

CALL FOR ARTICLES

The TRANSIT ADVOCATE is requesting articles on transit services and policy in the Los Angeles area.

Most articles will be written by SO.CA.TA members, although material from outside sources will also appear. Articles appearing in the TRANSIT ADVOCATE will generally be about current transit events; there will be a few historical articles as well.

ABOUT SO.CA.TA.

The Southern California Transit Advocates meetings are held every month. Please call (213) 254 9041 for current time, location and directions.

Letters and articles for the TRANSIT ADVOCATE newsletter may be sent to P.O.Box 41198, Los Angeles, CA 90041. Please enclosed a self addressed stamped envelope for return of materials.

With the exception of articles clearly marked "Editorial" or "Position Paper", all opinions expressed are those of the article authors and not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates.

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*President:
Pat Moser*

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Charles P. Hobbs*

TRANSIT UPDATES:

RAPID TRANSIT

- The Metro Red Line will continue to have a 25-cent fare through the end of March; however, passengers must pay \$1.10 + \$.25 transfer charge in order to transfer to buses, the Blue Line, or Metrolink.

- Also, Red Line service has been improved to every seven minutes on weekdays, during rush hour and lunch hours. (At other times service runs every ten minutes)

LIGHT RAIL

- LACTC is considering two additional light-rail routes in Downtown Los Angeles connecting the existing Long Beach and forthcoming Pasadena Blue Lines. Page 2

COMMUTER RAIL

- Metrolink commuter rail now serves Montclair. Also, off-peak trains have been added. Page 6

BUS

- The City of Burbank now operates shuttles between the Burbank Metrolink station and Downtown Burbank, as well as to the Media District

- Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) has modified DASH routes in downtown L.A. In particular Route D (Spring St.) now serves the Metrolink bus plaza at Union Station.

- Foothill Transit has taken over route #488 (L.A.-Covina-Glendora) from the RTD. Also, #482 (L.A.-Diamond Bar-Pomona) has been re-routed to serve industrial areas in Industry and Diamond Bar.

- Orange County Transit District operates Line #310 (not #30 as reported earlier), providing commuter service between Huntington Beach and the Wardlow BlueLine station in Long Beach.

- Certain Santa Clarita Transit schedules are now timed to wait for the 8:52 a.m. Metrolink arrival. Also, new rush-hour express service may be operating between Santa Clarita and Westwood/Century City.

Transit Updates are compiled by SO.CA.TA staff members. If you notice any new, changed or discontinued transit, please call us at (213) 254 9041

Downtown Connectors to Link Long Beach, Pasadena Blue Lines

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, along with the Downtown Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, has recommended that two light-rail transit lines be built to connect the Blue Line (to Long Beach) with future transit lines to Pasadena and Glendale.

Currently, Blue Line passengers who wish to travel north of Seventh and Flower (Metro Center) must transfer to the Red Line. Proposed Blue Line extensions to Pasadena and Glendale will initially terminate at Union Station, which is also the current terminus for the Red Line and Metrolink. Therefore, a through trip on both the Pasadena and Long Beach lines would require two transfers; one at Union Station and one at the Metro Center.

To alleviate overcrowding on the Red Line and to provide access to more destinations in Downtown Los Angeles, at least one more transit route through Downtown has been advocated. Such a routing would allow Blue Line trains to operate continuously through Downtown between Long Beach and Pasadena or Glendale.

At first, a single route was considered. This route would be an extension of the existing Blue Line north of the Metro Center Station along Flower Street, Third Street and San Pedro Street, then to Union Station. Stops would be provided at: Fourth Street (serving the Arco Plaza, the Bonaventure Hotel, and Library Square); Grand/Third (Bunker Hill); and Second/San Pedro (Little Tokyo).

Although the Bunker Hill/Little Tokyo route would most assuredly have a high ridership, there was also interest in providing transit access to the eastern, industrial areas of Downtown. Several alternative routes were proposed, routed along San Pedro, Alameda or Broadway and connected to the Blue Line at stations along Washington Boulevard. *(cont'd on page 6)*

Even Advocacy from the Sidelines is Important

*Tony Turriffin,
York University, Ontario, Canada*

In all my years of train and transit watching, one of the most thrilling events for me was when California voted not one, but two bond issues for trains and transit. Here was the most auto-oriented of places now trying to find the obvious alternatives. But just as significantly, these bond approvals came about by a lot of hard work by a coalition of environmentalists and train supporters.

In his book Supertrains, Joe Vranich refers to two groups: the Conservation League (representing more than 100 groups), and the Train Riders' Association of California (a state National Association of Railway Passengers, if you will). Advocacy at the right time and in the right place can make a difference. But where does that put the average railfan and 'transit hugger'? They don't appear to be very involved. Yet there is proof that even people who are not able to be activists can make a difference—witness the California events. It is perhaps not often enough appreciated that just being a member of an advocacy organization is significant enough—the cost of a case of beer, as we say in Canada.

Recently I learned some interesting facts about the Sierra Club, an old established environmental group in the U.S. with a very good record on trains and transit. (cont'd on p. 7)

So Many Transit Projects, So Little Time (and Money)

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority plans to build ten new additional rail projects. Certain rail projects, such as the Red Line extensions to Pico/San Vicente, East Los Angeles and North Hollywood, as well as the Pasadena Blue Line, are already assured of funding.

Officials from the various cities are ceaselessly promoting projects which would serve their areas. For example eleven San Gabriel Valley cities have contributed \$125,000 toward an Environmental Impact Report for a Blue Line extension from Pasadena to Irwindale. Proponents of the Exposition and Crenshaw-Prarie routes point to the need for transit in the depressed areas through which these lines would travel.

Up to \$75 billion is to be spent on these projects. Since not all of the funding will be available at once, transit officials must decide which projects get built first. All of these projects would be completed by 2030.

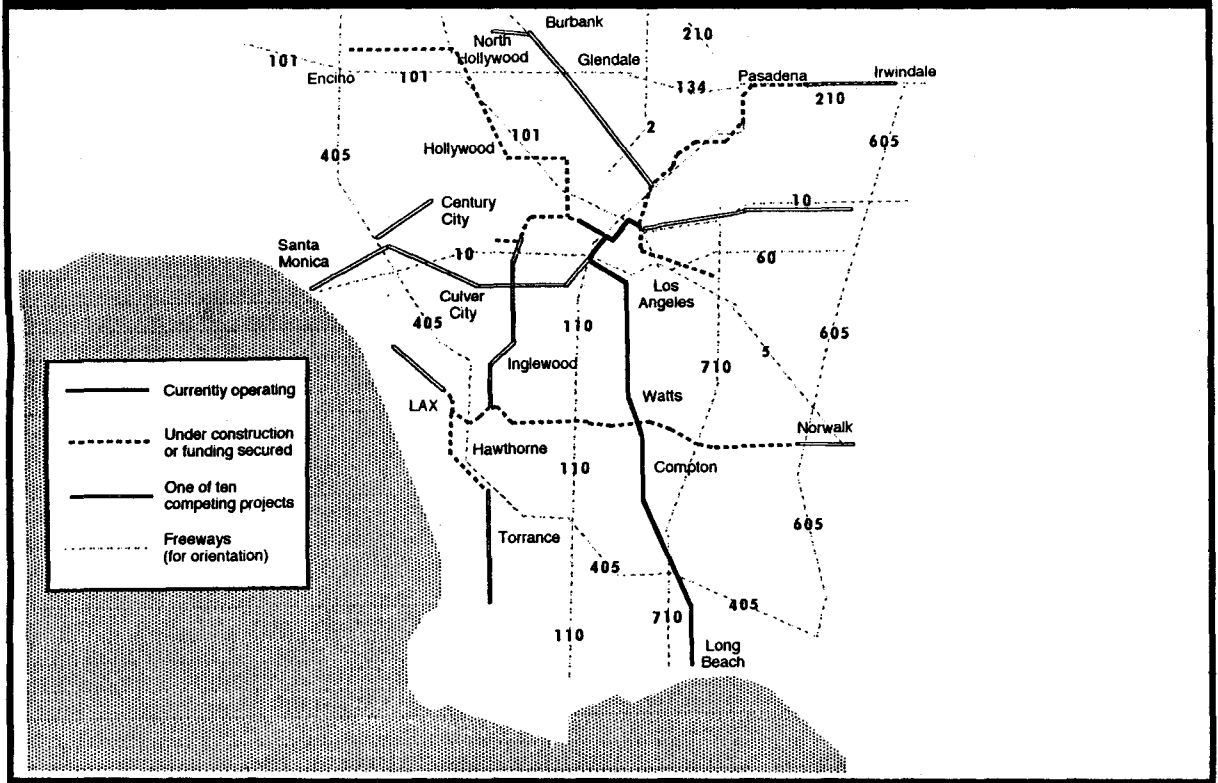
The ten competing projects are:

- An extension of the Pasadena Blue Line light rail from Sierra Madre Villa to Irwindale. This route would use the Santa Fe rail right-of-way and parallel the Foothill Freeway (I-210).
- A transit route operating in the San Gabriel Valley, operating on or near the San Bernadino or Pomona Freeway. Details of this route are currently undetermined.
- A branch of the Pasadena Blue Line operating to Glendale and Burbank, terminating at the Burbank Airport. This route parallels the Golden State Freeway (I-5) and two Metrolink routes. In fact, this route might share the Glendale and Burbank Metrolink stops.

- A branch of the Long Beach Blue Line from Downtown to Exposition Park and USC.
- The extension of the proposed Exposition Park line to Culver City and Santa Monica, via the Exposition right-of-way.
- An extension of the Green Line (planned to open in May, 1995) from El Segundo to Torrance, via former Red Car right-of-way on Hawthorne Boulevard.
- Another Green Line extension from LAX to Westchester Parkway.
- Still another Green Line extension, from the eastern end of the line near the I-605 freeway, to a future Metrolink station in Norwalk.
- The "Crenshaw-Prarie" corridor, connecting the Red Line with Southwest Los Angeles, Inglewood, and possibly, LAX. A variety of technologies, including light rail and rapid transit, are being considered for this line.
- Finally, an unspecified transit project along Santa Monica Boulevard between I-405 and Century City or Beverly Hills. The cities of Beverly Hills and West Hollywood have also expressed interest in developing transit over this routing.

The Burbank Airport is currently seeking Federal airport improvement funds for construction of the Burbank-Glendale route. If such funds are available, not only would LACMTA funds be freed for other projects, but a precedent could be set for rail transit lines serving LAX or other airports. For example, airport improvement funds might also be obtained for the Green Line extension, or the Crenshaw-Prarie route.

STATUS MAP OF LACMTA TRANSIT PROJECTS



MTA's New Headquarters? Is This A Merger or What?

The Los Angeles Transportation Commission and the Southern California Rapid Transit District will complete their merger by April, becoming the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. However, certain aspects of this merger might make one wonder if the two agencies really plan to become, and operate as one.

The most glaring inconsistency is LACTC's consideration of a different office building than SCRTD. While SCRTD plans to move from its current facility at 425 South Main Street, to a new office building to be built near Union Station, LACTC had begun negotiating with the developers of a proposed office building west of the Harbor Freeway in Downtown.

Because this LACTC decision was made at a closed meeting, some observers claimed that the decision violated the state Brown Act, which requires such decisions to be made in public meetings. LACTC stated since no final commitment was made, no such violation took place.

Finally, after much criticism, the LACTC decided to consider both alternatives.

The builders of the Union Station building said that up to eight floors could be added for about \$15 million; the other building could cost the agency up to \$111 million.

(Downtown Connector, from p. 1)

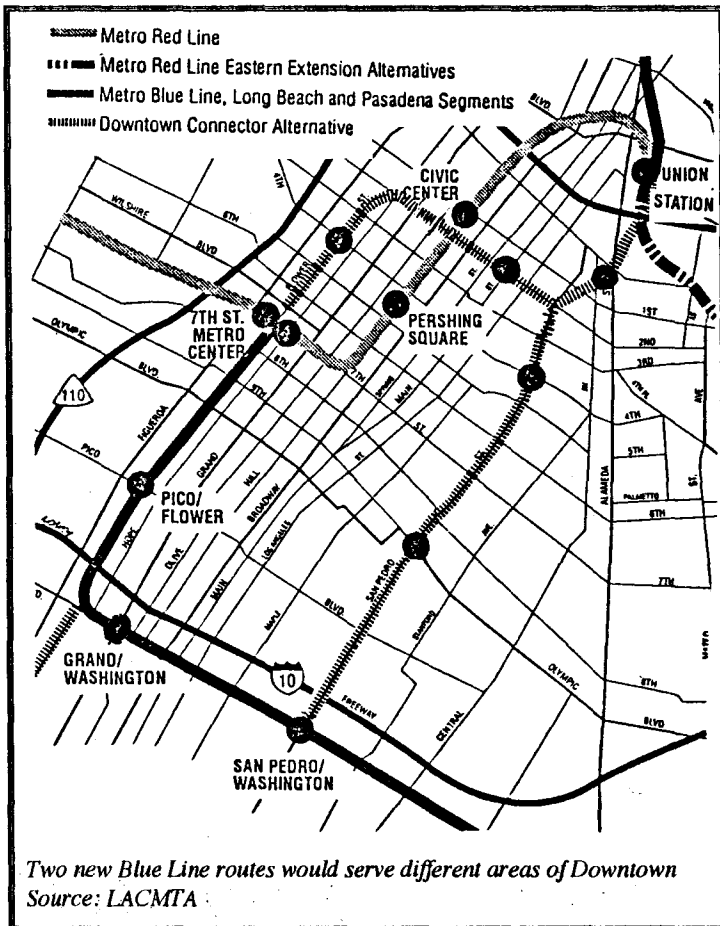
In total, 14 routing alternatives were considered; six of which served Bunker Hill, the balance serving any of several streets from Broadway to Alameda.

The Downtown Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, along with LACMTA, evaluated these routing alternatives and decided that the Downtown area would best be served by two "Connectors": one route serving Bunker Hill from the Metro Center, the other routed via San Pedro Street from the San Pedro Blue Line Station on Washington Boulevard. Both routes would serve Little Tokyo and Union Station.

The Bunker Hill ("Northwest") route would continue in subway with a station at Third/Flower. Instead of an expensive station at Bunker Hill, escalators or even an extension of the restored "Angels' Flight" funicular railway could provide access to Bunker Hill. The route would then operate via Third Street with a stop at Spring, serving the Reagan State Office Building and other new developments in this area. The next station would be near Alameda and Second Street (Little Tokyo). An overpass over the Hollywood Freeway would allow the line to access the Union Station platforms.

The "Southeast" route would operate between Washington Boulevard and Little Tokyo on the surface of San Pedro Street, with stops at Sixth Street and Olympic Boulevard (Garment District).

Both lines could be operating after the year 2000.



Two new Blue Line routes would serve different areas of Downtown
Source: LACMTA

Tokens, Tokens, Tokens!

Metal tokens have now replaced paper tickets on RTD bus and rail lines.

The tokens will be available in rolls of ten for \$9.00 (same price as the former ticket books)

The tokens were adopted because the tickets were susceptible to being counterfeited. Also, the tokens can be used on rail ticket machines, allowing RTD to offer a 90-cent discount fare on the Red, Blue, and future rail lines

METROLINK

As of February 22, Metrolink has extended all five rush hour trains on the San Bernadino Line to serve the Montclair Station. Connections can be made to and from RTD, Foothill, Omnitrans and Inland Empire Connection buses.

Also, Metrolink is now providing weekday off-peak services. Two round trips each operate on the Santa Clarita and San Bernadino Lines, while one round trip operates on the Moorpark line.

Because of signaling and other constraints, all off-peak service on the San Bernadino Line currently terminates in Pomona; service should be extended to Montclair by the end of March. Off-peak fares will be 75% of regular fares, but all trips passing through Union Station will be charged an extra zone fare.

Metrolink will also offer additional reverse-commuter service from L.A. to Glendale and Burbank, probably also by the end of March. Limited service between Los Angeles and Riverside may operate as early as April, but other improvements will probably not be implemented until June.

(Advocacy, from pg. 3)

It now has 400,000 members in the U.S. and is able to support, largely through membership fees and individuals' donations, a paid office staff of 100 in San Francisco, and 20 to 25 paid staffers in Washington to work on Congress. Its total budget is from \$50-65 million a year. By contrast, little old NARP has from 10,000 to 12,000 members and supports one office in Washington with 4 staff members. Yet NARP is credited as being a major force in saving AMTRAK in 1981 and 1985 through its organized letter writing campaign aimed at members of Congress. (It is told that NARP had to dampen an exuberant member in Omaha who boarded the darkened AMTRAK train there in the middle of the night waving his petitions and warning passengers of the coming end of the earth—I mean train.)

In part, this essay was stimulated by that little box of information that appears once a year in those magazines that we all read (Trains, PTJ, Railfan, etc.), where owners are required to state their circulation because they use the Post Office. Railfan magazine lists its average monthly number of subscribers and newsstand sales as 45,792 in

number, and the figure for Trains is a breathtaking 103,493. And that is just the potential in the railfan community, not to speak of employees, consultants, and people that just like trains (or plain transit riders).

How about that membership now in your local, regional or national advocacy group? End of pitch.

For those that are interested, here are two addresses to note of two national organizations:

***National Association of Railroad Passengers
900 Second Street, N.E.,
Suite 308
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 408-8362
Hot line: 1-900-988-RAIL
(toll line updated every Friday PM)
Membership fee: U.S. \$24 annually***

***Transport 2000 Canada
P.O. Box 858, Station B
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5P9(613) 594-3290fax
(evening hot line) (613) 594-3271
Membership fee: Canadian \$20***