

SO.CA.TA AGENDA

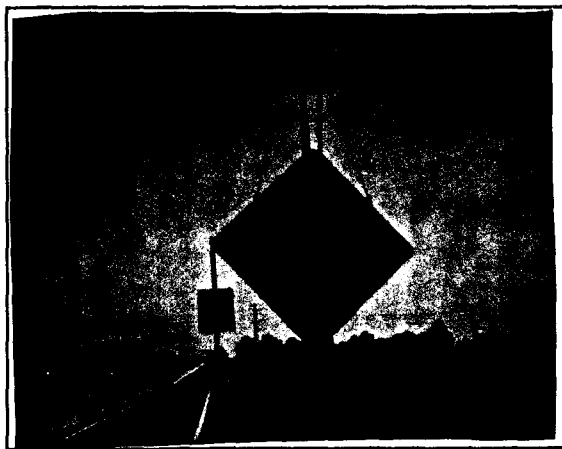
1. Elections will be held at the December meeting for the following positions:

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer

2. Other items as presented by members.

Items for the Agenda and Updates should be mailed or phoned to SO.CA.TA by the first Saturday of each month for inclusion in THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE.

Remember, one of the purposes of this newsletter is to keep members and others informed of any transit developments, so, if you see anything interesting in the world of public transportation, please let us all know!



*The defeat of Proposition 156—a rail transit bond measure—may also affect some highway projects.
Page 7*

UPDATES:

RAPID TRANSIT

• The Metro Red Line subway is scheduled to open on January 11, 1993. See article on page 4

LIGHT RAIL

• LACTC has released the Final Environmental Impact Report for a Metro Blue Line Extension to USC/Exposition Park. See article on page 5

COMMUTER RAIL

• Metrolink commuter rail service is now in operation. See article on page 3

HIGH SPEED RAIL

• Four companies have submitted proposals for a high speed rail line between LAX and Palmdale. Article on page 6

BUS

• The LACTC has granted \$40 million to RTD in order to forestall service reductions and possible fare increases. Article on page 4

• RTD has rerouted several bus routes in order to serve Metrolink stations.

• The Spring Street Contraflow Lane is open again as of Nov. 29. RTD, Inland Empire Connection, and probably DASH buses that had been rerouted to Main will resume using Spring.

• Foothill Transit is also rerouting several bus routes to provide Metrolink connections in the San Gabriel Valley. Also under consideration: a joint RTD-Foothill Transit bus pass (currently, any RTD passes are valid on Foothill Transit, but not vice versa)

• Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines has also rerouted its LA-Santa Monica Express (#10) to serve Union Station. The bus stops on Alameda Street, across from the station, Monday-Saturday.



METROLINK

L.A.'s new commuter rail system provides more commuting alternatives, but some snags remain to be worked out.

On October 26, 1992, the METROLINK commuter rail system started operations. Three lines operate from Los Angeles Union Station to the outlying communities of Moorpark, Santa Clarita and Pomona.

Ten trains of three to four double decker coaches operate into Los Angeles Union Station in the morning rush hours, and leave in the evening. There is currently no off-peak or weekend service.

All suburban Metrolink stations are furnished with parking lots with at least 300 stations. Local transit agencies have also rerouted bus lines to provide alternative transportation to Metrolink stations.

At Union Station, special Metrolink shuttle buses connect Metrolink passengers with Bunker Hill and the Financial District. A special trackside bus platform has been constructed to accommodate about 20 shuttles at once. (Certain RTD buses also use this platform, including Line #439 express to Los Angeles International Airport)

And, Metrolink will expand in the near future. Service will be extended to Claremont in December, Montclair in January, and Riverside and San Bernadino in March or April. A Metrolink line is to start operating in late 1993; Further extensions to Hemet, Redlands and Lancaster are under consideration.

So far, so good. However, there have been several problems which

have been found with the Metrolink service. These problems are not insurmountable, and will be resolved in time.

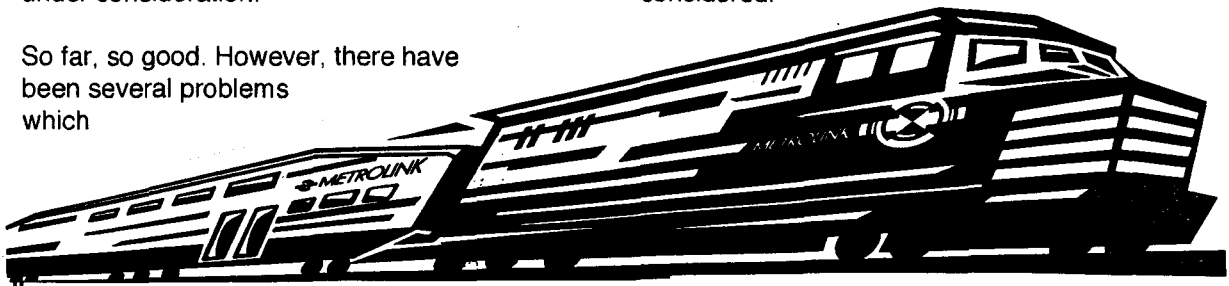
While the system carried up to 6300 passengers a day during the initial "free ride" week, that number has dropped to around 1500 after fares were required. Many passengers attribute this to the relatively high fares, which range from \$3.50 to \$6.50 for a single ride, or \$80-116 for a pass (RTD and other bus lines charge \$2.25-\$3.10 for comparable one way trips). The fares are under review, and may be lowered in early 1993 if ridership does not improve.

Some passengers have complained about seating on the cars being too cramped; these complaints have mostly come from Orange County commuters used to Amtrak equipment.

Until a new signalling system has been installed, trains run slower than they could.

Several stations (Sylmar and Baldwin Park) have not been completed yet.

Residents have complained of the noise of the train horn. Metrolink staff have experimented with placing boxes over the horn to muffle the sound; placing the horn at a lower level on the locomotive is also being considered.



Metro Red Line Subway to Open January 11. . .

Originally scheduled to open in June of 1993, the opening of the Metro Red Line Subway has been finalized at January 11.

Passengers will be able to travel between Union Station and Wilshire/Alvarado in about seven minutes. There will also be stations at the Civic Center, Fifth and Hill and at the Metro Center near Seventh and Wilshire. At the Metro Center, connections will be available to South Los Angeles and Long Beach via the Metro Blue Line.

Metro Red Line service will be especially attractive to Metrolink commuter rail passengers, who currently must use shuttle buses to get to most destinations downtown.

The initial Red Line segment will rapidly connect the Westlake area with Downtown Los Angeles.

Rapid transit vehicles have actually been on test runs in the tunnels since March, and it had been thought that the system would open in October, in time for the start of Metrolink commuter rail service. However, problems with the dynamic braking system delayed the start of revenue service.

One continuing controversy has to do with security services for the Red Line. Choices include LA County Sheriffs' deputies (as used on the Blue Line), the Los Angeles Police Department, or RTD's own Transit Police.

Metro Red Line Subway construction continues, with the line expected to reach Wilshire and Western in 1996, Hollywood and Vine in 1998, and East Los Angeles, Mid-City and North Hollywood in 2001.

. . . Meanwhile RTD Gets \$40M LACTC Grant

In order to protect existing RTD bus service from fare hikes and service cuts, the Los Angeles Transportation Commission has granted \$40 million to the RTD. The \$40 million was from Proposition C, a half-cent sales tax passed in 1991 to provide expanded bus and rail services.

RTD was seeking \$59 million to cover its operating losses. Otherwise, RTD would be required to reduce service levels, raise fares, or both, since it is legally prohibited from operating with a deficit. Base fares as high as \$1.50 (current fare is \$1.10) and the elimination of transfers (requiring full fare for each bus used) were being considered, as well as drastic reductions in peak-hour, night, and weekend bus service.

Bus riders and the RTD complained, especially in light of the higher subsidies per rail passenger than per bus passenger. Therefore, LACTC granted RTD \$40 million, and asked them to cut

costs.

Although the cost-saving measures to be taken by RTD deal mostly with security and administrative (non-operating) matters, RTD might consider one or more of these options: "grafting" a lightly used suburban line to a heavily used inner-city line, providing new travel opportunities, or turning over lightly used suburban and commuter bus routes to private operators. Although such an action would be unpopular with the RTD's unions, why should RTD complain about Metrolink passengers being subsidized when some of the subsidies on certain RTD lines is almost as high (e.g. about \$10/passenger on Line #457 L.A. -Belmont Shore)

In February 1993, the RTD and the LACTC will merge, forming the Metropolitan Transit Authority, or MTA. At that time, this issue of funding current levels of service vs. providing expanded services will have to be examined again.

Exposition Park Blue Line EIR Available

Several extensions are being considered for the popular Metro BlueLine, which currently travels between Los Angeles and Long Beach. One such extension would provide light-rail service between Downtown Los Angeles and the USC/Exposition Park area.

This line would serve USC, Exposition Park and the museums in it, the Coliseum and Sports Arena, as well as other destinations along Figueroa Street. It also could be extended to West Los Angeles and Santa Monica, via the railroad right-of-way along Exposition Boulevard.

Stations along the line would be located at 23rd Street, Jefferson and Vermont; the existing Grand station on the Blue Line may be moved. There are six alternatives, involving a mixture of at-grade, subway, and aerial construction.

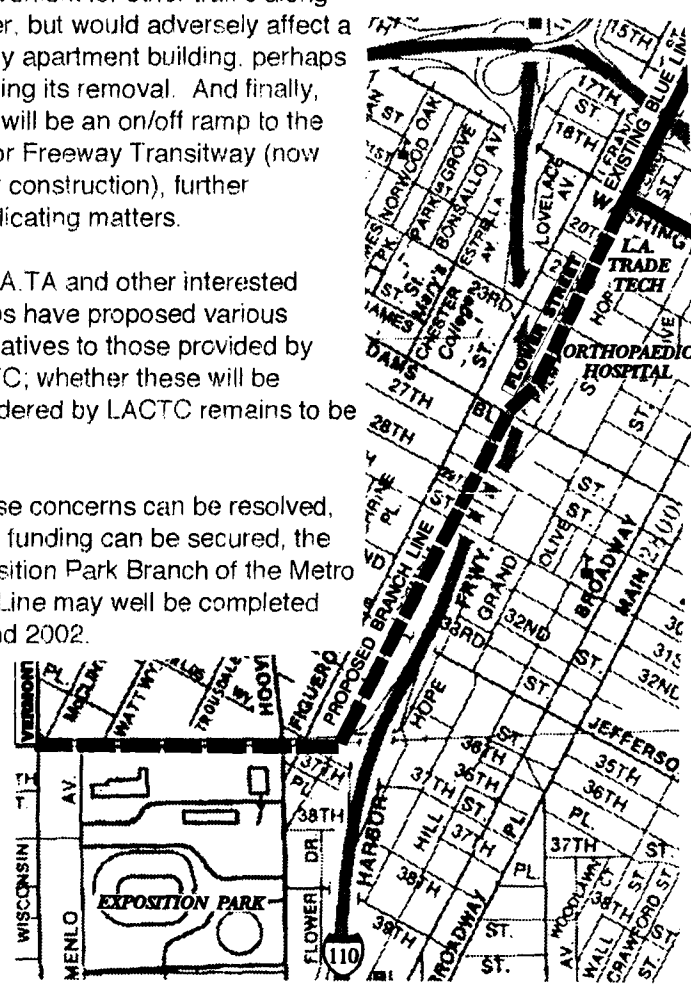
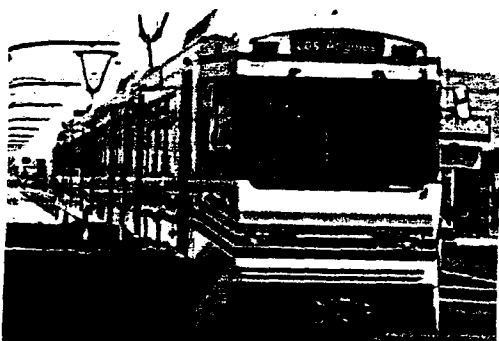
The prime controversy related to this line revolves around the area near 23rd and Flower, where the Orthopaedic Hospital is located.

The existing Blue Line tracks on Flower Street are on the east side of

that street, running in a reserved right-of-way. It would be easiest to continue the line southward along the east side of Flower. However, Orthopaedic Hospital staff have objected to that routing because it would block the rear entrance of the hospital; they favor a rail alignment which would veer across traffic lanes to the other side of the street near the hospital. But doing so would not only be inconvenient for other traffic along Flower, but would adversely affect a nearby apartment building, perhaps requiring its removal. And finally, there will be an on/off ramp to the Harbor Freeway Transitway (now under construction), further complicating matters.

SO.CA.TA and other interested groups have proposed various alternatives to those provided by LACTC; whether these will be considered by LACTC remains to be seen.

If these concerns can be resolved, and if funding can be secured, the Exposition Park Branch of the Metro Blue Line may well be completed around 2002.



Source: Los Angeles County Transportation Commission

LAX-Palmdale High Speed Rail

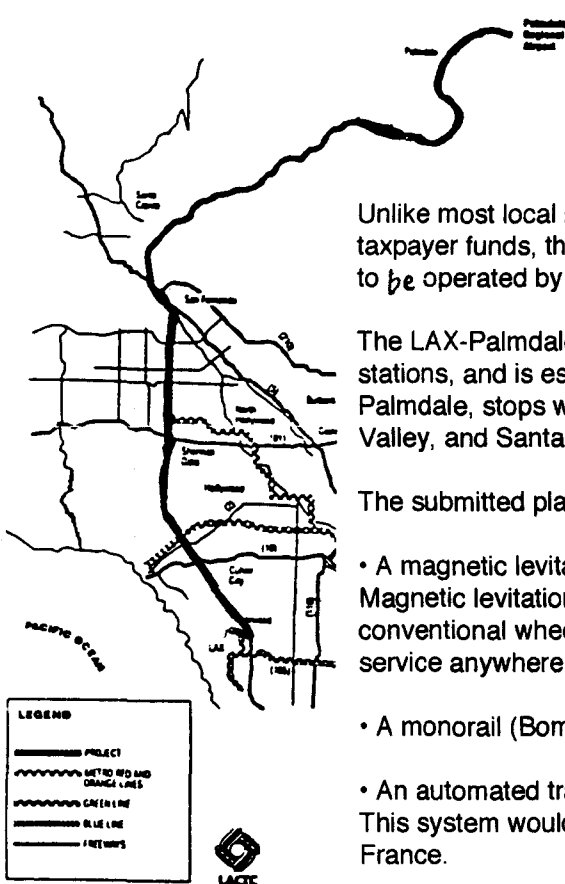
The Los Angeles Transportation Commission has received four bids for the construction of a high-speed rail line connecting Los Angeles International Airport and a proposed airport in Palmdale.

Unlike most local rail construction projects, which are financed by taxpayer funds, this project would be privately funded, then turned over to be operated by the LACTC.

The LAX-Palmdale line would be about 72 miles long, have up to 14 stations, and is estimated to cost about \$4 billion. Between LAX and Palmdale, stops would be made in West Los Angeles, the San Fernando Valley, and Santa Clarita.

The submitted plans include:

- A magnetic levitation system. (Thyssen-Henschel of Germany)
Magnetic levitation trains operate on a magnetic field instead of on conventional wheels and rails. They have never been placed in revenue service anywhere, although test tracks exist in Germany and Japan.
- A monorail (Bombardier of Canada)
- An automated transit system (Matra of France)
This system would probably be similar to the "VAL" operating in Lille, France.



- An "advanced light rail" project (Morrison-Knudsen, USA)

This proposal would be the most similar to conventional rapid transit; however, the system would be designed for speeds of up to 150 miles per hour. A similar system is being proposed for a nuclear research facility in Idaho.

All of these proposed transit systems would be required to have a minimum speed of 60 miles per hour, and be able to carry at least 4000 passengers per hour.

Hughes Aircraft was a partner in two of the bids, making it the first local defense contractor actually expressing interest in a transit project.

The proposals also included a line over the Ventura Freeway in the San Fernando Valley. This service would connect with the Metro Red Line in North Hollywood, and has been considered as a substitute for extending the Red Line any further in the Valley. However, passengers travelling between Los Angeles and the Valley would be forced to transfer between the Red Line and the Ventura Freeway Line. There are also several problems with locating and accessing transit stations on the freeways.

The Defeat of Prop. 156: A Setback for Transit—or Highways?

Although Proposition 156 (the \$1-billion rail bond issue) did well in urban areas, voters in suburban and rural areas rejected it. When the voters refused to pass Proposition 156 last November, many of them probably did not realize that many highway projects, as well as rail transit projects, throughout the state would be jeopardized.

Because of several cost-sharing formulas mandated by the State Legislature, state-funded transportation projects (both highway and transit) must be divided equitably throughout the state. If 156 had passed, the rail bond money would have gone primarily to transit projects in urban and suburban areas, while other transportation money would have been made available for various road projects. It should be noted that no mention of this required cost-sharing was disclosed to the public before the election.

Most of the affected highway projects are improvements to two-lane rural roads, with most projects in urban areas consisting of lane additions or interchanges. However, one major freeway project affected is the extension of Route 30 between La Verne and San Bernadino.

Although no current transit project is endangered, future projects may be substantially delayed. These include: Blue Line extensions to Exposition Park, Santa Monica, Southwest Los Angeles, Glendale and Azusa; Green Line extensions to Norwalk and Torrance; Red Line service to the San Fernando Valley; Metrolink extensions to Hemet and Palmdale, and Amtrak service to Santa Barbara.

Solutions to this problem include: presenting a \$2-billion state bond measure on a future ballot; seeking more federal funds; or having cities and counties issue their own bonds.

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS + EVENTS

Note: Meeting times and places subject to change without notice.

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| Dec 1 | 6:00 pm | Electric Trolleybus #40, Lawndale City Hall, 14717 Burin, Lawndale |
| Dec 1 | 6:30 pm | Electric Trolleybus #18,66,67,M10, East Los Angeles College Cafeteria, 1301 Brooklyn, Monterey Park |
| Dec 2 | 6:30 pm | Electric Trolleybus #70, Monterey Park City Hall, 320 W. Newmark |
| Dec 2 | 7:00 pm | Foothill Transit, Fourth Floor, 100 N. Barranca, West Covina |
| Dec 3 | 4:30 pm,
6:30 pm | Electric Trolleybus #560, San Fernando Boys&Girls Club, 11251 Glenoaks, Pacoima |
| Dec 3 | 6:30 pm | Electric Trolleybus #30/31, Boyle Heights Senior Center, 2839 Third, East L.A. |
| Dec 5 | 12:30 pm | Electric Trolleybus #40, Challengers Boys & Girls Club, 5029 S. Vermont, Los Angeles |
| Dec 9 | 8:00 am | LACTC Intercounty Bus Connections, Second Floor Conf. Rm, 818 W. 7th Los Angeles |
| Dec 11 | 10:00 am | Metrolink, SCAG Conf. Rm 12th Floor, 818 W. 7th, Los Angeles |
| Dec 12 | 1:00 pm | SO.CA.TA @ ECO-HOME
4344 Russell, Los Angeles |
| Dec 23 | 1:00 pm | LACTC Board Meeting
Board of Supervisors Hearing Rm
500 W. Temple |
| Jan 9 | 1:00 pm | SO.CA.TA @ ECO-HOME
4344 Russell, Los Angeles |