

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

Bus ridership to the new Getty Museum in the Sepulveda Pass (via MTA #561 and Santa Monica #14) has been surprisingly heavy. In some cases, half the passengers on a #561 bus in the Sepulveda Pass are travelling to/from the museum. In many cases, these passengers are first-time transit users.

Huntington/Maycrest to the Dozier Loop (connects with MTA #30/31). 213-485-7201

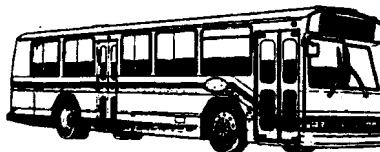
Foothill Transit may modify some routes as early as March. There's even talk of additional limited stop and express service on #480 and #187, their busiest lines. Stay tuned . . .

MTA and the Getty are discussing plans for improving bus service to the museum.

Huntington Park has begun a weekend shuttle operating four routes between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Fare is 25 cents (children under 3 ride free). For more information call 888-649-7737.

MTA: CustomerRelations@mta.net  
SMMBL: bus@pen.ci.santa-monica.ca.us  
Getty: publicaffairs@getty.edu

LADOT has reportedly begun service on a new DASH route in the El Sereno area. This shuttle will take a rather circuitous route from



## **BULLETIN BOARD**

The SO.CA.TA Officers and Directors for 1998 are: President: Dana Gabbard; Vice President: Charles Powell; Secretary: Kris Sharp; Treasurer: Juanita Dellomes; Directors-at-large: Charles Hobbs, Pat Moser, and Chris Ledermuller.

The Election Committee thanks all who participated in the vote, and those who ran for office.

We will be accepting membership renewals at our Jan. 10th meeting. \$15 for general membership, \$6 for limited income. Checks can also be sent to **3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010**. Your dues help make it possible for SO.CA.TA to be a voice for better public transit.

President Gabbard will be bringing to this month's meeting several copies of the Executive Summary of the Southern California Association of Government's draft Regional Transportation Plan for members to examine.

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 date. ■

# 1997 HOLIDAY BUFFET

*Our first annual holiday buffet on December 13th was a smash success! Guest of honor Pam O'Connor, Transit Advocate of the Year and Santa Monica Mayor Pro-Tem, regaled attendees with tales of her experiences as a regular user of public transit. The food at the Colonial Buffet received rave reviews. Overall a good time was had by all and we hope to do it again in '98 [only next time with better door prizes]. Our thanks to all who participated!*



MTA and BART share a common problem. Both have expensive rail extension projects that have problematic federal funding commitments. MTA's is the North Hollywood extension of the Red Line while BART's is its planned extension to SFO (San Francisco International Airport). Given the current anti-deficit fixation in Washington, relying on Congress for funds seems foolhardy. The solution to the agencies' problem is S.B. 45, which I described last month. Its chief feature is placing most state transportation fund programming in local hands. State Senator Quentin Koop's main motivation in authoring the bill (according to MTA critic John Walsh) was aiding the BART project. But MTA has wasted no time using the new process to direct millions toward completing the North Hollywood leg of the Red Line.

Meanwhile MTA Interim CEO Julian Burke has informed the Board of Directors that he recommends the agency suspend work on all rail projects except for the Red Line to North Hollywood. He terms this necessary to have MTA concentrate on improving bus service and put its fiscal house in order. Within a year or two he hopes the agency will be able to determine what is feasible in terms of rail construction while also complying with the consent decree. Burke stresses that he anticipates eventual resumption with no loss of federal or state funds for projects that have commitments. With the FTA sternly demanding MTA come up with a realistic recovery plan the Board (reluctantly) has no choice but to follow Burke's lead.

Could the Bus Rider's Union penchant for protests backfire? One well-informed observer

put it to me that when they next go before the special master who mediates consent decree disputes that MTA should be able to cite these public displays to bolster arguments that the BRU is unreasonable and has an overly broad reading of the agreement. Part of the problem may be (according to my source) that the decree was forced upon the BRU by their pro-bono lawyers who wanted a resolution to the protracted lawsuit.

SCAG's new Regional Transportation Plan includes a proposed privately funded mag-lev high speed rail system linking Riverside, Los Angeles and Orange Counties (<http://www.scag.ca.gov/rtp/part1c.htm>). I hope to have details about this in the coming months. Politicians in Riverside County worry it could interfere with the proposed statewide high speed rail project.

Question of the month: If Foothill Transit is the model for a Valley Transit Zone according to the heavy hitters in the San Fernando Valley, why then was Foothill not invited to make a presentation at the recent Valley Transit Summit II?

The Regional Transportation Agencies' Coalition is a little known entity whose chief purpose until recently was to fulfill a state code provision requiring regular inter-county communication on regional transportation issues. In early 1997 a new state law (S.B. 836) gave it responsibility for funding voluntary rideshare programs (using \$1.5 million provided to it by the AQMD each year for that purpose). Obscure entities such as this one have an impact (if only indirectly). ☞

Building a Metrolink station normally requires six months to a year, depending on various factors (related to construction, funding, etc.)

Of course, after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, several temporary stations (mostly along the Santa Clarita line) were made operational within a few *days!*

If these "temporary" stations (most of which have now been made permanent) hold the record for "most quickly built stations", then the Pomona Metrolink station on the Riverside Line must hold the record for "most slowly built station".

The City of Pomona expressed interest in a second Metrolink station as early as 1992, when the system started operating. Although Pomona already had a station on the San Bernardino Line, it was felt that a station on the Riverside Line would revitalize their downtown shopping area.

In addition to the Metrolink platform, the new Downtown Pomona station would feature a bus loading area, and the old Southern Pacific station building would be renovated, with amenities such as a "transit store" and

One of our goals is to make sure they don't fully evade public scrutiny.

I was startled to find USC Professors Moore, Richardson and Gordon in their anti-rail op-ed piece for the Dec. 28th LA Times ("MTA Makes a Right Turn") describe urban sprawl in benign terms. For an alternate view see the report "Beyond Sprawl" ([http://www.bankamerica.com/community/comm\\_env\\_urban1.html](http://www.bankamerica.com/community/comm_env_urban1.html) or write for a free copy from the Greenbelt Alliance (one of the sponsors of the

perhaps even an Amtrak ticket office.

Work started on the station in July 1994, and the transit platform was finished in late 1995. (MTA and Foothill buses started using it in February 1996). However, construction delays prevented Metrolink from opening the platform on the originally scheduled date of July 1995. (The pedestrian bridge over the tracks wasn't even completed until May 1997!). Also, no (visible) work has been done on the SP station building as yet, even though Pomona Valley Transit Authority may have closed its Indian Hill Mall store in anticipation of relocating in the SP building.

A current controversy is a pipeline, owned by Santa Fe Pipeline, under the Union Pacific right-of-way. This pipeline may need to be relocated in order to accommodate the new station construction. SFP insists that the City of Pomona pay the total cost (about \$900,000) of relocation; Pomona is asking UP to pressure SFP to pay the entire cost of the relocation.

If these issues can be resolved, the station *may* open in December 1999—four years behind schedule. ■

report): 116 New Montgomery, Suite 640 San Francisco CA 94105 - (415) 543-4291 (they ask that a self addressed 8 1/2" x 11" envelope with two stamps be included with the request).

Add to your reading list William Fulton's "The Reluctant Metropolis" [Solano Press Books, 1997]. This was brought to my attention by member Roger Christensen. It includes informative chapters on the politics of bringing rail transit to Los Angeles County and SCAG's attempt to get clout. ■

# ROUTE OF THE MONTH *Chris Ledermuller*

## Route of the month: SMMBL 14

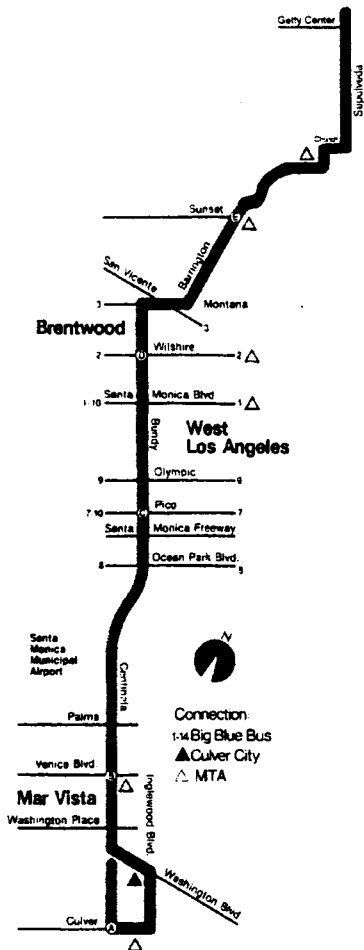
**Where does it go:** Primarily along Bundy and Centinela Aves (West Los Angeles), with service to the new Getty Center.

**Ever since the opening...:** Probably never in SMMBL's history had they have so many passengers using the system. No doubt most people are going to the museum, but beforehand, the 14 was SMMBL's most productive route, carrying 91.5 passengers per hour!

**Tips on riding:** Since the bus will be crowded (like most MTA lines), the best advice going north is to get on either at the beginning of the line or at Pico & Bundy. Extra runs have been put on to handle the demand.

**Fare:** 50 cents.

**For more information:** (310)-451-5444. ■



# TRANSIT TRIVIA *Chris Ledermuller/Dana Gabbard*

**Q. Timewise, what is the longest route beginning and ending within L.A. County?**

**(The answer will be announced at the January meeting, and will appear in February's newsletter)**