

AGENDA FOR MEETING 11/13:

Discussion of

- Newsletter Format
- 501(c) Status Progress
- Transit Centers
- Red Line service on Wilshire Bl.
- Light Rail/Rapid Transit . . .

TRANSIT UPDATES:

Please see individual articles for important information on Metrolink and bus service in Glendale, Lancaster/Palmdale and Riverside/San Bernadino

Transit Updates are compiled by SO.CA.TA members. If you notice any new, changed or discontinued transit services, please call us at (213) 254 9041 so that all members may be informed.

MEETING LOCATION:

The next SO.CA.TA. meeting will be held in the building at **4640 Hollywood Bl. (1/2 block east of Vermont)**

This is more aconvenient location for members and guests arriving by public transit: use MTA bus routes:
#1–Downtown, Sunset Bl, Hollywood Bl.
#180-181–Los Feliz, Glendale, Pasadena
#203-204–Vermont Bl.
#206–Normandie Bl.

Parking is available at the rear of the building.

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.

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Pat Moser*

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Glendale Beeline Expands Service



The City of Glendale has expanded its successful Beeline downtown shuttle bus service into a municipal transit system serving almost all parts of Glendale.

The Glendale Beeline started in 1984 as a five-vehicle, Proposition-A funded downtown shuttle. Additional service was added later to the Glendale Transportation Center (Amtrak/MetroLink station)

The number of passengers carried per year has risen from about 30,000 in 1984, to around 1.2 million currently.

Starting November 1, Beeline buses will operate along the following routes:

Route #1: Starts at the Glendale Transportation Center, operates north on Central Ave. through Downtown Glendale to Stocker, then returns to the Transportation Center via Brand.

Route #2: The opposite of Route #1. North on Brand, south on Central.

Route #3: Operates between Chevy Chase and Garfield and the Adventist Medical Center

Route #4: Serves Palmer Park, Downtown Glendale and Glendale College.

Route #5: Operates in the Montrose area, beginning and terminating at Sparr Senior Center, and serving Verdugo Hills Hospital. This route

is not currently connected to the other Beeline routes.

On weekdays, buses run every 12 minutes on Routes #1 and #2, every 25-30 minutes on Routes #3 and #4, and every 15 minutes on Route #5. Saturday service on Routes #1, #2, #4 and 5 is also provided.

Although the Beeline had experimented with free fares for a nine-year period, a fare of 25 cents is now charged due to the expanded service.

Special MetroLink shuttles serving San Fernando Road will continue to operate.

The Glendale Beeline also features seven new larger buses (for a total of 18), a new logo and color scheme.

In the future, Beeline service will be extended to other portions of Glendale and nearby areas. Coordination of transit services with nearby Burbank and La Canada is also under consideration.



New, larger buses are replacing original Glendale Beeline vehicles such as the one shown here.

One Year of METROLINK

On October 26, 1993, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (an agency made up of the transit commissions of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernadino and Ventura) operated the first Metrolink commuter rail trains from Moorpark, Santa Clarita and Pomona into Downtown Los Angeles. During the first week of service, around 54,000 passengers enjoyed free promotional trips on the three lines.

Warp Speed Implementation

Actual construction of the first three lines required only 18 months, since for the most part, existing railroad rights-of-way were used. The SCRRA provided the trackwork, locomotives and cars, while each city along the route was responsible for developing its own station.

Ever-Expanding Ridership

In the first week of November 1992 (when regular fares went into effect), about 2,400 passengers rode Metrolink. Today, that figure is up to around 8,200—and growing. And, at least 65% of Metrolink passengers, according to surveys, used to drive alone.

The Riverside Line was added in June (1994) and has become the second busiest route, after the San Bernadino Line.

High Fares, High Subsidies

One criticism of Metrolink is its fare structure. In general, the minimum peak one way fare is

\$3.50—it increases with distance—up to \$7.50 for the longest trips. (There are discounts for multiple ride tickets, off-peak travel, and senior citizens). Although Metrolink fares are cheaper than driving (and parking in downtown Los Angeles!), they seem high enough to discourage many commuters who would otherwise consider riding Metrolink.

Metrolink has also come under attack from a variety of individuals and groups claiming that suburban Metrolink passengers—at \$12 per ride, are unfairly subsidized in comparison to bus passengers, which generally cost the transit agencies about \$1.17 per rider to transport. Metrolink officials claim that increasing ridership will lower the high Metrolink subsidy.

There have been fewer, if any, complaints about train noise since the original harsh-sounding Metrolink horns were replaced with softer “tugboat whistles”.

Delays, Delays, Delays

Uncertain relationships with the host railroads continue to put a severe crimp in Metrolink service expansion. While Southern Pacific (Moorpark Line, Santa Clarita Line and San Bernadino Line to Pomona) and Union Pacific (Riverside Line) have generally been cooperative with Metrolink, relationships with Santa Fe (San Bernadino Line east of Pomona, Orange Line) have left a great deal to be desired.

Los Angeles' commuter rail network celebrated its first birthday last month. Here's a look at the trials and triumphs of this ever-expanding rail transit system.

First, Santa Fe insisted on an excessive price (\$1.3 billion) for use of its tracks. Then there were differences on service extensions to Claremont and Montclair. Currently, only three round trips are allowed into San Bernadino, with the rest terminating into Rialto. Finally, delays in Santa Fe track construction near Union Station have delayed the startup of Metrolink service to Orange County. (Santa Fe claims that most of its track crews are working on the Pasadena light rail project)

A Bright Future for Metrolink

New regular services serving Lancaster/ Palmdale, and connecting Riverside County and Irvine should be in place by 1995. Weekend service along all existing lines is currently being discussed and may be implemented in late 1994.

The success of special services, such as the trains to the Ventura County Fair (37,000 passengers total) and the Los Angeles County Fair (35,000 passengers), have piqued interest in special trips to the Rose Parade, Glen Helen Regional Park (north of San Bernadino), Santa Barbara and Palm Springs, although nothing definite has been planned to those areas.

According to officials, Metrolink should be carrying 23,000 passengers per day by 1996. If past performance is an indicator, that number should be much greater.

METROLINK UPDATE

Additional service

17 new train trips have been implemented on three lines:

- The San Bernadino Line enjoys the greatest service improvement. A total of 22 weekday train runs are now provided on this line, including new late-night trains (leaving Union Station at 7:06 and 8:26 pm), an early-morning train to Claremont, extension of off-peak trains to Rialto and additional trains to Montclair
- The Santa Clarita Line also now has a late-night run (leaving L.A. at 8:40 pm), and additional off-peak trains.
- The Ventura County line has an additional mid-morning round trip between L.A and Chatsworth.

Orange County Line Delay

Because of delays in completing necessary trackwork, the Orange County Metrolink service, originally scheduled to start December 6, will be delayed at least until February (and possibly as late as May) 1994

New Stations

- Fontana (Nov 22)
- Cal State Los Angeles (early 1994?)
- Sylmar (April 1994)
- Rancho Cucamonga (late 1994?)

AVTA Commuter Buses

Add Trips . . .

The Antelope Valley Transit Authority, responding to passenger concerns about overcrowded buses, has added service on its commuter routes (#785 and #787) between Lancaster/Palmdale and the San Fernando Valley or Downtown Los Angeles.

These routes are so popular with Antelope Valley commuters (about 15,000 boardings last August) that some people have been forced to take a later bus because of overcrowding. There have been even cases of commuters left stranded in Downtown Los Angeles after the last bus. AVTA will run a special van to pick up these passengers;

Inland Empire Connection Reduces Express Service

In response to reduced funding levels from Los Angeles County, service on Inland Empire Connection Lines #110 and #496 has been reduced as of October.

These express buses operate between Downtown Los Angeles and Riverside (#496) or San Bernadino (#110) stopping at various intermediate points. This service replaced and augmented RTD #496 in August of 1990, and is operated by a private carrier under contract to Omnitrans and the Riverside Transit Agency

Until recently, MTA had contributed 50% of the \$2.8 million annual operating costs for the express routes (Omnitrans contributed 40% and RTA contributed 10%—proportional to the

however, this requires that the van be driven from Lancaster to meet these passengers,

After passenger protests at the AVTA offices, the agency added one bus to each line (#785 now has five trips and #787 has seven). AVTA is also considering special feeder buses connecting with Santa Clarita Transit and Metrolink commuter rail in Santa Clarita, in order to economically handle the increasing passenger load.

NOTE: As of November 1, local bus drivers and mechanics went on strike. This action reduced local AVTA service to half its normal level; commuter routes #785 and #787 were minimally affected. Replacement drivers are being provided as negotiations continue.

amount of service provided in each county). MTA discontinued its share of the operating costs, probably in order to support other bus routes in Los Angeles County.

As a result:

- Night service (after 7pm) has been discontinued.
- Only limited (hourly instead of every 30 min.) service operates west of Montclair, with some passengers required to transfer to the other IEC route or MTA #496.
- Service is no longer provided to Eastland Center (West Covina)

Other related news: Inland Empire Connection Line #149, between Riverside and Anaheim, has increased weekday service to 90 minutes between buses (previously 3 hours)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

I understand the Southern California Transit Advocates oppose use of LA County Proposition A funding for light rail, on the grounds that the November, 1980 ballot measure asked voters to approve a half cent sales tax for a rail rapid transit system. While dictionary definitions of rapid transit often imply that such a system will be elevated/in subway, you should be advised that LACTC Ordinance No. 16, Section 5(a)1 defines rapid transit for Prop A. purposes as follows:

“‘System’ or ‘rail rapid transit system’ means all land and other improvements and equipment necessary to provide an operable, exclusive right-of-way, or guideway, for rail transit.”

This has been upheld in subsequent legal opinions by the Los Angeles County Counsel. The definition as given clearly permits use of Prop. A money for light rail, since the guideway is only used by rail transit vehicles and the linear right-of-way is not used by other vehicles except at grade crossings.

You should also be aware of the fact that a plethora of often confusing definitions has been applied to rail transit modes. Hence, light rail transit is also a rapid tramway system, light rail transit, or surface rapid transit; grade separated rapid transit is also called heavy rail; based on system capacity; commuter rail is also called heavy rail because of the heavier construction of vehicles . . . The definitions are very loosely applied, and a definition must be supplied with any ballot measure that will permit the intended transit improvements to be implemented with funds generated. This was done in the case of Proposition A, and use of the funds for LRT is

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therefore legal.

I further understand your organization is promoting a 1000-mile elevated rail rapid transit system. You must understand that \$500 million in transit funding will build from 12 to 33 miles of light rail (upon level of grade separation required), only eight miles of elevated railway, or about 2 or 3 miles of subway. Hence, LRT, operation on largely surface R-O-W, can provide a much larger system than is possible with elevated railways. Public funding is currently seriously constrained, and tax dollars to support urban rail have to be used in a cost-effective manner.

Further, there are many places where area lines are visually intrusive, potentially causing urban blight. In these locations, surface LRT or underground construction will be needed. Every transit corridor is different, and careful attention must be given to balancing system speed, cost, safety, aesthetic requirements, and neighborhood concerns in every case.

I would respectfully suggest that your group will be taken seriously only if it promulgates cost-effective transit solutions, and ceases its efforts to mandate simplistic, system-wide design standards.

Respectfully,
Alan Havens, Ph.D.
Transit Analyst