

# TRANSIT UPDATES *Have anything to report? Call 213 388 2364*

The City of Burbank has started construction of a new depot/transit plaza at its downtown Metrolink station. This project, scheduled for completion in Spring 1998, will feature restrooms, bus shelters, covered seating, bike racks and other passenger amenities. The construction has necessitated the closure of the regular parking lot at Burbank Metrolink, and a temporary parking lot, accessed via Olive Av. and Flower St. has been provided.

MTA, LADOT, and the Southern California Association of Governments are funding an experimental "Smart Shuttle" for the West San Fernando Valley. This service can be used by either going to one of over 20 "access points" and boarding the shuttle, or calling the dispatch number (1-888-804-8333). The shuttle operates in an area roughly bounded by Ventura Bl, Tampa Ave, Roscoe Bl, Balboa Ave, 118 Freeway, Topanga Cyn Blvd, Parthenia St, and Platt Ave. One way base fare is \$1.00, with an additional \$.50 for pickups or dropoffs at points other than the designated "access points". More information about this service can be obtained at 888-804-8333 or <http://socata.lerctr.org/ss/wvshuttle.shtml>

A new "Culver City Trolley" provides weekday, lunchtime service around Downtown Culver City, and the movie studios. Service runs every 20 minutes, between 11:30 a.m. and 3:05 p.m. along Culver, Washington, National and Hayden. Fare is \$.25

Carson Circuit modified almost all its routes Saturday October 4th. This includes one new route, the "North/South Shuttle".

The new route runs mostly south on Main St. and north on Figueroa St. but goes south from Sepulveda Blvd. on Avalon and north on Main St. before heading west to Avalon Blvd. North

of Torrance Blvd. there will be two way service on Main St. to Victoria St. before a mini-loop back to Main St. At the south end it does leave Lomita Blvd. to serve some neighborhood streets. The North/South Shuttle is Carson's first route (since the old "G" route along Carson Blvd was cancelled) that does not begin and end at Carson Mall. It begins and ends at the Kmegamart weekdays from 5:20 am until 6:40 pm and Saturdays from 10:40 am until 5:20 pm like the other Carson Circuit busses.

There's a new Santa Clarita Transit schedule out, effective Sept 4,97:

- Additional trips will operate on #10 along Soledad Cyn between Valencia Town Center and Shadow Pines. Service will operate every 15-minutes during weekday, peak-hour periods (with some buses continuing to/from #35, q.v.)
- #30/31 have had schedules adjusted in order to keep the route on-time; this has reduced the number of trips by one.
- #35 will also operate every 15-minutes during weekday peak periods. In addition, #35 has been extended into Stevenson Ranch.
- On weekends, #40 and #50 will be through-routed at Valencia Town Center; neither will serve Metrolink.
- #45 is a new peak-hour only route, serving the Northbridge/Northpark area (McBean, Newhall Ranch Rd, Boquet cyn Rd, terminating at Metrolink).
- #50 has been pulled away from Soledad Cyn between Metrolink and Whites Canyon Road. It now operates between Whites Cyn and Newhall via Sierra Hwy.

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# BULLETIN BOARD

On Saturday September 27, ten SO.CA.TA members had the opportunity to tour the MTA subway tunnels in North Hollywood at the future Universal City station. A complete article will appear in next month's newsletter. Another tour, this time of the completed tunnels near Hollywood, is also under consideration.

Sunday Sept. 28th we had a booth at the Eco Fest held at Barnsdall Park in Los Angeles. Members who helped staff the booth included President Gabbard, Vice President Powell, Directors Ledermuller and Moser plus members Joe Dunn and Hank Fung. Due to the layout of the event, foot traffic where we were located was light but we had some significant expressions of interest and extended conversations with the public about transportation issues and concerns. It should be noted our participation was at the invitation of the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department. It certainly signifies efforts to improve our visibility are having an impact.

Saturday October 4th Founder and Director Pat Moser gave a presentation at Sunset House on public transportation. This is a retirement facility for seniors who were progressive activists and continue to have an interest in public issues. Mr. Moser distributed material about various transportation options including Access Services and its Infoline. This is the sort of public service that our group was formed to encourage.

Wed. Oct. 15th at 6 p.m. there will be a community meeting about the status of the Glendale Blvd. corridor project. It will be held at the Echo Park Methodist Church, on Alvarado 1 block north of Sunset (where we formerly had our meetings).

We would appreciate volunteers to help staff our booth at the Central City Senior Fair, Tuesday October 14th between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., 3rd Street and Hill (where we have our monthly meetings). Contact us by phicric [(213) 388-2364 ext.2] or e-mail [dgabbard@hotmail.com].

AARP is searching for an volunteer to coordinate transit related issues for this area. Interested? Further information: (213) 250-7921.

At our October meeting we hope to finalize the price for the X-Mas buffet and where to go for this year's day after Thanksgiving excursion. By then we may also have a response from MTDB of San Diego to our inquiry regarding SO.CA.TA's interest in having a booth for the celebration of the opening of the Mission Valley extension of the San Diego Trolley in late November.

To get on the mailing list for MTA's restructuring studies in the mid-city and south bay areas call the study's hot line: (213) 922-3585.

CalACT (California Association for Coordinated Transportation), an organization devoted to small rural, urban and specialized transportation systems (e.g. paratransit), will have its Autumn conference Oct. 22-24 at the Biltmore in downtown Los Angeles. For further details call (800) 422-5228 or <http://www.calaction.org>

From member J.K. Drummond: Robert C. Post, president of the Society for the History of Technology will lecture on Los Angeles' electric railroads at the Huntington Library at 7:30 pm. Wednesday October 15th. The free talk will be in the Friends' Hall, 2251 Oxford Road, San Marino. Call 626 405-2100 for more information on "Red Car Memories and Why They Matter".

As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs articles, letters, Transit Tips, photographs and research (newspaper clippings, etc.) from all members and interested non-members. All materials should be sent to **3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010.** (or e-mailed to [transit@lerami.lerctr.org](mailto:transit@lerami.lerctr.org)). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting.

## **PLAC REPORT** *Dana Gabbard (dgabbard@hotmail.com)*

I was quoted in a Sept. 12th article in the San Francisco Chronicle about the influence (or lack thereof) transit groups have during prolonged strikes by transit agency employees. This was in the midst of the BART strike and evidently the reporter discovered our web site and played a hunch in calling us for a quote. Our next goal is to start being quoted in area newspapers, broadening the discussion. In the past, too often on transit issues the most heard voices were the least informed. Hopefully we can change that.


At the Sept. 6th hearing at the Gateway building on the new service initiative overseen by MTA and the Bus Rider's Union as part of the consent decree we finally saw details about the 18 new/modified routes. Our web site has maps for these routes plus the recommendations of our Land Use Committee. The recommendations have been sent to reporters, MTA and LADOT staff, key local politicians and the BRU.

Never having bothered to learn anything about issues involving bus service improvement, the BRU continue to emphasize slogans and protests geared to get media attention. They seem to have had little to do with the actual proposals (unless they came up with the dubious express routes linking Panorama City/East L.A. and West Hollywood/San Pedro).

At the meeting I strongly spoke out against the proposed routing of shuttles that would operate in my area. My proposals for service on Union and Rampart/Hoover, made during the Central/East/Northeast restructuring meetings over a year ago, had been ruined by poor planning that didn't focus on key local needs.

Interestingly the BRU staff person running the meeting responded that she had driven along the routes and they looked okay to her. With a bit of pique about my casting aspersions on a process the BRU was now invested in she said I shouldn't come to the meeting and describe proposals as stupid. So whether routes serve a need matters less than the BRU having a seat at the table.

A glittering array of local political heavy hitters (Mayor Riordan, Supervisor Yaroslavsky, MTA boardmember Zarian, California Transportation Commission boardmember David Fleming, former Assemblyman Richard Katz) were present at the Valley Transit Summit organized by the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley and held Friday Sept. 12th in Van Nuys. Members Charles Hobbs and Roger Christensen attended the presentations (by SCAG, the Reason Foundation, Tom Rubin and others) plus panel discussions. Charles has posted his thoughts about the event on our web site. Roger told me he found it strange among the panelists was the owner of a auto dealership and a homeowner association President who declared he had never ridden public transit and he never would.

As Vice President Powell pointed out months ago this has more to do with the secessionist movement than any serious interest in transit. While busways a la Curitiba still get some attention, Valley opinion leaders have now jumped on a new fixation: creating a transit zone for the San Fernando Valley a la Foothill. This fulfills the battlecry to control their own destiny. And then what? 

It appears the roiling of the valley even has forced Mayor Riordan to ask Carol Schatz to resign from the MTA Board in response to complaints that no one from the Valley was on the board after Mel Wilson was replaced by Jose Legaspi (as eastsider) last month. But did Wilson do anything for the Valley during his years on the board? Again pity politics dominates cries from west of the Cahuenga Pass.

Recommended as one useful result of the summit is Assemblymember Robert Hertzberg's white paper "Mass Transit in the San Fernando Valley and ISTEA Reauthorization". A copy can be requested by calling Hertzberg's district office: (818) 376-4040.

Interim MTA CEO Julian Burke reportedly has brought in an outside audit firm to resolve the mystery of the true state of MTA's finances. Also MTA choose New Flyer for its next order of 278 CNG buses. Neoplan's bid was termed nonresponsive on rather narrow grounds (and they are protesting).

Hill International in a July report to the Federal Transit Administration indicated "the Vermont/Hollywood leg is physically closer to completion than the Wilshire leg was at this same milestone". They further believe the extension to North Hollywood barring unforeseen events should open by December 2000.

While riding the Red Line recently I was interviewed for MTA's market research. One question of interest was what effect it would have on the amount I ride if passes were no longer sold and only tokens were available.

Omnitrans' day pass is the subject of an article in the August issue of Transit California. By most measures it has been a great success, now accounting for 40% of all fares (and 86% among full fare paying passengers). Farebox recovery is up 20% from last year and ridership is accounting for 40% of all fares (and 86% among full fare paying passengers). Farebox recovery is up 20% from last year and ridership is growing! The only downside is the increased number of dollar bills that have to be collected and counted. Oddly the Senior/Disabled daypass only accounts for 1% of ridership. We hope eventually to present MTA with a proposal for it to consider a daypass, and these numbers suggest it could be successful.

At the Sept. 24th MTA Citizen's Advisory Council general meeting Rick DeRock of Access Services gave these statistics for ASI's paratransit system:

- 1997 fiscal-year budget - \$36 million
- Costs average \$27 per trip
- ridership increases 4% per month
- average riders make 23 trips a month
- average fare of \$2.50
- average trip length - 13.8 miles
- number of persons certified to use their service - 34,000

Congress and federal regulators used dubious logic in designing and implementing ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). There is no interest at present to revisit these issues despite its great expense for transit agencies.

*(continued on pg. 6)*

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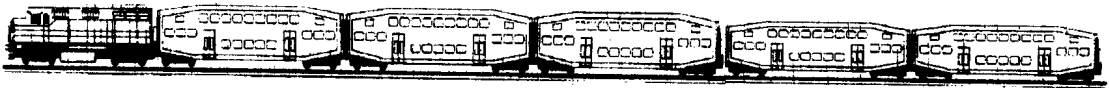
Governor Wilson line item vetoed the \$1.5 million in the new state budget for experimental weekend Los Angeles to Coachella Valley Metrolink service.

In other Sacramento news Assemblymember Murray has joined forces with Tom Hayden and Quentin Kopp of the state Senate in creating a bill to put MTA in receivership (A.B. 1141). It would also put in place a commission whose members would be appointed by the governor, Senate President Pro-Tempore and Assembly Speaker. The MTA Board would be advisory only until finances were on a firm footing and full compliance with the consent decree assured. And even after the receivership ended the commission could retake control if the agency had fresh financial problems. It is interesting Murray, who had before said Southern Californians should lead on this issue, now

aligns himself with a Bay

Area powerhouse like Kopp. Also for a novice to pass and introduce significant legislation is impressive (albeit after hiring Richard Katz's former transportation aide John Stevens). It'll be interesting to see the response to this idea when the legislature reconvenes next year.

Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines in its focus groups for restructuring include bus riders and non-riders. In its analysis the consultants (Nelson/Nygaard) include an interesting aspect of bus use that may indicate why many hesitate to use public transit: "Non-Riders looked on with bemused admiration as riders explained some of the complexities that they had learned in using the system". Making systems more user friendly and less complicated to understand is a imperative if public acceptance is to be achieved. ■



## **TRANSIT TRIVIA** *Chris Ledermuller*

**Last month's Transit Trivia question was:**

Which Metrolink stations have no connecting bus service?

**The answer:** East Ontario (Riverside Line), Northridge (Ventura Line), Rancho Cucamonga (San Bernardino Line)

**This month's Transit Trivia question:**

East bound in the afternoon what is the first bustop Foothill route 481 picks up passengers at (hint: despite the map in the Transit Book it is not Wilshire/Western)

**(The answer will be in next month's Transit Advocate, and announced at the October SO.CA.TA meeting!)**

(Transit Updates, from page 2)

AVTA (Antelope Valley) also has new schedules, effective Sept 2. The five local "color" lines (Red, Orange, Blue, etc.) have been replaced by nine numbered routes:

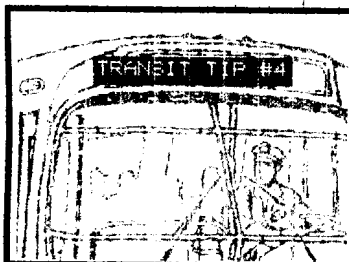
- #1 - Runs between Lancaster and Palmdale via 10thW, Palmdale Bl, 30th E, and Avenue S. Replaces most of the Orange Line, runs every 30 min.
- #2 - Operates from Lancaster via Ave I, 30th E, Ave J, 30th W, Ave K. Serves Downtown Lancaster (Senior Center), Walmart and the Factory Stores, and Lancaster City Park (the main transfer point in Lancaster)
- #3 - Operates to Palmdale from the AV Mall via Ave P, Sierra Hwy, Ave Q, 10th St E, Ave R, 47th St E. Replaces the Ave "R" portion of the old Orange line, as well as a portion of the Red Line between Downtown Palmdale and the Mall.
- #4 - Operates along Ave K from 20th St E to the City Park. Throughrouted with #5. #2 and #4 replace the East Lancaster loop of the old Blue and Green Lines.
- #5 - Operates from the City Park to Mayflower Gardens and High Desert Hospital. Through-routed with #4. Replaces the former "Purple Line" somewhat.
- #6 From Ave S/25th St E. in Palmdale to Littlerock via Ft Tejon, and Pearblossom Hwy. Replaces Little Rock portion of former Red Line.

- #7 - Operates from Lancaster via the Factory Factory Stores, to AV Mall. Replaces portions of the Green Line.
- #8 - School-tripper type route in Lancaster, runs about 5 round trips on weekdays only.
- #9. Operates between AV Mall and Lake Los Angeles. Replaces the old Lake Los Angeles line.

No changes in commuter service, or the Saturday shuttle between Metrolink (Lancaster) and the Factory Stores. Also, the span of service of the local lines remains unchanged (Mon-Fri 6am-8pm, Sat 9am-6pm, no Sunday or Holiday service)

Changes for OCTA (effective September 8):

- # 1 has a new routing middays and weekends in Huntington Beach, via Beach, Atlantic, and Magnolia.
- #43 now features enhanced service (no more shortlines) 14 minute service during the base period, while 7 minutes at the peaks
- #47 now has weekend service
- #57 no more shortlines during rush hour (though still a few middays) more afternoon services, and other scheduling changes
- #38,50,60,69, 76 and 205 all have minor changes
- There are added trips on the #65
- #74 does not enter South Coast Plaza anymore
- #391 is on hiatus for the winter season
- #453-454-461-463-488- have modified their schedules, in order to connect with the last Metrolink train. ■



Be aware some transit agencies have strict rules regarding acceptance of interagency transfers.

For example, Foothill accepts Omnitrans day passes as transfers for base fare only at two locations: Montclair Transcenter and Indian Hill/Holt.