

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

MTA has announced the extension of the Red Line to Hollywood will open June 12.

MTA bus routes with minor modifications: 30/31, 40, 55, 70, 207/357, 108, 165, 188, 204, 206, 230, 258/259, 497

The latest new LADOT DASH route is for Wilshire Center/Koreatown (see route of the month on pg 5) for details on where it runs).

The schedule of LADOT #422 (reverse commute from Downtown LA to Thousand Oaks) has been modified, with additional tripper service between Warner Center and the Alvarado St. freeway stop. Also late morning trips (leaving LA after 7:20 a.m.) now terminate at Warner Center.

OCTA on July 11 introduces a fare restructuring. Regular fare remains \$1 but free transfers will be eliminated in favor of \$2 day passes (to be raised to \$2.50 on Jan. 1, 2000). Monthly passes remain \$37.50 but a pass for full time students will be reduced to \$25. A single 25 cent senior/disabled fare replaces the former peak/off-peak differential fare. A Senior/disabled day pass will be 50 cents and monthly passes will drop from \$18.50 to \$10. Monies from Measure M will subsidize this price cut.

New and modified RTA routes go into effect April 18:

- #1 and #2 will be combined to provide a single Riverside. The Hole Ave portion of #1 will be transferred to #12; the 3rd St/Blaine/Big Springs portion will go to #13. (On Sundays, both these sections will be covered by #1 on alternating trips)
- #3 will be streamlined through the Norco area; alternate routes will be removed.
- #7 will be extended to Inland Valley Medical Center, south of Lake Elsinore. (Companion #8 already goes there).
- #14 will be through-routed with #29, north of Downtown Riverside.
- #16 will be streamlined to provide more direct service between Riverside and the Moreno Valley Mall.
- #17 and #18 will be rerouted to serve more of Moreno Valley; #19 will extend to serve North Moreno Valley and Sun City (replacing #27)

- #21 and #29 will be streamlined to operate less circuitously through Rubidoux/Glen Avon/Pedley.
- #23 A/B (Temecula/Murrieta) will be restructured into two new routes, covering Temecula, Murrieta and connecting with #7/8 at Inland Valley Medical Center.
- #26 (Moreno Valley-Riverside Express) will be cancelled; the new #16 will only be slightly slower.
- #27 will no longer serve Sun City, but will extend into Valley Vista (replacing this portion of #32)
- #31 and #32 are modified in the Hemet/San Jacinto area.
- #35 and #36 will operate via 6th Street in Banning in both directions (not I-10). Also #36 will deviate to points within 3/4-mile of the route w/24 hour notice)
- New route #37 provides expres service between Perris, Sun City, and Temecula. Certain early morning and late night trips serve Hemet instead of Perris.

To introduce riders to the new services, both April 18 (Sunday) and 19 (Monday) will be "Ride Free Days" (no fare charged on all RTA fixed routes).

The San Bernardino Associated Governments has awarded a contract to extend the tracks that the Metrolink train to San Bernardino runs on one mile to a location near E Street where a multi-modal transit center for Metrolink trains and Omnitrans buses is being built. SANBAG is also investigating the possibility of a further extension to Redlands (using either Metrolink trains or Diesel Mobile Units).

In other San Bernardino County news, during fiscal year 1997-98 most of its public transit operators experienced substantial growth in ridership. This includes Omnitrans (+24.7%), Morongo Basin Transit Authority (+19.3%), Needles Area Transit (+18.8%), and Victor Valley Transit Authority (+7.7%). The only losses were posted by the Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority (-1.8%) and Barstow Area Transit (-3.4%).

Simi Valley Transit is undertaking a three year demonstration project to test service in the northwest part of the city which until now has had no transit service. The West End shuttle is slated to start operating May 24. For more information call (805) 583-6456.

# BULLETIN BOARD

At our April 10 meeting there will be a letter writing session. Members who attend will write a letter on an issue of interest to them to the appropriate official (appointed or elected) or a transit agency. Before the meeting members should:

- pick an issue
- find out the name & address of the proper recipient
- bring envelope, paper, 33 cent stamp and a pen

Arrangements are being finalized for our tour of the Red Line extension. This will likely occur in mid-May (possibly May 15). Call our hotline to get the latest word. Members can bring a guest or family members to join them on the tour. If someone has a camcorder please let us know since we may want to have a tape of the tour for our Archives.

President Gabbard convened an ad-hoc committee to prepare comments on MTA's draft revised Transportation Zone Guidelines. Participants included members Chris Ledermuller, Kymberleigh Richards and Roger Christensen, Vice President Charles Powell, Directors Armando Avalos and Hank Fung, newsletter editor Charles Hobbs, Recording Secretary Pat Moser and our President. The comments were submitted to MTA via fax on March 30. Copies will be available at our April meeting, or on our website at <http://socata.lerctr.org/zone.html>

Members in the news this month include: member Roger Christensen with a letter in the Mar. 19 Daily News noting solutions to congestion are "expensive, long term and regional". Director Armando Avalos's recent letter to the Los Angeles Weekly on the Pasadena Blue Line was favorably quoted by the Pasadena Star News in a March 7 editorial. Member Woody Rosner attended the National Association of Railroad Passengers regional meeting in Riverside and reports he had a swell time meeting the various railfans in attendance.

Member J.K. Drummond had previously requested MTA add to the cover of its line 550 schedule a listing of key destinations served by the line. We are happy to note MTA has done so with the new 550 schedule dated March 7. Drummond also recently took the South Bay/Gateway restructuring study consultants on a tour of problem/opportunity spots in the San Pedro/Harbor City/Wilmington area. Drummond also has been working with County Supervisor Don Knabe on the lack of emergency telephones at freeway bus stations. Knabe has introduced motions before the County Supervisors and MTA Board that MTA investigate the feasibility of funding, installing, operating and maintaining emergency call boxes at bus stations along freeways, transitways, and busways throughout Los Angeles County. SO.CA.TA supports this important enhancement of bus stations, and appreciates Drummond's advocacy.

Member Joseph Dunn brought to our Mar. 13 meeting a huge number of MTA line 550 schedules he had requested from the agency. These were given to J.K. Drummond who has placed them in various key locations in and around San Pedro. If 550 schedules are readily available it is our hope the line will have more ridership. Our thanks to Mr. Dunn for his thoughtful action.

Director Hank Fung submitted comments to Foothill for its recent public hearing. Fung agreed with the proposed discontinuing of line 731 and expressed support for the split of service between lines 498, 499 and 699 undertaken in response to the Eastland Center parking cutback.

May 1 and 2 we will have a booth at Fullerton Railway Days. President Gabbard and member Woody Rosner have volunteered to represent us. Our visibility in Orange County has been limited heretofore and we hope this event will be an occasion for us to raise our profile. (to pg 6)

I have read Special Master Donald Bliss' ruling of March 8 to compel MTA to comply with the consent decrees' load factor mandates. All you need to do is read on page 55 "obtain through lease or other means 277 buses on a temporary basis" to realize how out of control this process has become, which is essentially the point of my letter to the March 10 Daily News. While in its earliest stages the decree had some laudable results, such as restoring monthly pass, at this point its just about Eric Mann maximizing his media exposure by clubbing MTA with the decree. Meanwhile Mayor Riordan in the March 26 Daily News complained the consent decree's requirements don't make sense, he was misled by the MTA staff when he agreed to the decree in 1996 and that "consent decrees are not made on Mount Sinai". Besides being a case of too little, too late, it is quite disingenuous for Riordan to blame the MTA staff. Staff were under a great deal of pressure from the Mayor in 1996 to do whatever was needed to get the lawsuit off his neck. Now he hypocritically doesn't want to take responsibility for his blunder. Evidently the theory was Eric Mann would be satisfied with just having an agreement and stop his posturing for the cameras. Instead the agreement and its ridiculous requirements has become Mann's chief weapon.

Sadly an initiative to comply with the decree without flooding the streets with hundreds of buses has been aborted by the consent decree's ravenous appetite. Rapid Bus would improve bus performance. Efficiency is what we need to improve bus service, since buses spend half of their times stuck at bus stops and traffic signals. Why can't the BRU drop their outrageous and deceitful billions for buses demands in favor of

rapid bus, which would be a real improvement for transit users? Because it wouldn't sustain their constant refrain "not enough".

One possible additional casualty of the decree is the Pasadena Blue Line. The California Transportation Commission is understandably leery of the situation. But would a federal court really overturn state legislation? Meanwhile in a bizarre development L.A. Weekly columnist Marc Haefele has embraced the project ("The Arroyo Special" L.A. Weekly March 26).

MTA CEO Julian Burke in a wide ranging interview with the Metro Investment Report in its March 1999 issue discussed his view of the agency - its progress, where it needs to go, and what is being done to achieve these goals. A special concern was the lack of a long range plan. "The revision process will substantially involve the public, the City, and all the other relevant agencies, including SCAG and the CRA". Which is something I heartily support.

March 6 attended the annual Planning and Conservation League Environmental Legislative Symposium. It was educational (especially on how to lobby effectively). Also I had a chance to talk with member Kirk Schneider, who was at the meeting on behalf of TRAC. One interesting conversation we had was about OCTA's proposed light rail system. While current plans are for it to be entirely elevated the agency is studying having the line partially on the surface to reduce construction costs. Schneider pointed out since the line has no separate right of way it would be sharing streets with automobiles which slows down service and increases operational costs. An automated grade separated service a la

Vancouver's SkyTrain is in Schneider's mind a model OCTA would do well to emulate.

When KCET's Life & Times asked me to speak on camera about the traffic impact of the new Staples Center I was a bit puzzled but game. And the reporter quickly agreed the ideal place for an interview was the Pico Blue Line station, which is near the sports arena. My March 22 appearance

([http://www.kcet.org/programs/life\\_times/transcripts.031999/032299.htm](http://www.kcet.org/programs/life_times/transcripts.031999/032299.htm)) was our first mass media exposure. I need to work on being simple and direct and in my comments. But I was glad to raise the issue of increased traffic and land use decisions.

Interesting fact of the month: the Democratic convention will be in L.A. the same year the UTU/ATU/TCU contracts come up for renewal with MTA. And with a very labor friendly Governor and Assembly Speaker/potential Mayoral candidate looking over MTA's shoulders.

Vice President Charles Powell informs me that when Coach USA learned despite making the low bid that it didn't get the contract to operate service for Foothill, Coach's representative posed some pointed questions to Foothill's Board. One factor the Board cited was wanting to avoid a disruption by sticking with Laidlaw. Which prompted the Coach USA rep to ask just how competitive and fair the process is.

State Senator Solis thus far refuses to withdraw her bill on the El Monte Busway. Our letter noting SO.CA.TA's opposition to S.B. 63 went to key decision makers. Hopefully with enough pressure Solis will eventually drop this misguided legislation to allow cars with two passengers use the Busway.

Senator Perata has reintroduced his bill to eliminate Amtrak thruway bus service in favor of Greyhound. We opposed his bill last year on the same subject and I hope we will do so again. ■

## ROUTE OF THE MONTH

### Koreatown/Wilshire Center DASH

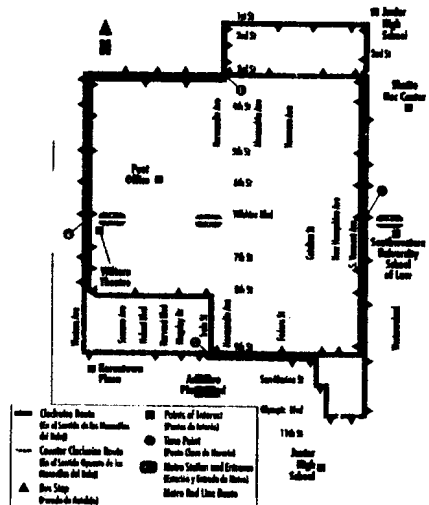
Where does it go: Wilshire/Western Red Line station, Virgil Middle School, Wilshire/Vermont station, Wiltern Theater and several supermarkets along the way.

How often does it run: Monday through Saturday, every 30 minutes.

How much does it cost: 25 cents, or free with a senior/disabled MTA pass

Whom to call: 808-7433 (Good from most area codes)

Whom to call: (562)-591-2301 ■



(Calendar, from pg. 3) Monday April 12 between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. MTA is conducting a public hearing for input on its Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Santa Monica Transit Parkway Project (from the I405 freeway to the western boundary of Beverly Hills). This will be held at Emerson Middle School's Student Cafeteria, 1650 Selby Avenue in Los Angeles. For further information call Henry Gonzalez at (213) 922-3032 or see <http://www.mta.net/EBB/bids1.asp>

Director Anthony Loui presented MTA at its March 6 public hearing our Route of the Year Award, given this year to Route 218.

The deadline for submitting an order for our new T-Shirt to be part of the first batch has been extended to April 10. An order form is enclosed for members to use in ordering.

The proposal to raise dues was discussed at our March 13 meeting. The consensus was that this should be deferred until October, at which time we can determine our projected financial picture for next year and whether a dues increase is necessary

At our April 10 meeting we will discuss by-law revisions to add as an officer of SO.CA.TA a Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms. This entails the following changes:

section 3.1 - add to list of Officers

section 3.4 - add description of duties (and renumber sections); "The Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms shall before and after meetings provide assistance in setting up and cleaning up and during meetings rule on issues regarding parliamentary procedure, supervise time limits and enforce decorum".

section 3.4.5 - add to list of Officers on the Executive Committee

section 4.2 - add to list of elected offices

The High Speed Rail presentation has been postponed, possibly for our July meeting.

Our forum (likely the first Saturday in October) this year will be devoted to municipal operations

<http://www.asila.org> is the new website of Access Services, the coordinated paratransit provider for Los Angeles County.

The Alliance for Regional Solution to Airport Congestion has a new phone number: (310) 827-7411.

<http://www.sprawlwatch.org> is a interesting website on smart growth and livable communities.

"New Opportunities for Innovative Transportation Planning: How to Use Senate Bill 45 to Fund More Livable Communities" is a new joint publication of the Local Government Commission, Planning and Conservation League Foundation and Surface Transportation Policy Project. An excellent overview of the new funding paradigms, it includes a list of key agencies and the interim Guidelines for the State Transportation Improvement process For information on ordering copies contact the Local Government Commission at 1414 K Street, Suite 250 Sacramento CA 95814-3929 or (916) 448-1198.

Mr. Ty Pruett, a recent purchaser of our Transit Guide, is interested in trading two books of LADOT tickets for MTA tokens. Anyone interested should contact us and we'll pass your name and hone number along to Mr. Pruett.

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. ■