

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

MTA is now testing the Red Line extension to Hollywood, on the schedule that will be used on June 12, when the extension is opened to the public. This means that certain trains will only carry passengers as far as Vermont, rather than all the way to Wilshire/Western.

The Red Line related MTA bus service reductions have been finalized. MTA backed away from many proposed changes, such as that of the 424-425-522, the 11 elimination, the 3 elimination, the 302 elimination, the 354 elimination, the 429 elimination, and the creation of Line 303. However, MTA states that 41,000 annual revenue hours of bus service will be eliminated with the Red Line opening. Almost 9,000 riders will be affected by this proposal. \$3.8 million will be saved yearly in operating expenses, but \$4.7 million would have been saved if all MTA Valley express line were terminated at Hollywood and Vine.

Here's the rundown of changes:

- 1: eliminated east of Vermont, extra service added to Line 2 to handle any demand.
 - 14: rerouted to Beverly and Pico from its current terminus in Beverly Hills.
 - 18: Option 2 (via Wilton and Wilshire) to Western Red Line.
 - 26: terminated at Sunset/Vermont, subject to replacement bus service along Franklin on 26, and LADOT acceptance of MTA passes.
 - 66: Option 2 (via Wilton and Wilshire) to Western Red Line.
 - 163: rerouted to Argyle between Yucca and Hollywood before continuing via Hollywood Bl. to the current terminus at Highland.
 - 206: terminal reroute (via Kenmore, Sunset, Hillhurst) (but deferred to December).
 - 212: terminal reroute (via Argyle to bus layover lot).
 - 420: terminated at LA City College, renumbered as 156, offer Line Continuation Transfers. Line 420 owl service will continue as usual.
 - 429: terminate at Hollywood/Vine Red Line. No renumber. Free Line Continuation Transfers offered.
- As of March 8 Fairfax DASH has improved headways (every 15 minutes vs. the previous 20) and now operates until 6 p.m. It has also added a one-way loop at its Southern end along Wilshire Blvd. between La Brea and Fairfax and along Fairfax between

Wilshire and Third. The Third Street segment between La Cienega and Fairfax has been deleted (this duplicated MTA lines 16 and 218).

New Metrolink schedules go into effect on May 17. Most changes are relatively minor (e.g. a few minutes). Major changes include two new evening trains (5:10 and 7:20 p.m.) from Burbank Airport to Downtown Los Angeles, mid-day Ventura Line service extended from Simi to Moorpark, and

According to the April 29 Our Times (a LA Times insert) for the Sherman Oaks area, Mayor Riordan's fiscal year 1999/2000 L.A. budget proposes to eliminate the DASH routes in Sherman Oaks and Pacific Palisades due to low ridership (Sherman Oaks has a farebox recovery of 6%). Phil Aker of LADOT is quoted that routing of the Sherman Oaks line will be tweaked soon in an effort to improve its performance. Member Roger Christensen notes one reason for the lines' decline is that presently a key trip generating destination it serves, the Sherman Oaks Galleria, is closed.

PAL Shuttle is a new privately operated service linking the Oceanside Transit Center and local attractions, including Legoland (which NCTD does not serve). For more information: (760) 720-9400.

Consideration is being given to extend Metrolink to Ventura, possible placing a station at Montalvo where the trains layover.

The City of Glendale is preparing a short range transit plan whose key element is a restructuring of its Beeline system. For details see <http://publicworks.ci.glendale.ca.us/traffic/transit/Planning/SRTP/Default.htm>. Comments or questions can be e-mailed to beeline@ci.glendale.ca.us or call (818) 548-3960. ■

BULLETIN BOARD

The California Futures Network, a statewide coalition of organizations advocating on behalf of sustainable land use, has invited us to become affiliates. We are currently seeking clarification on some issues of concern raised by members during our March 13 meeting before deciding how we wish to proceed. <http://www.calfutures.org> is the website of the coalition.

Tuesday May 11 the Torrance City Council will conduct a public hearing on phase one of the Torrance Transit Route Restructuring Plan. Phase one involves the proposed truncation of Torrance's route one at Harbor Transitway Station during non-peak hours. Between 5 a.m.-9 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. it would still serve downtown Los Angeles. The hearing is being held in the Council Chambers of Torrance City Hall, 3031 Torrance Blvd. in Torrance. Comments on the proposal can be made in person at the meeting via telephone at (310) 781-6925 or in writing to: Torrance Transit, Route Restructuring Comments, 20500 Madrona Ave., Torrance CA 90503-3690. Final approval of changes will be sought from the Torrance City Council in June after the comments and inputs are analyzed.

Our April 10 meeting had 3 special guests seeking feedback on transportation issues they are involved with. James Rojas discussed the need to get beyond the current log jam obstructing transportation planning. Philip Lau asked our members as transit users to describe key issues for the design of bus stops to aid his project to create better stops. And Alberto Rodriguez had concerns about inadequate access to the Gateway Transit Plaza by bus lines serving the east side. It was a vibrant discussion and we hope in the months ahead to hear from them regarding their progress.

Our April 10 meeting also had our first letter writing workshop. Members writing letters on issues of current interest included Joe Dunn, Dana Gabbard, Pat Moser, Mark Lehman, Russell Jones, Frank Roldan and J.K. Drummond. At our May 8 meeting the letter writing topic will be our opposition to S.B 63 (the Solis El Monte Busway bill). Maybe if enough state Senators are written we can kill this wrong headed piece of legislation. As an incentive, everyone at the meeting who writes a letter will get a free piece of candy.

Additionally the April 10 meeting saw the election of our first Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms: Kymberleigh Richards. Richards' main function will be to aid the President in the smooth functioning of our meetings. Congratulations, Kym!

April 17 the Special Projects Committee had its second Transit Guide work party. Our gracious host was the Committee Chairman, Charles Hobbs. Starting in the late morning data entry continued until early evening, and significant progress was made as a result. By our May 8 meeting Charles Hobbs hopes to have a draft guide ready for final review and fact checking. Thanks to all the members who have been diligently working to make sure the new Guide can premiere at the Red Line opening in June: Charles Hobbs, Charles Powell, Dana Gabbard and especially Armando Avalos (custodian of the awesome Armando Transit Schedule Archives!).

Our tour of the Red Line extension to Hollywood is scheduled for Saturday March 15. We will meet at 10 a.m. on the Red Line platform in Union Station. From there with our tour guide we will board a train and once past Vermont/Wilshire station spend 2-3 hours exploring the extension. Members are welcome to bring family members and/or 1 guest. President Gabbard has extended an invitation to members of the MTA Citizen Advisory Council to join us since some of them will be unable to participate in the the CAC's own tour on the 8th due to schedule conflicts. We look forward to a fun time enjoying a sneak peek at the extension. Call if you have any questions: (213) 388-2364.

Since the Red Line opening on June 12 conflicts with our usual meeting date, we will instead have a special event celebrating the Subway extension on June 5 at Angelus Plaza in the Library (on the 3rd Floor). This will begin at 2 p.m. and includes the showing (on a large screen TV) of a documentary on "Subways" that recently aired on the Discovery Channel. Plus we hope to show camcorder footage taken during our Red Line tour. (cont'd on pg. 8)

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

At the April 29 MTA Board meeting my comments included a greeting to new MTA board member Mayor Frank Roberts of Lancaster, wishing him luck in the coming contentious months. Roberts replaces Larry Zarian of Glendale, whose common sense comments at the tail end of his time on the board will be much missed.

I also thanked MTA CEO Julian Burke for the new lawyers the agency has brought in to revitalize its consent decree legal team. The Motion these lawyers recently filed in response to the Special Master ruling that MTA must immediately order over 500 buses is impressive. MTA's old legal team was widely considered incompetent. Now it appears those days are over.

I criticized the Special Master ruling in letters published in the April 14 LA Independent and read on the April 23 edition of KCET's Life and Instead of flooding the streets with more buses, I stated Rapid Bus is the viable and affordable way to reduce overcrowding. I am glad to note rapid bus is included in the draft MTA budget for 1999/2000 and that this important initiative hasn't been forgotten.

For the past few months the BRU have been talking about a "new service Plan" that they submitted to the Special Master under the 5 year plan provision of the consent decree. Media coverage had been vague so I wanted a copy of the plan of my own to analyze. Yet my letter to the BRU requesting it went unanswered. Finally I obtained it from MTA Records Management.

The plan encapsulates my problems with the BRU. Some portions are sensible and may have some value in shaping future transportation

policy. But shoe-horning a billion dollar project into an obscure decree provision smacks of grand standing. Data in the plan includes information gathered from BRU members. This points up another fault - instead of individuals with needs, BRU members are statistics marshalled for propaganda purposes. Ideology instead of humanity underlies the BRU. Members are herded to public meetings, their seating arranged to exemplify the multi-racial message and placed before microphones like poster children mouthing comments they are often coached by staff people to state as personal opinion [and all this staged managed action is video taped by the BRU for a documentary they are readying on their epic struggle]. This appalling spectacle has never been questioned since the LA Times earlier this decade began treating the BRU as a legitimate organization. Jeffrey Rabin has tried to draw some distinction by noting comments by the BRU are from 'bus rider advocates'. But the whole cachet of the BRU is that it is supposed to be consist of actual bus users protesting conditions. And I think many are sincerely angry at the state of bus service in the urban core. But listening to the members mouth identical comments makes it painfully clear they are not being empowered by being educated on transportation issues and may well have little say in the direction of the organization. Aren't these issues that should be heard in the mass press? Bluntly, if Eric Mann and his staff call the shots, control funding (such as the \$400,000 annual budget referred to in the Labor/Community Strategy Center's Tripod listing - http://www.tripod.com/explore/jobs_career/good_works/jobs/521.html), etc. is it a real Bus riders Union or a shell? And by taking a stance that is divisive could Mann et al be threatening broader support for transportation funding to the

detriment of their supposed constituency?

At least KNX in its March 19 editorial (available on <http://www.knx1070.com>) questioned the BRU stance championing duplicative freeway express services between Hollywood and downtown L.A. versus the Red Line.

Marc Littman, MTA Director of Public Relations, notes in his article "Media Digs Against Los Angeles Subway Construction Bury the Positive Facts" (Tunnel Business Magazine, Mar. 1999) that general assignment reporters often lack perspective when dealing with complex issues. So L.A. media generally falls back on the standard MTA vs. Reason Foundation/BRU dichotomy instead of digging for other perspectives. But I imagine the Hollywood Red Line extension will begin to cause a re-examination. Maybe talk of "subway to nowhere" and "rail racism" will soon vanish.

Question of the month: when BRU lawyer Constance Rice reads statistics on TV about the number of missed runs by MTA this year, does that include new CNG buses having problems at pull out?

MTA finally has a new Executive Officer for Operations - Tom Conner, formerly of LADOT. He has our best wishes for success in the daunting task he faces of continuing to improve MTA's performance under trying circumstances.

After spending an inordinate amount of time at its April 29 board meeting on minor matters, it was breathtaking to behold how quickly new Zone Guidelines were approved. Even we in the audience weren't able to follow the discussion and final decision. And MTA staff indicates they may need a few weeks to prepare the new Guidelines after reviewing a tape of the meeting.

At least at the same meeting John Fasana of Duarte persuaded his colleagues to take a position against S.B. 63 (the Solis El Monte busway legislation that SO.CA.TA opposes) unless the bill is amended to only allow cars with two passengers on the busway during non-peak hours.

Larry Miler, co-interim CEO of the Pasadena Blue Line Authority, made a presentation at the April 27 MTA Citizen Advisory Council meeting. It was clear they are aggressively examining every aspect of the project budget and the gold plated days are over. Given strong support of the project from area residents and officials (including Assembly Speaker Villaraigosa, in a break with the BRU) I am a bit more encouraged the project may actually come off.

April 15 Directory Anthony Loui and I attended the inaugural meeting of the Los Angeles Walks Advisory Committee (lawalks@earthlink.net). This is an effort to coordinate on behalf of pedestrian issues in Los Angeles County. Attending were many key stakeholders from public and private agencies. We hope to provide input from our perspective as transit users who often walk. Our thanks to co-chairs Deborah Murphy and Gloria Ohland for helping get this effort underway.

Then on April 19 I attending a meeting co-sponsored by the Surface Transportation Policy Project and the Southern California Council on Environment and Development on the proposed statewide High Speed Rail network. Dan Leavitt of the High Speed Rail Authority made a presentation and answered questions from the audience. The dialogue was sharp as Leavitt addressed various concerns. My comment was to ask the audience to consider whether they could support the project if some of the (to pg. 6)

(PLAC, from pg. 5) proponents willing to spend millions to mount a statewide campaign) turn out to be developers and similar sprawl benefactors.

Rumor of the month: activist John Walsh claims Mayor Riordan plans to appoint soon to be ex-councilman Alatorre back to the MTA board, this time as a member of the public. While in the past I have publicly complained about Riordan's non-compliance with state statute by appointing 2 council members to the MTA board, having Mr. Alatorre as the vehicle of compliance is too horrible to contemplate.

Speaking of high speed rail, I announced at our April 10 membership meeting that the SCAG's proposed regional mag-lev system was dead. Unfortunately I was premature in my diagnosis. The Governor's Office has now signed off on the project competing for the federal demonstration funds in TEA21. Evidently various parties conspired to resurrect this senseless proposal.

New Assembly Transportation Committee Chair Tom Torlakson (from Northern California) is interviewed in the April Metro Investment Report. Especially noteworthy is his statement "...we can't solve the Transportation crisis in California without solving our housing crisis. Those two issues are inextricably linked together, and we have to take that into account when we plan our growth". This is a refreshing attitude. New concept of the month: regional big-wigs, local politicians who specialize in serving on regional commissions (MTA., SCAG, LAFCO etc.) as a means of building influence.

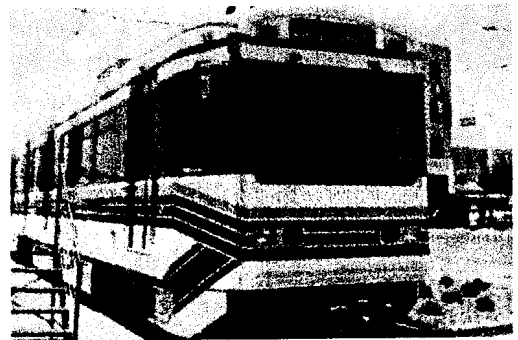
David Fleming, a Republican from the San Fernando Valley whose term on the California Transportation Commission just expired, is the object of a bipartisan campaign to persuade Governor Davis to reappoint him to the

Commission. Frankly I see Fleming as your basic valleycentric insider and am puzzled why so many are touting him. Maybe because he was a ready conduit by which fellow insiders had influence?

SCA 3 is the bill by Senate President Pro-Tem John Burton that would allow renewal of local sales taxes dedicated to transportation with simple majorities. Southern California counties that have sunseting taxes in the next 10 years include San Diego, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside. And of them only the San Bernardino measure passed with the 2/3 super majority that new taxes will have to meet. Our membership should begin considering our stance on this issue.

Meanwhile a statewide assessment of transportation needs is quickly being prepared for submittal to the Governor and legislature by mid-May. The Apr. 23 California Corridors notes that this will serve as the starting point for anticipated proposals by state leaders to maintain and improve infrastructure, the new cause celebre in Sacramento.

Interesting fact of the month: according to the April Wheel Clicks the Green Line had all time weekday average ridership in January of 23,250 (tying Sept. 1997, when it first opened with a ride free week). ■



OMNITRANS FIVE YEAR SERVICE PLAN

Omnitrans, the public transit provided in Western San Bernardino County, has produced a five-year service plan for service expansion.

The plan identifies both funded and unfunded service expansions. Funded expansions will be implemented every six months, starting in July 1999; funds will have to be discovered in order to implement any unfunded projects. The unfunded projects were included in this plan in order to make policy makers, planners, and the public aware of the need for these projects.

Most of the service enhancements involve increasing the frequency of bus service (some routes would operate as frequently as every 9 or 10 minutes). The span of service (i.e. how many hours per day the buses operate) would also be increased for many routes. On the other hand, certain low density areas (e.g. Chino Hills), which cannot be effectively served by conventional fixed route transit, would be served by "Smart Shuttles" (similar to dial-a-ride, but may also serve certain stops on a more regular basis).

The following service improvements are scheduled to be implemented in July 1999:

- Line #7 would be extended to Verdemont (Devore area, just north of the Cal State San Bernardino campus). A few years ago, a short-lived Line #37 served this area.
- New Line #20 would replace the current #21 routing via Merrill, Hemlock and Randall.
- #21 (Country Village-Fontana) would be interlined with #71 (Downtown Ontario-Country Village) on weekdays. Also #21 would run directly via Sierra Avenue

- Reroute #71 via Jurupa, Etiwanda and San Sevaine, rather than using the freeway.

- Additional early morning trips on #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 61. Also, longer hours of weekend service on most routes.

- Weekend frequency improvements on #14 and #19

- Route of #68 modified to serve Kaiser Hospital and Heritage Hospital.

- Regular weekday service (not Saturday service) would be provided on Veteran's Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and President's Day.

In April 2000, #60 and #61 would be modified:

- #60 would be separated from #61, and would only operate between Ontario Mills and Rancho Cucamonga. Service would operate every 60 minutes, seven days a week.

- #61 would operate every 15-minutes (30-minutes on weekends) and would be extended to both Fontana Metrolink and the future Downtown Pomona Metrolink (yes, Omnitrans service in Downtown Pomona).

July 2000 would bring weekday and Sunday frequency improvements on Lines #1, 2, 3 and 4.

In January 2001, weekday frequencies would be improved on #2, 3, 4, 14, 63, 64 and 71.

Possibly in July 2001, #5, 6 and 10 would also have a frequency increase. (*cont'd on pg. 8*)

(Omnitrans, from pg. 7)

Inland Empire Connection #100 (Riverside-San Bernardino) will get 30-minute weekday service by 2000, 30-minute Saturday service by 2001, and 30-minute Sunday service by 2002.

“Smart Shuttles”, a mixture of fixed-route and dial-a-ride service, would replace conventional fixed routes in Redlands (#30/31), Yucaipa, Chino Hills (#72) and Rialto/Fontana (#29). Smart Shuttle services are also proposed for Grand Terrace, Southwest Ontario and Rancho Cucamonga, although they are currently unfunded.

Other unfunded transit improvements include:

- Weekend frequency improvements on #7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 63, 64, and 70
- Weekday peak improvements on #1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 15, and 21.

- All-day weekday frequency improvements on #65 and 68.

- New Route #74 between Pomona Transcenter and Southwest Ontario (via Garey, Philadelphia and Central)

- #32 extended to Highland Avenue, service frequency improved from 45- to 30-minutes.

- Expanded Route #69 “along Highway 30 Corridor” (Baseline Ave?).

Omnitrans’ ADA paratransit service (ACCESS) will be expanded to match the expanded fixed route area, as well as to accommodate increased demand over the years. Other, non-ADA paratransit (Dial-A-Cab) would be discontinued.

(Bulletin Bd, from pg. 3)

Our thanks to member Mike Baron for providing a tape of the documentary.

Before the event there will be an informal SO.CA.TA meeting at 1 p.m. in the Library. It will mostly involve last minute preparations for our booth at the Vine/Hollywood Red Line station during the opening celebration. Also after our May 8 meeting members can participate in a brain-storming session regarding the booth. This will be the most important event we will participate in this year. It may well be a milestone in our emerging as a voice on transportation issues in the region.

Jane Holtz Kay, author of "Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take it Back" (Paper, Univ. of California Press, \$16.95), will be appearing in the L.A. area during the first week of June. This will include appearances at Vromans in Pasadena (June 2), Midnight Special in Santa Monica (June 3 at 7:30 p.m.) and the Eco-Village in L.A. near Vermont and First Street (June 4). Dates and times should be confirmed. We are helping publicize the tour and encourage members to hear Kay speak (a slide show will be given at Midnight Special and the Eco Village).

Railfan & Railroad in its February issue included an article by Bill Hough on the history of Metrolink and the Coaster, "Southern California's Regional Rail Renaissance", accompanied by some great photos.

During a recent trip to L.A. member Chris Flescher (who lives in San Diego) became puzzled why a machine to sell MTA tokens isn't located in Union Station, the regional transportation hub. Other sites for machines that Flescher thinks should be considered by MTA are the downtown Los Angeles Greyhound Station and the LAX City Bus Center.

Eva Ledermuller, mother of member Chris Ledermuller, recently brought to our attention the plight of Carlos Reyes, who oversees the Glendale Community Center. In a phone call to President Gabbard Reyes described his difficulty obtaining MTA bus schedules for areas his clients live and work in (Glendale, Atwater, Cypress Park and Eagle Rock). Each month the Center serves about 2,000 persons, most of whom are transit dependent. We have submitted a request for schedules on behalf of Mr. Reyes and also provided him with timetable order forms and the voice and fax phone numbers to request schedules in bulk from MTA. Aiding access to information regarding transportation options is a key task of SO.CA.TA.

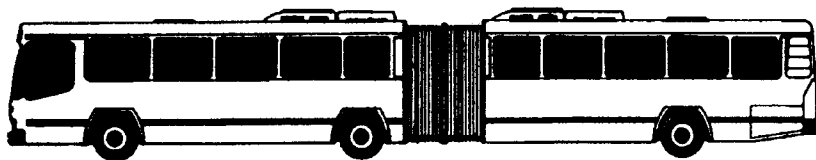
Member Tim Adams has begun a charitable foundation devoted to taking young people on fun trips to local attractions using public transit. To learn more see <http://www.transitpeople.org>

May 1 members Woody Roser and John Ulloth joined me staffing a booth at the first annual Fullerton Railroad Day. Members attending the event who visited the booth included Russ Jones, Jerome Stack, Charles Powell and Mark Panitz plus Western Transit's editor Edmund Buckley. Besides handing out a few hundred fliers and selling some Transit Guides we also received some interesting comments from attendees. One gentleman noted that when OCTA converts to day passes and eliminates transfers July 1st agreements will likely not be in place for interagency transferring. Which (for example) means at Fullerton Transportation Center an OCTA passenger boarding the MTA route 130 will have to pay full fare. OCTA is talking to agencies in adjoining counties regarding this issue [evidently hoping to have connecting lines accept day passes as transfers a la Omnitrans]. We hope the agreements can quickly be reached to limit adverse impact on Orange County resident who need to travel into Los Angeles, Riverside or San Diego counties.

Overall despite the hot sun attendees appeared to be having fun visiting the various booths plus touring some train equipment parked on an adjacent siding. Our thanks to the Fullerton Railway Plaza Association (especially SO.CA.TA and FRPA member Barry Christensen) for allowing us to participate.

Members in the news: John Ulloth of the San Fernando Greens is among the interviewees in the new documentary "The Last Stand: The Struggle for Ballona Wetlands". Roger Christensen had an incisive letter on the consent decree overcrowding standards debate in the April 24 L.A. Times. And a letter by Chris Flescher wondering why officials at UCSD object to the San Diego Trolley having its station in the center of campus if and when the Trolley is extended there appeared in the April 12 San Diego Union Tribune.

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). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting date. ■



ROUTE OF THE MONTH

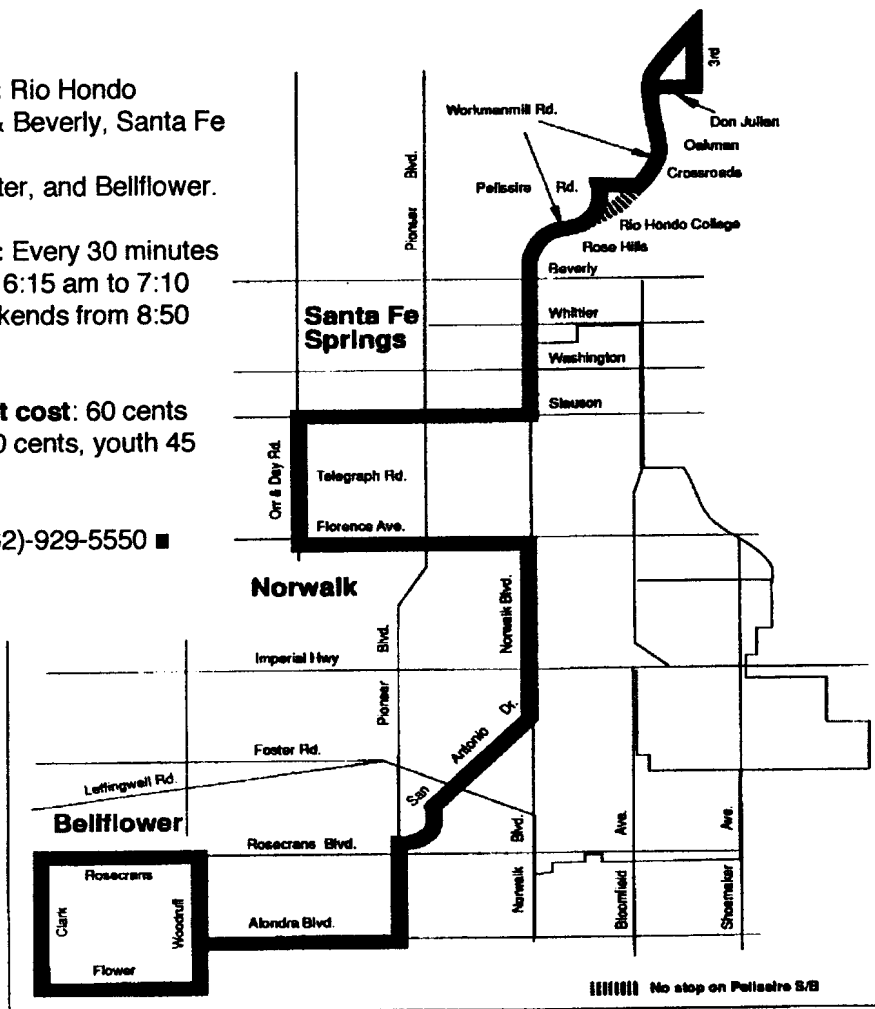
Norwalk Transit 1

Where does it go: Rio Hondo College, Norwalk & Beverly, Santa Fe Springs, Norwalk Civic Center, and Bellflower.

When does it run: Every 30 minutes on weekdays from 6:15 am to 7:10 pm, hourly on weekends from 8:50 a.m. to 4:50 p.m.

How much does it cost: 60 cents (senior/disabled-30 cents, youth 45 cents)

Whom to call: (562)-929-5550 ■



TRANSIT TRIVIA

Question: which bus lines serve a single pair of stops (one in each direction) along Wilshire?

The answer will be presented at the May SO.CA.TA meeting, and printed in the June Transit Advocate!