

## TRANSIT UPDATES

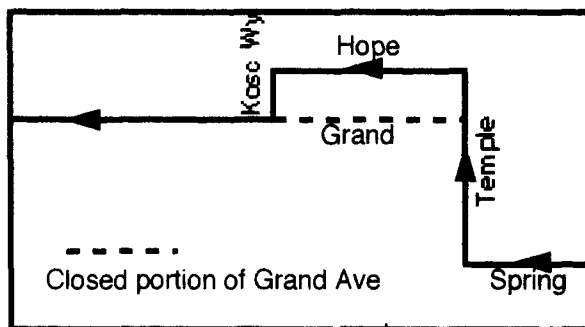
Current **MTA** bus/rail fares are still in effect, even though the Federal judge has indicated that he may allow a fare increase, if MTA increases the number of token sales outlets. The monthly pass would most likely also be retained, but at a much higher cost (\$60-70?)

MTA bus routes #3, #76, #78, #9, #96, #97, #378, #379, #401, #402, #412, #483-491 operating eastbound on Grand Avenue will be rerouted for approximately eight months (see map on this page). The reroute is necessary because Grand Avenue will be closed during construction of the new Disney concert hall. (Most likely, **Foothill Transit** routes using Grand Avenue will adopt this, or a similar routing).

**Santa Clarita Transit** has adjusted several schedules in response to **Metrolink** service changes (see page 10 for more information on Metrolink)

**Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines** is now running a new peak-hour route ("TLC-The Lincoln Commuter") between Wilshire Blvd. and the LAX/El Segundo area, largely via Lincoln Blvd. (This is the same route as SMMBL #3, but with limited stops)

*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.*



## Our Message: Look, Listen, and Live.

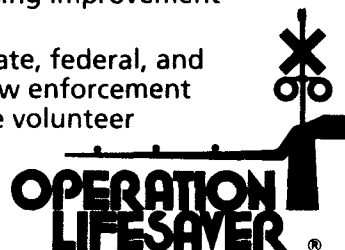
Operation Lifesaver, a national, non-profit organization started in 1972, is uniting efforts to educate the public about railroad and grade crossing safety.

California Operation Lifesaver's goals are:

- To achieve a continued reduction in crossing accidents
- To create a continuing public railroad safety awareness message
- To promote good safety habits for motorist, cyclists, and pedestrians crossing railroad lines, and
- To develop public support for grade crossing safety and crossing improvement programs

Who's involved in California Operation Lifesaver? California state, federal, and local agencies, the railroad companies, government leaders, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, auto clubs, and all importantly, the volunteer public.

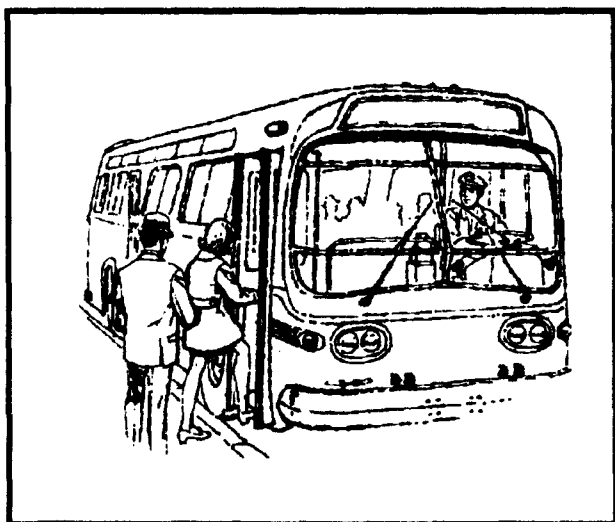
The Operation Lifesaver message is for everyone.  
For more information, call 1-800-537-6224



## FROM THE EDITOR

by Charles P. Hobbs  
Vice President/Newsletter Editor

- Nominations will be held at the November meeting for the following offices: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Directors-at-large.
- Newsletter Survey: Inside this issue of *The Transit Advocate*, there is a postcard with several questions on it. Please fill this out and return it to us as soon as possible. Your comments and suggestions will be used to help determine the form and frequency of this newsletter for the next year.
- Guest Authors: Our thanks to Elson Trinidad for providing yet another excellent historical article on the Pacific Electric Subway Tunnel. (It should be noted, however, that exploring this tunnel is not recommended!)
- To help expedite newsletter production, contributors are now being asked to submit long articles (over 100 words or so) already typed (for direct paste-up) or in electronic format (3.5" disk or e-mail). In this issue, read "MTA Bus Route Restructuring" on page 4 for an example. Call us at 213-254-9041 for details on electronic submission of articles. Remember, all articles should be received by the first Saturday of the month.



Our meetings are currently held at  
the Echo Park United Methodist  
Church,  
1226 N. Alvarado St, Los Angeles.,  
north of Sunset Bl.

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This location is easily accessed by  
the following MTA bus routes:  
#1, #2, #3, #4, #92, #93 and #200

This past April Franklin White, Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, held a summit with the various Los Angeles county municipal operators at which he requested they submit proposals to aid MTA in closing a looming deficit.

One of the key issues of the strike this past summer was to what extent MTA could transfer routes to other operators. The final agreement allowed MTA to give up 13 lines provided no MTA union members lost their jobs as a result.

The proposals made to date:

Foothill Transit on June 24 proposed two packages of routes they wished to assume: one consisted of lines 270, 484, 490 and 497, the other included lines 170, 188, 264, 267, 268, 401, 483 and 487. They estimate this would result in a savings to MTA of approximately \$10 million.

Los Angeles Department of Transportation on June 15 proposed taking over routes 406/407, 427, 620 and 660/661 (in the past they have also discussed taking over route 445). They estimate these would result in savings for MTA of about \$1.9 million.

Glendale as part of the San Fernando Valley restructuring proposed two years ago taking over portions of routes 177, 183 and 201 that operate within their city boundaries (and perhaps would operate a bit beyond those). Their intent is to

acquire a small fleet of buses to advance from their present DASH-type shuttle service toward a local transit agency along the lines of what is operated in Culver City, Montebello, Santa Monica and Torrance. There are on-going discussions of the possibility of a regional system like Foothill among the members of the Arroyo-Verdugo Transportation Coalition, which consists of Glendale, Burbank, Pasadena, La Canada and South Pasadena.

Montebello is interested is taking over route 262, which mostly operates in their service area.

Palos Verdes Transit in April proposed taking over routes 225, 444 and 446. While they have heretofore only been essentially a dial-a-ride service, the present head of PV Transit, John Meyer, has experience in running a bus system (he formerly helped operate San Diego transit and is the current temporary head of Torrance Transit concurrent with his position at PV Transit).

At its September 21st meeting, the MTA Board considered a workplan for reviewing short and long term service restructuring of MTA bus operations. This was in its initial stages to include an examination of the proposals from the various agencies. It also included a timetable for MTA to incrementally review bus operations in the entire MTA service area using as a model the San Fernando Valley restructuring

(which has been favorably received).

The benefits of an extensive review were laid out in a Dec. 1, 1993 letter Michael Ueyno, a Senior Transportation Engineer at the Los Angeles Dept. of Transportation, sent to James McLaughlin (director of System Integration at MTA): "Our consultant for the San Fernando Valley Transit Restructuring study, who has experience in analyzing many transit services throughout the United States, has suggested that extensive line segment performance analysis typically can yield 10% savings with minimal negative impact. With extensive segment analysis, service is decreased in areas with low ridership, while service is increased in areas with heavy ridership."

An added incentive for MTA to undertake such an analysis is that the city of Los Angeles, which underwrote the half-million dollar cost of the SF Valley study, has budgeted funds for similar reviews of the entire city. MTA can effectively piggyback on this and only pay for the review of service outside of Los Angeles.

The workplan met a muted response from the MTA Board. It was considered late in the meeting and given about two minutes. Boardmember James Fasana used the word "luke-warm" in discussing the report, and requested additional material. The proposal was sent back to the Planning and Programming Committee. Whatever changes are being

made to it, and when it will again be forwarded to the MTA Board for possible implementation, is unclear.

A staffperson with one of the municipal operators involved commented some recent meetings with MTA staff about the status of the proposal the operator had made gave the impression that MTA is slow to act due to the after-effects of the strike and the still unresolved court injunction blocking the fare increase. Until these problems sort themselves out, the restructuring may be in limbo.

Another factor may be an institutional reluctance on the part of MTA to give up routes. An indication of this is MTA operations' desire to bid for MTA to operate the routes when they are released.

While routing restructuring is stalled, MTA is going forward with changes in its operations. Division 15 is the pilot for these, which involve a new streamlined structure with a Division Manager having final authority for operating the Division. Early next year this will be expanded with pilot regions (four groups of three divisions) with Regional Managers overseeing the Divisions. Performance Measures are intended to clarify the status of the system. Savings in the pilot project are estimated at \$1 million, mostly from staff reductions.

SO.CA.TA will monitor the progress of these projects and keep its membership apprised.

## VALLEY RAIL LINE

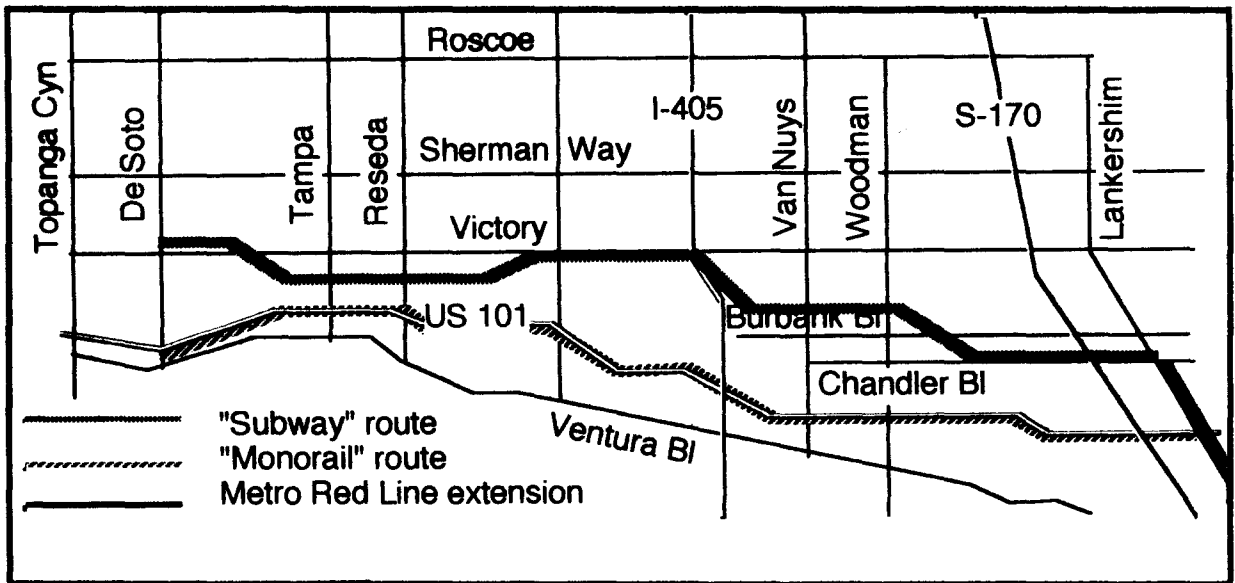
After ten years of political infighting, the route of one of Los Angeles' more controversial rail projects has been approved. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority has decided to support a San Fernando Valley rail route along a former Pacific Electric right of way (known as the Burbank-Chandler route because of the local streets it parallels). This route was chosen over a competing route along the Ventura Freeway (most likely, in or over the median strip of the freeway)

(Often the Burbank-Chandler route has been called "the subway", while the Ventura Freeway route has been called "the monorail". In fact, no particular technology has been selected for either line, although the Burbank-Chandler route almost certainly would be built as an extension of the Metro Red Line subway system. The Ventura Freeway route might be an actual monorail, or a light rail line similar to the Metro Blue/Green Lines. Also, the "subway" along proposed

Burbank-Chandler route might have several elevated, open trench or at-grade segments, particularly in non-residential areas).

The Valley line was first presented as one of several rapid transit lines under Proposition A, the half-cent sales tax measure passed in 1980. However, Proposition A did not specify the exact routing of the Valley line, so several different routes (including not only Burbank-Chandler and Ventura Freeway, but Ventura Boulevard as well) and various technologies (rapid transit, light rail, monorail) were considered. Eventually, transit officials decided to choose between Burbank-Chandler and Ventura Freeway routes.

In early 1990, the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission voted to support the Burbank-Chandler route. But in a non-binding referendum held three months later, voters in the San Fernando Valley overwhelmingly supported the Ventura Freeway route.



Former State Senator Alan Robbins had a bill passed by the governor in 1991 which requires that the line be built underground through residential neighborhoods east of Van Nuys Boulevard.

Arguments over which of the two routes should be built became thick and furious, as various groups took sides. Homeowners groups along the two proposed routes typically advocated that the route not passing through their areas be adopted.

The supporters of the freeway alignment cited the lower costs of the "monorail", proximity to Ventura Boulevard and possible service west to Calabasas and Ventura County.

Advantages of the Burbank-Chandler route would include; no transferring required between the Valley and Downtown, better local bus connections and service to important destinations (two colleges and Van Nuys Government Center)

Burbank-Chandler line supporters also stated that a freeway rail route could also be destroyed if an earthquake damaged the Ventura Freeway. Both the Los Angeles City Council and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation went on record as supporting the Burbank-Chandler route.

In January 1993, MTA performed an in-depth study of both routes. This study determined that the cost for the Burbank Chandler route was only one percent greater than that of the Ventura Freeway route. (This assumed that the freeway would have to be widened in order to accommodate a transit line, and that subway construction costs could be reduced through open trench construction *(cont'd on page 10)*)

## MTA Funding Frozen, RCC Dismantled

In light of recent problems with construction quality and safety, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency has dismantled its Rail Construction Corporation (RCC).

The incident started when this year when safety violations were found at the Metro Red Line construction site between the Vermont Avenue and Santa Anita stations. Several sink holes were found and some buildings along the route were damaged. Because of improper subway construction, there is a crack instead of joint in the concrete (transmission).

In response to these construction irregularities, the County Transit Authority withheld \$1 million in construction funds until corrections were made.

MTA representatives stated that they were going to monitor the construction and supported the County Transit Authority's decision. MTA members who were on the board of experts, however, felt that to retain the current contract for the project, including it would prove to be a cost-effective problem.

The MTA was formed by the merging of members from the Los Angeles County Board of Transportation and the Southern California Rapid Transit District in order to prevent disputes between the two agencies over rail project construction.

## SUBWAY TUNNEL ADVENTURE

I, along with three other rail/transit buff friends, took a walk inside the old Pacific Electric subway tunnel near Downtown L.A.

For the uninitiated, Los Angeles actually had a subway even before the Metro Red Line. Built in 1924, this \$5 million trolley tunnel served as a quick bypass for Pacific Electric trolleys between Downtown L.A. and the PE's Glendale, Hollywood, San Fernando Valley and Santa Monica routes to avoid the automobile traffic downtown. The tunnel was in service from 1925 to 1955 and stretched for about a mile.

The four of us gathered outside the tunnel when we ran into a minor stumbling block - the filming of the new Clive Barker movie, "Lord Of Illusions." There were movie crews and trailers occupying the lot that was once PE's Toluca Yard and some of the local homeless hung around their home, which was the former PE substation just outside the portal, which is now graffiti-ridden.

We bargained with the film production security guard, who said that we could go in, as long as we "got out from the other end." Yeah right. Alas, there was a break in filming, so he allowed us to come in.

As we entered, a couple of the homeless, sitting on rusty lawn chairs, said to us, "Beware of the alligator!" and "There's a large rat with diamond eyes!" We took this with a smile, as one of us had gone inside all the way before, without problems.

The first 50 feet or so is strewn with garbage, empty spray paint cans, wooden boards, tires and (in some locations) feces, which we craftily avoided. The next 100 or so feet was generally muddy ground, with tread markings all around. Another 100 feet was a 3-foot high wall of garbage, burned out cars and other junk, which appeared to be bulldozed. We also carefully navigated ourselves and forged a path to go over

this heap.

Once over, things were a little better. The stench was less severe here, the graffiti was less concentrated, the ground was more solid and there was little in the way of physical obstacles. We forged on.

The ground was still damp in places, and tiny cracks in the ceiling of this reinforced concrete structure leaked water, which formed puddles in the floor. We caught sight of this with our mag lights and steered clear of these places, even seeing a few stalagmites and stalagmites along the way.

Speaking of the structure, it was built 70 years ago and has survived four major earthquakes, three of which have happened after its abandonment, and found no major structural damage whatsoever. This subway was built to lower and more primitive standards than the modern Red Line, and yet is still as hard as a rock! Who says there can't be subways in L.A.?

As far as rail-related structures, we saw the 6-foot high cubby-holes that were built for PE workers to avoid being hit by trains and the remains of the light sockets that were located at the apex. We also saw catenary "hooks" on the ceiling, other indentations on the wall, which appeared to house electrical equipment, ballast strewn on the ground, cables on the walls, 1x3-foot ditches on the floor (filled with clear water!) and most amazing of all, RAILROAD SPIKES! (of which we grabbed a few for keepsake).

The tunnel gently curved southeast, and we followed it, even occasionally shutting off our flashlights to see where the light ended. There was an eerie wedge of light as it faded into the curve.

After the curve there was a point where it was completely pitch black.

Not much further was our goal - the end of the tunnel! It was boarded up with wooden boards and a trench, partially filled with water lay between us and the end. There was some graffiti here. At this point, we stopped to take pictures.

There were even tall protrusions that merged in the floor and one of us thought it was covered-up track. But one of us tried to dig through with a pocketknife, and came up with nothing but dirt, mud and sediment.

One of us estimated that the point we were at was approximately under Figueroa Street, and that the tunnel was blocked off here to make way for the foundations of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel. It was amazingly cool inside, about 55 or so degrees, and the air was slightly humid, as steam traces came out of our mouths as we exhaled.

On the way out, we took more pictures, and stopped to test the acoustics (we yelled and screamed to hear the extent of the echoes), and heard slight vibrations, which we decided that at this point we were underneath the Harbor Freeway.

We stopped where we had the first view of the outside and found it eerie to see the daylight world, yet not hear a thing. It was eerily silent, save for the dripping of water from the ceiling.

As we finally got out and navigated the pile of junk, the 90-degree heat hit us outside. As we stomped off the mud from our shoes, we briefly discussed the possibility of running trolley trains here again, as a sort of downtown shuttle of sorts. Not entirely impossible. If the guy in New York can do it, so can we, I guess...

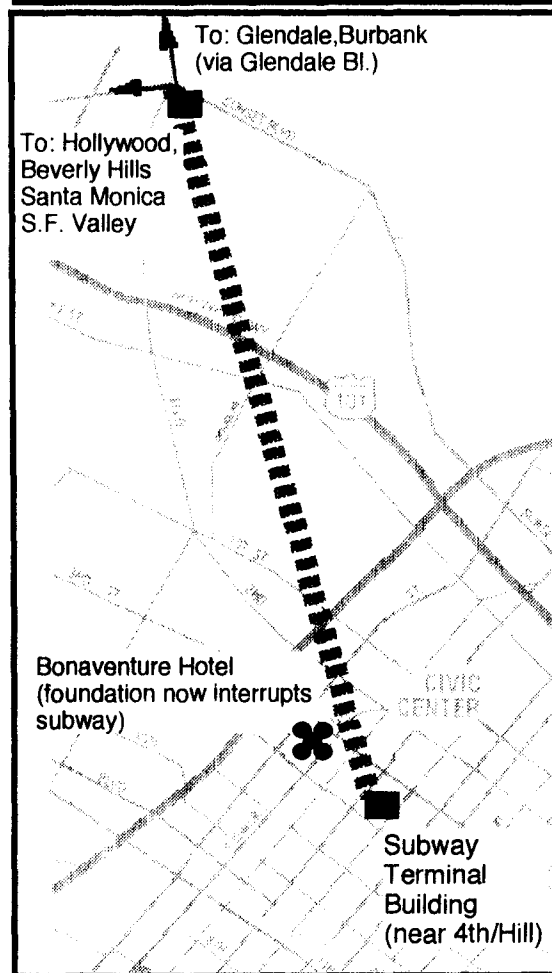
It was quite an adventure. I had previously attempted this a year ago, but chickened out, thinking my flashlight was not that powerful to see with. With three others, it's not as scary, and quite fun.

*-Elson Trinidad*

(One of the few people in L.A. who's been in BOTH of our subway tunnels!)

**Editor's note: Exploring this tunnel is potentially dangerous and is therefore, not recommended. This article is provided for educational purposes only.**

## PE SUBWAY MAP





## METROLINK UPDATE

In celebrating its second birthday, Metrolink has finally opened two long-awaited stations on the San Bernadino Line: Rancho Cucamonga and Cal State Los Angeles.

The Rancho Cucamonga station is located at Haven Ave. in its namesake city; The Cal State LA station is located near the I-10 Busway stop serving that campus.

All trains (except #301, the first run out of San Bernadino) will serve the Cal State LA station, while the Rancho Cucamonga station will have only peak-hour service.

The new stops have lengthened the total running time between San Bernadino and Los Angeles by about 4-5 minutes.

In addition, new schedules went into effect on October 31 on the other Metrolink routes. Many of these changes were made in response to a recent survey of Metrolink riders.

- Track improvements have changed schedules on the Orange County Line trains (and Amtrak San Diegans). In general, trains are now arriving at stations up to five minutes earlier.

.....  
(Valley Rail, from Page 7 )

and deferred opening of certain stations in low-density residential areas west of I-405.

Interestingly, Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan had initially supported the freeway alignment, but decided to support the Burbank-Chandler route about a day before the October 26 MTA board meeting.

- There are now four peak-hour round trips on the Riverside County Line, as well as an additional reverse commute round trip (leaving Union Station at 6:08 am and Riverside at 5:29pm). Reverse commute service makes no stops between Los Angeles and Riverside at this time.

- Santa Clarita Line service now features more trains serving the new Via Princessa station (Canyon Country) and a late-night train leaving Santa Clarita (9:32 pm). Although several additional runs (started after the January 17 earthquake) have been discontinued due to low ridership, the three round trips serving Lancaster are still provided. (Santa Clarita Transit #795 provides service between Santa Clarita Metrolink and the Antelope Valley, connecting at Metrolink )
- The most significant change on the Ventura Line is that trains now leave Oxnard at 5:31 and 6:30am. (The earlier departure s are designed for Ventura County residents who work in Burbank)

The Metrolink system now consists of 346 miles of track, 39 stations and carries 7,800 round trip passengers each weekday.

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Finally, on October 26, 1994, the MTA voted, 8-5 to support the Burbank-Chandler route. (The vote would have been 7-6 if Councilman Richard Alatorre, who supported the freeway alignment, were present at the meeting)

After the vote, most of the MTA board members (except Antonovich, the most vocal "monorail" supporter) expressed (*continued on page 11*)

# CALENDAR OF MEETINGS + EVENTS

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

*For meetings pertaining to municipal transit systems (Santa Monica, Long Beach, etc.), contact the city hall of that particular city.*

Nov 4 10:30am Ventura County Transit Commission  
Camarillo City Hall,  
601 Carmen Dr.

Nov 12 1:00pm **SO.CA.TA meeting**  
**Echo Park United Methodist**  
**Church**  
**1226 N. Alvarado St, LA**

Nov 14, 9:30am Orange County Transit Authority  
Nov 28 Planning Commission Hearing Rm  
10 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana

Nov. 16 1:30 p.m. MTA Board  
Bd. of Supervisors  
Hearing Room  
500 W. Temple St.

Nov 18 10:00am Metrolink, SCAG Conf Rm  
12th Floor  
818 W. 7th, Los Angeles

Nov 18 3:00pm Riverside Transit Agency  
1825 Third St, Riverside

Dec 2 10:30am Ventura County Transit Commission  
Camarillo City Hall,  
601 Carmen Dr.

Dec 8 10:00am Metrolink, SOAG Conf Rm  
12th Floor  
818 W. 7th, Los Angeles

Dec 9 1:00pm **SO.CA.TA meeting**  
**Echo Park United Methodist**  
**Church**  
**1226 N. Alvarado St, LA**

Dec 12 9:30am Orange County Transit Authority  
Planning Commission Hearing Rm  
10 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana

*(Valley Rail, from Page 10)*

varying degrees of support for the chosen alignment, although there were **some** concerns over subway tunneling problems on the Metro Red Line through Hollywood.

Construction may start sometime after 2001 (about the time the Red Line segment to North Hollywood opens) and will probably be completed by 2018.



## HOW THEY VOTED:

*For the Burbank-Chandler route*

County Supervisor Ed Edelman  
Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan  
Mel Wilson (Mayoral Appointee)  
Los Angeles Councilman Nate Holden\*  
Los Angeles Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky\*\*  
County Supervisor Gloria Molina  
County Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite-Burke  
Gardena Councilman Jim Cragin  
(\* alternate of LA Councilman Richard Alatorre)  
(\*\* alternate of mayoral appointee Stan Sanders)

*For the Ventura Freeway route*

County Supervisor Michael Antonovich  
County Supervisor Deane Dana  
Huntington Park Councilman Raul Perez  
Glendale Councilman Larry Zarian  
Duarte Councilman John Fasana