

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

The opening date of the North Hollywood Red Line extension has slipped from May to June of 2000. The delay partially is due to workers being pulled from the project to help the Hollywood branch open on time.

From now until December the Blue Line will experience delays and reduced frequencies some nights and mid-day due to maintenance work Sunday thru Wednesdays until December. Check message board at stations for further details.

MTA system maps (the first in 5 years) are available at participating Carl Jr. locations, while supplies last (and already some errors have by spotted by our members).

Director Armando Avalos informs us MTA line #627, the El Segundo/Nash Green Line station shuttle was discontinued as of July 30. Line #626 continues to operate (for now).

Member Kym Richards reports that LADOT DASH Panorama City-Van Nuys now stops inside the parking lot at Van Nuys Amtrak/Metrolink.

The grand opening of the newly renovated Glendale Transportation Center will be held Wednesday Sept. 15 beginning at 3 p.m. It will consist of a ribbon cutting ceremony, some speeches by local dignitaries and an open house for the refurbished depot.

Member Chris Ledermuller reports that AVTA Line #9 (Palmdale Mall-Lake Los Angeles) now has Saturday service.

The restructured Lawndale fixed route system, now called Lawndale Beat, began service August 1. The East and West routes have been replaced with an "Express" route (serving the Metro Green Line Marine/Redondo station and Hawthorne Blvd) and a "Residential" route (serving the residential areas served by the former routes). For recorded information and to request a schedule call (310) 970-2100 ext.171.

The July 3 San Gabriel Valley Tribune ("Shuttle System in the Works") describes La Puente's plans to begin a local fixed route circulator in November, scaling back the existing dial-a-ride. Service will operate 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. After an introductory fare of twenty-five cents the price will increase to fifty cents. Headways will be 40 minutes.

Member Mark Panitz announced on our member only board that OCTA line 60 now operates discharge only westbound in Long Beach to the Transit Mall (but you can board and alight eastbound).

Omnitrans ended fiscal year 1998-99 with an overall increase of ridership of nearly 10 percent.

Restructured Simi Valley fixed route service began August 9. Routes #A and #B will keep their routes, but will operate every 40-minutes peak, 80-minutes off peak and Saturdays. Route #C has been extended (via Los Angeles St, Tapo St and Tapo Canyon) to serve the Simi Valley Civic Center. Route #D has also been extended to serve the Civic Center, as well as First St. and Long Canyon Road in the southwest portion of the city. (Service to the Reagan Presidential Library is available on #D by requesting that the driver stop there, or by calling Simi Valley Transit at 805-583-6546.

The Ventura Visitor and Convention Bureau is taking over the management of the Ventura Trolley from the city. Hours of service are due to expand to 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday thru Sunday.

Regional Transit Maps for San Diego county have been revised. To request one call (619) 233-3004.

# BULLETIN BOARD

Due to a conflict, the presentation on Exposition Blvd. scheduled for our August meeting will rescheduled for a later date. On Sept. 11 Richard Silver of RailPAC will share with us his views on transportation issues. On Oct. 9 Lt. Robert Fox of LAPD's transit bus policing unit will be our speaker.

At our August meeting Mr. Van Ajemian may attend and present proposals he has for local and state legislative actions to support improvement of public transit.

Saturday August 21 we will hold a session for writing position papers at Eagle Rock City Hall (on Colorado Blvd 1 1/2 block east of Eagle Rock Blvd.) beginning at 1 p.m. All members are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Members in the news: Member Roger Christensen in the July 27 LA Times had a letter asking why plans for the Coliseum ignore its proximity to the Exposition alignment and a potential link to the Metro Rail system. Member Thomas Rubin had a lengthy letter in the latest issue of Mass Transit magazine with perspectives on transportation decision making in Los Angeles County. July 15 President Gabbard and Director Anthony Loui along with members Perias Pillay and Roger Christensen attended the 3rd meeting of LA Walks which is beginning to formalize its structure and goals.

We have prepared a brochure on Public Transit resources for Southern California. Members can obtain a free copy by sending a self addressed stamped envelope. Listings include organizations, publications, libraries, museums, directories and web based resources.

Thursday Sept. 9 from 10 a.m. to Noon a planning meeting will be held to coordinate Earth Day 2000 activities among various organizations concerned with clean energy. We need a delegate to attend (it is being held near the Normandie Red Line station). Please contact President Gabbard if you are interested.

Member Philip Capo recently graduated from Humboldt State and currently is working for the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium. He solicits correspondence on Southern California transportation issues via e-mail at [geoatlaslemur@netscape.net](mailto:geoatlaslemur@netscape.net) or the old fashioned way at P.O. Box 250 Arcata CA 95518.

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. ■

## TRANSIT TIP

**Stuck in traffic on the eastbound Hollywood Freeway to downtown (MTA #420, 424, 425, 522 and LADOT #422)?**

**Hop off at the Vermont freeway stop, walk to the nearby Beverly Red Line station, and hop on a speeding subway train. Now you're moving!**

Sometimes the good guys don't win. On July 23 Governor Davis signed Senate Bill 63 despite our campaign urging him not to do so. By decreasing from three to two the minimum number of people a carpool must contain to use the El Monte busway this bill will create gridlock on the busway during peak hours. Amazingly Senator Solis, who sponsored the bill, admitted in "Senator Drive Ends in New Lane Law" (San Gabriel Valley Tribune July 28, 1999) that the proposal is based solely on anecdotal evidence and the desire to relieve congestion on the mixed flow lanes. That latent demand will likely quickly crowd any such relief seems to have not entered her calculations. Our thanks to Director Hank Fung and Vice-President Charles Powell, both San Gabriel Valley residents, who publicized the issue to busway users. Also thanks to our many members who wrote letters. We can at least try to make sure this ill conceived idea is not extended when it expires in July 2001.

On the other hand thanks to public comments by member Roger Christensen at the June MTA board meeting (picked up on by board member Zev Yaroslavsky) the agency is now considering later service for the Red Line. Way to go, Roger!

Surprise of the month: MTA critic John Walsh defended an MTA staff person against unfair bullying by the aforementioned Yaroslavsky at the July Construction Committee meeting (kudos to board member Jenny Oropeza for publicly admitting Walsh was right).

Leonard Shapiro in his July 29 "observations of a Gadfly" column describes how politics have undermined attempts to have bus shelters raised at the 9,000 bus stops in the city of Los Angeles. After 20 years only 944 shelters have been built and many other promises made by the shelter company haven't been kept. The City says it will extend the

current contract for a few years to give staff time to draft a request for proposal to put the shelter contract out for bid. Director Anthony Loui hand delivered our letter to the City Council bringing up two issues: that transit maps be included in the design and that shelter placement should be dictated by user needs instead of maximizing advertising revenue for the shelter company. We'll keep an eye on this issue.

I have obtained a copy of the July 10 MTA fare hearing transcript. If any members want to read Kymberleigh Richards' comments on our behalf just drop me a line. (also available at <http://socata.lerctr.org/krstmt0799.html>).

How unreasonable are the clean air zealots? The Natural Resources Defense Council puts MTA on its list of the 10 Dirty California Transit Agencies despite the huge number of CNG buses it has bought (<http://www.nrdc.org/status/trcaten.html>). The NRDC even urges people to pressure MTA (<http://www.nrdc.org/status/trcabus.html>). That there are concerns in the industry about CNG evidently can be ignored if you scream loud enough.

Given the dim prospects for rail in the near future why do rail bashers like USC Professors Moore and Gordon continue foaming at the mouth? ["The MTA's Obsession with Rail Knows No Bounds", LA Times July 25] These column inches would have ben better used promoting rapid bus. Talk about obsession...

New Expo Rail web site:<http://members.aol.com/exporail>.

California Transportation Commission member Dana Reed during July foreswore his car in favor of transit, bikes, walking, etc. His avowed purpose was

to explore bus service and familiarize himself with the agencies that are funded by monies that flow through the Commission. His daily diary has been posted on the internet (<http://www.dgs.ca.gov/ctc/travels/ReedTravels.htm>).

This received media attention: "Experiment with Public Transit Becomes Ordeal" LA Times July 30; KCET's Life & Times newsmaker interview August 4 (which member Chris Ledermuller commented on in a letter read on the August 6 program). In an interview ("Dana Reed Posts a Diary About His Transit Use", California Corridors July 23, 1999) Reed states "One of the major problems with public transit is that important people don't use the system." He also notes even occasional use of public transit contributes to reduced congestion and pollution.

Interesting BRU tidbit: Dana Reed repeatedly has asked the BRU for a list of the most overcrowded bus lines so he can go out and see the conditions for himself. They haven't responded.

At the July 22 MTA Board meeting with no discussion item #39 was approved. This involved adjusting the pilot lines that are part of the consent decree. Interestingly the BRU didn't have anyone present to speak. Kikanza Ramsey waltzed in shortly after the vote, briefly spoke to a staff person, and left. Evidently she was there to speak on the item and left after learning it was already voted on. Strangely the staff report for the item notes while the BRU objected to the changes repeated attempts by MTA staff to meet with the BRU to discuss the matter were met with unanswered letters and unreturned phone calls. In fact at the June Joint Working Group meeting the BRU promised to submit their concerns by June 30. None were submitted by the deadline.

Oh, now the BRU has announced on Thursday passengers should refuse to pay fares to continue the campaign to pressure the agency to comply

with the special master ruling. This alleged strike has had no impact on MTA revenues and received hardly any media coverage. Looks more like a fare stunt than a fare strike.

Deception of the month: the sole transit component of the Santa Monica Blvd. Transit Parkway project in West Los Angeles is a short bus only lane near Century City. Otherwise this is only a roadbuilding project. [P.S. why does Zev "Mr. Curitiba" Yaroslavsky not promote a busway along this median?]

July 24 I was a panelist at a Community Forum in Torrance sponsored by AFSCME local 1117 (Torrance Municipal Employees). It was an attempt to build a coalition between users and drivers to oppose the proposed Torrance Transit restructuring. The turnout was impressive, at least 30 people in attendance (including members J.K. Drummond and Woody Rosner). On July 28 I spoke at the Torrance City Council meeting on phase 1 (line one) with special emphasis on alternatives to minimize the impact on present users while providing resources to improve service in Torrance. We will continue monitoring this situation.

Dan Leavitt at our July meeting provided an interesting presentation on the proposed statewide high-speed-rail system to an audience of 25 members and guests. The q&a session was spirited. I certainly learned a lot. Out thanks to Mr. Leavitt for an informative presentation. This is another issue to keep an eye on.

# SAN DIEGO RAIL CONFERENCE *John Ulloth*

While SO.CA.TA went on its July 31st muni excursion around L.A., members Woody Rosner and John Ulloth made a run for the border, clad in our new SO.CA.TA shirts, to attend a luncheon conference Future of Rail Service in San Diego, and ride the rails.



Member Woody Rosner at San Ysidro Trolley Stop  
J. Ulloth photo

historic... exploratory run," and "it's something we really want to do."

Held in the GasLamp District's Old Spaghetti Factory, the conference was keynoted by State Senator James Mills, and jointly addressed by the presidents of conference cosponsors; Bill Scholz of Train Riders Association of California (TRAC), and Alan Wimmergren of Rail Passenger Association of California (RailPAC). Julia Nyard, formerly of the Coaster, and currently Chair of 9-county Southern California Intercity Rail (San Luis Obispo to San Diego) attended, was asked to speak, and fielded questions.

Mills' topic was "High Speed Rail and San Diego," (Mills is a member of that board), and explained because High Speed Rail Authority is a creation of the Legislature, is in no position to decide the technology, fix routing, or get the substantial funding needed for construction. Mills does not foresee a H.S.R. bond measure making it to the ballot in 2000, 2002, or perhaps even 2004. Mills focused more on selling the 40 member audience why incremental improvements to existing rail are more compelling, "...if High Speed Rail doesn't work, feeder system development is what we've got." Among these, incrementally double-tracking the Coast Line from San Diego to L.A.: building tunnels under San Juan Capistrano, Del Mar, Sorrento Valley grade, and making L.A.'s Union Station a thru-station.

Nyrd said Coaster is going to Escondido in 2003, with 30 minute headways possible, Siemens' Regio Sprinter is being studied! Rosner asked when Coaster was coming in to L.A.; Nyrd said they already have made "an

In the 2nd half of the meeting, organizer Ric Silver proposed unity instead of tensions between RailPAC & TRAC. President Bill Scholz said he couldn't remember why TRAC split from RailPAC; "like the family feud between the Hatfields & McCoys... the people who remember the reason died, quit, or whatever" and proposed working together. President Wimmergren listed projects both groups could work on. Silver held the floor open for any objections: there were none. Then "in that 40 people speak for 3,000, it's done," Silver declared.

After the meeting, Mr. Rosner & I attempted to ride every inch of the San Diego Trolley, but chickened out 4 stops short of the San Diego Mission end of the Blue Line, rather than miss Amtrak's last packed train. Rosner spotted a sign advertising a Trolley Square development at the east end of the Orange Line. I notice trolley's stops are numbered in descending order heading south for the border, but the track ends at San Ysidro- Stop #13 instead of Stop #1... does this mean long range plans include 12 Blue Line stops inside Mexico? Or interlining with a Mexican light rail authority between metro Tijuana & San Diego?

# **ROUTE OF THE MONTH** *Chris Ledermuller*

Fairfax DASH

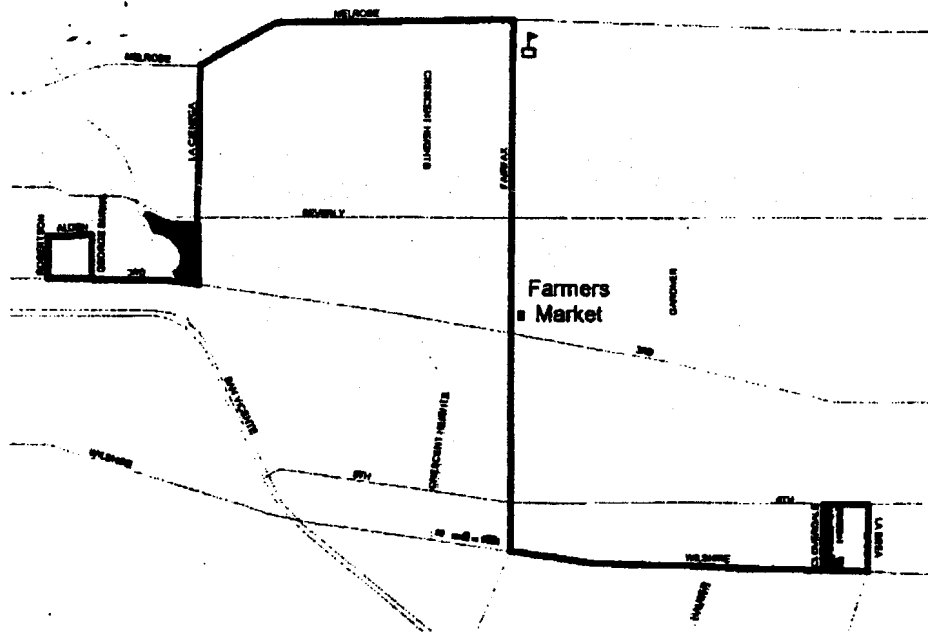
Where does it go: Farmers Market, MTA Customer Center, Miracle Mile, Museum

Row, Fairfax District, Fairfax High School, Melrose Av., Beverly Center and Connection, and Cedars-Sinai.

How often does it run: Every 15 minutes, Monday through Saturday.

How much does it cost: 25 cents.

Whom to call: 808-2273 (good from any area code)



# **TRANSIT TRIVIA** *Joe Dunn*

**Last Month's Question:**

Which train line is west of the San Diego Freeway (I-405) and is free of charge to ride?

**The Answer:**

The Getty Museum Shuttle train between the museum and the parking lot.