



TRANSIT UPDATES

Help keep all of your fellow SO.CA.TA members informed!!! If you notice any new, modified, or cancelled transit services, please call us at 213-388-2364

The **MTA Gateway** Transit Plaza, near Union Station, is now open. Several MTA buses now stop there, with more to come in December.

The City of Santa Clarita has applied for funds to build its third Metrolink station in the southern part of the city (Newhall)

Torrance Transit fares have risen to \$.75 for regular riders, but Torrance promises additional service on heavily used lines.

Foothill Transit is now operating three Metrolink shuttle routes. Two routes operate from the Industry Metrolink station, and one operates from El Monte Metrolink to Arcadia.

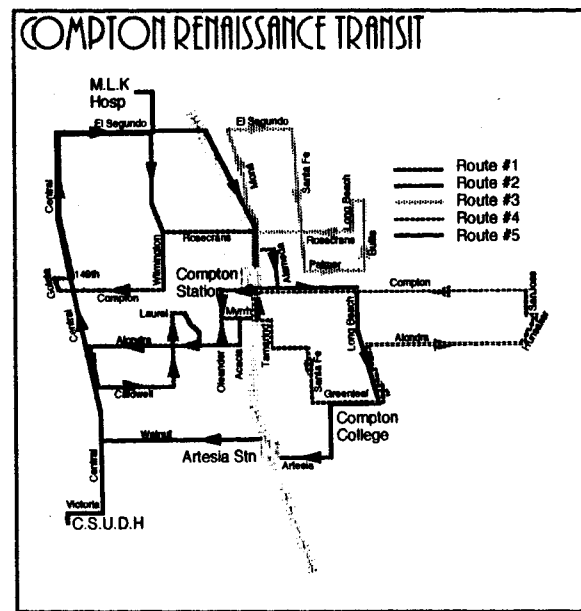
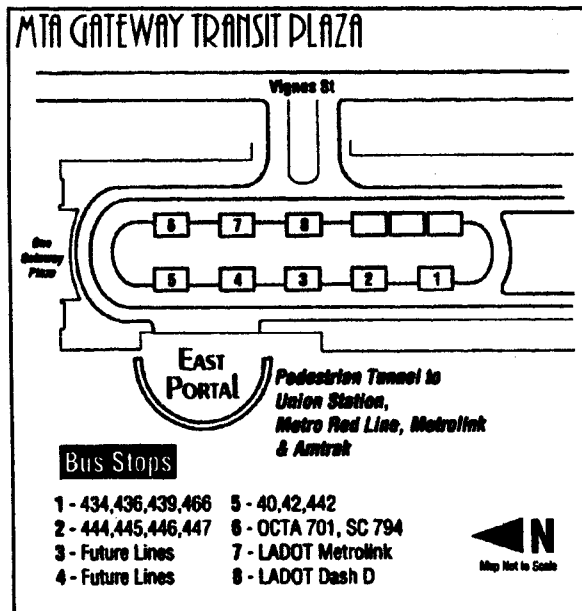
Compton Renaissance Transit is a new fixed route bus service operating in the City of

Compton. Five routes provide 30-minute service (60-minutes on Rt#5) weekdays and Saturdays (see map)

New low-floor buses are operating on **OCTA** #25,29,42,54 and 65.

RTA reportedly plans to use three ex-OCTA Superbuses (tractor-trailer buses) on IEC #149. Also, new **Banning Municipal Transit** service is operating between Banning and Cabazon.

Amtrak has adjusted schedules on its San Diegan trains. An early morning weekday "Express Train" makes limited stops between San Diego and Los Angeles, then continues to Santa Barbara. Also, four daily round trips operate to Santa Barbara, with one round trip continuing to San Luis Obispo.





FROM THE EDITOR

Charles P. Hobbs
President/Newsletter Editor

- At the October meeting, SO.CA.TA members voted to increase the yearly dues, effective January 1, 1996, to \$15 for regular members and \$6 for low-income members. It was felt that the higher rate would enable SO.CA.TA to do more (larger newsletters, more extensive advertising, etc.). However, we are still open to input and suggestions on our rates; please leave a message at 213-388-2364 (or better yet, come to the November or December meetings) if you have any comments.
- Also, for all current members, is a survey. Please fill it out and send it back to us as soon as possible. Again, your input is crucial in determining the direction of SO.CA.TA.
- The HOV Committee will meet on November 11, right after the main meeting. Participants are reminded to write down their comments for the committee meeting!
- As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs articles, letters, photographs and research (newspaper clippings, etc.) from all members and interested non-members. If you see an interesting, transit-related article in the newspaper, consider sending a copy (preferably two copies) of the article to Box 41198, Los Angeles 90041. Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting date.

-Charles P. Hobbs, President/Newsletter Editor

Our Message: Look, Listen, and Live.

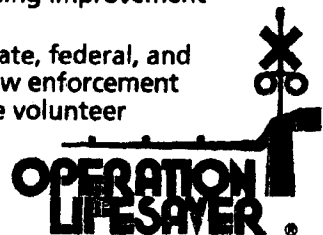
Operation Lifesaver, a national, non-profit organization started in 1972, is uniting efforts to educate the public about railroad and grade crossing safety.

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





PUBLIC AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.1 - NOV. 1995

Diesel Multiple Units (DMU) are rail cars that have their own engines and operate singly or in 2-3 car configurations. They were widely used in the U.S. during the 40s and 50s, mostly with the famed Budd cars. But in the past 20 years they have all but vanished domestically although in such countries as Japan and England thousands of such cars operate today.

MTA is among several American transit agencies presently investigating running this technology. They have invented the phrase Alternate Rail Technology (ART) to signify their preference for a clean fuel car. This interest grows out of the realization that many rights-of-way MTA now owns won't get light rail placed along them for decades given present financial conditions. The 20 Year Plan directed MTA's staff to study ART as a viable low cost alternative for these corridors.

"Encouragement" from politicians eager for a way to be found for them to bring rail to their area has accelerated the pace of consideration of this technology. The Phase I review of the current state of rail car technology and obstacles to bringing it to Southern California was released in August. At present the Phase II study of the feasibility of running ART on the Burbank/Glendale/Los Angeles alignment is being readied for presentation at the November 15th MTA Board meeting. A sign of regional support is \$60,000 for the study contributed by the cities of Burbank and Glendale along with the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport

Authority.

But there are troubles. Because this corridor is also used by Metrolink, Amtrak and freights, any ART cars MTA runs along it will need to meet stringent Federal Railroad Administration standards. No cars on the market at present meet these. Expensive trackwork may be necessary due to the heavy traffic this stretch of track carries.

MTA's hope to use clean fuel also hits the same snag - no cars exist at present that do what MTA wants. There are hopes to substitute a pair of Compressed Natural Gas bus engines to provide locomotion for an ART.

The final, and perhaps insurmountable obstacle, is funds. As resources continue to tighten being able to undertake initiatives such as this will prove difficult. The numerous public entities targeted to contribute to its funding (FAA, MTA, Burbank-Glendale Pasadena Airport Authority, and the cities of Burbank, Glendale and Los Angeles) will require delicate handling to avoid complications (a la the Alameda Corridor project).

In the face of this chief proponent (and MTA Chairman) Larry Zarian touts ART as an opportunity to have rail without the expense of overhead wires. In an article in the September 28th Glendale News Press he predicts if all goes well they can be running ART by the year 2000.

We'll be keeping an eye on this, and ask pointed questions, as this progresses.



YOSEMITE ELECTRIC BUS

*Kris Sharp
Secretary*

How much difference is there between prudent transit advocacy in the pristine setting of a national park and the urban sprawl of Southern California? Evidently not much.

As reported by Yosemite National Park recently, electric buses, manufactured in the Los Angeles area are going to one of the nation's oldest national parks to help preserve the environment. The massive onslaught of visitors and automobiles has caused such problems that a recent proposal by the California state legislature, concerning Yosemite National Park involved the construction of a 5000 space parking structure to help alleviate traffic problems. Sound familiar? Plans now include the introduction of two new, emission-free, electric powered buses into Yosemite Valley's shuttle system by early fall of 1995. After a period of evaluation two to three more may be ordered.

Yosemite is being used as a proving ground for electric vehicles in which the California Energy Commission, the California Department of Transportation, Pacific Gas and Electric and Yosemite National Park has provided funding for the purchase of the new electric buses. With air quality laws requiring 10 percent of all new vehicles in California to be "zero-emission" or free from emissions by the year 2003, the buses will demonstrate the ability of electric vehicles to meet the demands for a transit system that carries up to 2,000 passengers daily during the summer months. The fact of the matter is that these buses are joining one of the most heavily used mass transit systems in the nation. Yosemite's current fleet of 10 diesel-powered Gillig buses transport approximately 3.5

million visitors annually. An eight-and-half mile shuttle loop provides visitors with a 'no-fare' shuttle bus system that has been in operation since 1970. This system encourages auto drivers to park and still see park sights, thereby reducing air pollution, congestion, noise and damage to the delicate valley geology.

The buses will be constructed by Specialty Vehicle Manufacturing Corporation of Downey, as well as APS Systems of Oxnard, California. The buses will carry only about half as many passengers as the diesel coaches, but both are wheelchair lift equipped. The buses run on alternating current (AC) electric motors using lead-acid batteries. Each bus has an extra battery pack that can be switched with the discharged batteries in approximately 15 minutes. This allows them to operate up to 12 hours per day.

It seems ironic that Los Angeles is exporting something besides its pollution in defense of wilderness preservation and that a world famous refuge of nature must indeed turn to such measures. However, just as in the urban setting, efforts in Yosemite are being made to restore a semblance of environmental purity which can somehow coexist next to the wilderness supermarket. And the true test of transit advocacy is still an educated and alert public who makes clear demands on how their transportation tax money is spent. That is, an educated public that demands appropriate mass transit vehicles and systems; marked reduction in highway construction and most important, a reduction in automobile use. In this way maybe we can all come a little closer to getting the hell out of paradise.

