - 3 p.m.  
Tranquil Tea Lounge  
106 W. Wilshire, Fullerton  
RSVP: info@calelectricrail.org

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**Southern California Transit Advocates**  
**3010 Wilshire #362**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90010**  
<http://www.socata.net>

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