

Effective 12 Sep 1999 MTA will make changes to the following lines

- #108: Discontinue both segments to the Citadel mall
- #104: Discontinue weekend service
- #128: discontinue weekend service and cut line back to La Mirada (from Fullerton)
- #167: Cut headway on weekdays to 45 min
- #205: Cut headway to previous headways prior to 1998 (hourly?)

Thanks to a tip off from member Joe Dunn we have learned MTA is testing Sunday limited stop service on Wilshire Blvd. to handle heavy peak demand by beachgoers. In the morning line #320 runs westbound and late afternoon/ evening it runs eastbound, supplementing local service in the corridor.

A new LADOT DASH Downtown weekday schedule, dated July 1999, is now out. The only major change is that DASH Route #F now has 12 minute service instead of 15.

Preliminary plans of the Santa Monica Transit Mall were approved by the City Council, despite some concerns voiced by area merchants. Construction could start by next Spring.

The Metrolink website at presstime is down. Metrolink Board member Ian Humphreys hopes by the time this issue the problem will be resolved.  
**News flash: website up and running!**

August 30 Santa Clarita Transit began operating peak hour commuter service to and from Westwood and Century City. The fare is \$3.00 each way.

SCT Line #797 is the commuter version of the line (to Westside in the morning and to Santa Clarita in the afternoon). It travels via the same route as the other commuter services, starting at the Santa Clarita Metrolink station and traveling via Orchard Village to I-5 and 405 to Westwood and Century City.

Line #792 is the reverse commuter service (to Santa Clarita in the morning and to the Westside in the afternoon). It travels via the same route as the other reverse commuter services (via I-5 to Valencia Town Center, Kaiser, and the bus yard). Note that reverse commute services are deadheads which Santa Clarita allows passengers to ride.

LADOT route #573 has withdrawn from Santa Clarita and resumed its former routing between the mid-San Fernando Valley and Westside. The route starts/ends with the loop of Balboa, Chatsworth, Haskell and Devonshire.

Orange County bus service changes for September 12 are described at <http://www.octa.net/servicechange.asp>. Highlights include:

- new route #191 (combination of existing #397 and San Clemente Pier routing of #91. Route #91 will no longer serve San Clemente Pier, but will (most likely) remain on El Camino Real

OCTA will also provide additional later weekday evening trips on: #25, 26, 29, 30, 38, 42, 45, 46, 47, 47, 50, 53, 55, 56, 60, 65, 74, 75, 76, 85, 89, 91, 99, 175, and 205.

Headways will be reduced on #164, while #673 will be discontinued

Also, OCTA buses serving the Laguna Hills Transportation Center/Mall will have slight reroutes.

Finally, Sunday service (not special reduced level service) will be provided on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

The July Western Transit reports as of June 27 the Orange Blossom trolley in Riverside operates the Univ. of California-Riverside route only Friday evenings and all day Saturday. *(continued on pg 7)*

# BULLETIN BOARD

Our speaker this month is Richard Silver of the Rail Passenger Association of California on the topic of "Improving Passenger Rail Service in Southern California". Next month Lt. Robert Fox of the LAPD transit bus policing unit will be our speaker. In November we may have a gentleman from the Southern California Association of Government given a presentation on smart shuttle. As usual our general meeting begins at 1 p.m. and our guest speakers will begin at 2 p.m.

August 21 the Executive Committee plus member John Ulloth spent several hours at Eagle Rock City Hall roughing out position papers. Topics include Regional Transportation Development, Analysis of Transportation Funding, Structure of the Southern California Regional Transit Agency and Transit Technologies and Modalities. Chair Kris Sharp is coordinating this effort. When drafts are ready they will circulate for comments and input from the membership.

September 25 at 1 p.m. a special meeting will be held at Eagle Rock to discuss the future of our group (aka "The Vision Meeting") All members are invited to attend. Free parking is available and refreshments will be provided. Transit buses serving the site (Colorado Blvd. 1 1/2 blocks east of Eagle Rock Blvd.) include MTA routes 81, 83 and 180 and Eagle Rock DASH.

August 7 Santa Monica Big Blue Bus held another community outreach meeting at the Ken Edwards Center. Members in attendance included President Gabbard, Vice President Charles Powell, Directors Anthony Loui and Armando Avalos and member Jeff Sklar. SO.CA.TA allies Ken Rubin and Pam O'Connor (the latter Mayor of Santa Monica) also attended. Plus the entire management team of Big Blue Bus was present to answer questions! Kudos to BBB for its sterling public outreach.

Two recent additions to our website of particular note: Director Hank Fung's analysis of the recent call for project awards by MTA (<http://socata.lerctr.org/cfp.html>) and the text of a Ventura County Grand Jury report on the role of the Ventura County Transportation Commission in transit service within the county (<http://socata.lerctr.org/vctc.html>). Also, Parliamentarian Kymberleigh Richards documents the history of San Fernando Valley transit restructuring at <http://home.pacbell.net/krichrds>.

Suggestions are requested for our annual day-after-Thanksgiving excursion. Also President Gabbard plans to explore the MTA's overnight CityNightline (route 646) to San Pedro and welcomes 1-2 volunteers to join him. It is anticipated that during October we will have our exploration of changes to service recently instituted by Riverside Transit Agency.

Members in the news: Tom Rubin was quoted in the Aug. 27 Los Angeles Times ("MTA Allots Funds to Workers' Comp") and Sept. 5 Daily News ("Many Convinced Valley Transit Zone is Way to Go"). The latter included quotes by member Roger Christensen and Parliamentarian Kymberleigh Richards, providing a user perspective on the topic. President Gabbard, Vice-President Powell, member Roger Christensen and Parliamentarian Kymberleigh Richards, providing a user perspective on the topic. President Gabbard, Vice-President Powell, Directors Loui and Avalos and member Joe Dunn attended a public meeting Sept. 2 by MTA at Montebello City Hall seeking input on alternatives for improving transportation for the eastside. Information was provided on heavy rail, light rail and busway options under consideration. Chris Flescher had a letter in the Sept. 3 OC Weekly responding to anti-light rail comments in a previous issue by the pro-highway Drivers for Highway Safety. Member Chris Ledermuller had a letter in the Aug. 9 L.A. Downtown News clarifying that MTA owns low floor buses and is acquiring more in the coming year. Member Bob Clark in a letter published in the July 22 Park LaBrea News laments the absence of a Red Line stop at Third and Vermont

The President has announced the next Forum will be delayed to Spring 2000 due to press matters requiring his attention. The Forum's topic will be munis and their role in Los Angeles County public transportation. (*continued on pg. 6*)

The MTA Board appears to be having trouble of late attracting a quorum. Could it be because the are no longer dispensing billions? A motion at the Aug. 26 meeting to delay the fare increase failed on a 5 to 3 vote. The motions' co-authors (Yaroslavsky and Fasana) were among the no-shows.

When will the local media finally begin digging into the scandalous state of the bus shelter franchise in Los Angeles? Leonard Shapiro in his Aug. 19 "Observations of a Gadfly" column asks why can't L.A. get 9,000 bus shelters built within two or three years for its bus riders? The shelters pay for themselves with advertising revenue. Instead the city is satisfied with a pledge of 400 shelters within 4 years being erected. Pitiful!

I was gratified the Times in its Aug. 25 edition ran my letter that "watchdog" is the correct term to use for activists who attend public meetings and speak out. The Times in a previous article called us "gadflies", which many see as pejorative.

Question of the month: when will Mayor Riordan appoint a new MTA boardmember to replace the recently departed (and unmissed!) Richard Alatorre? And who will it be? Want to bet it's another insider who votes per Mayorial fiat?

"Blue Line Asked to Go Deep" by Andrew Bridges in the Aug. 16 Pasadena Star-News profiles No Blue Line at Grade [<http://www.noblag.org>], a small but vocal group of residents agitating for the Pasadena Blue Line [<http://www.la-pasblueline.org>] to have a 1 mile below grade segment to avoid traffic conflicts at Glenarm St., California Blvd. and Del Mar Blvd. The demands are falling on deaf ears, as the project already faces serious budgetary woes. An added blow are MTA demands the project include a full service maintenance yard. The sole good news is the Authority Board choose Rick

Thorpe as permanent CEO. Thorpe has a reputation for quality and bringing projects on time and under budget.

Surprise quote of the month: "Heavy rail has got to be part of the mix. Buses are still the main part of the system, but we need more light rail, and I'd like to see a subway used as a backbone of the system, with light rail feeding into it" James Hahn, L.A. City Attorney and mayorial candidate ("Cattle Call", L.A. Weekly Aug. 20).

<http://www.sccd.org/hotissues/RTP6-14.html> is a report on the June 14 briefing by SCAFG on its Regional Transportation Plan. I am glad that finally there are signs even insiders recognize business as usual is no longer acceptable. We must be making progress for the sprawl masters to attack liveable communities (<http://www.nahb.com> - a tip of the hat to member Anthony Cruze for bringing this site to my attention).

S.B. 804, the bill pushed by Greyhound to undercut Amtrak thruway service, has been declawed. Now it merely strengthens guarantees that passengers use the service solely to connect with Amtrak trains.

S.B. 1101, the anti-transit zone measure pushed by MTA's unions has gone thru numerous twists and turns. By next month we'll know if the zone applications (already on life support) can dodge this fatal blow.

Zone surprise of the month: MTA Boardmember James Cragin announced at the Aug. 26 MTA board meeting that he oppose zones and that being a bus operator is a demanding task deserving a fair wage.

While "in the August Metro Investment Report Michael Tennenbaum, Chair of the High Speed Rail Authority, attempts to put a good face (*to pg 6*)

# TALE OF TWO BUS STOPS *Alberto Rodriguez*

In Los Angeles, in 1999, there is a place that still discriminates among people-not based on their race or religion, but based on their point of origin- on a bus route.

This place is MTA's Gateway Center, Southern California's glorious transit hub. It maintains a "back door" entrance for bus riders coming from the eastside. Riders originating from the eastside are dropped off across the street from the Gateway center, whereas riders originating from the south or westside are transported directly to the Gateway Center's doorstep. Worse still, passengers heading to the eastside have to wait on a desolate intersection across the street from the county jail, while other passengers wait in the comfort and security of the sparkling Patsaouras transit plaza.

The transit plaza is not ordinary by any means. It is endowed with costly sculptures and fountains that greet riders as they reach the Gateway center.

I became aware of this disparate situation on a recent visit to the L.A. Public Library. Eager to use L.A.'s new multi-million dollar subway system, I decided to leave my car behind and travel the city streets on public transportation-an exciting idea at the time. Although MTA buses are infamous for their over-crowding and poor performance, I kept my mind on the shiny new air conditioned train that would transport me to the library.

First, I plotted my course. I would have to take the 68 bus down Cesar E. Chavez Ave. and then transfer to the subway at the Gateway Center in Downtown L. A. Waiting at the bus stop in Boyle Heights, my precon-ceptions of the bus system proved correct. The scheduled bus was late and once I got on the bus it soon began to take on more passengers than it could comfortably accommodate. Getting off the bus at Vignes St. and Cesar E. Chavez Ave. I finally reached the Gateway Center. This part of the story is short and simple. I got on the subway and made my way to the Los Angeles Public Library.

Upon returning, however, I realized that I would have to wait for the 68 bus on the corner of Cesar E. Chavez Ave. and Vignes St. at seven o' clock at night during a cold spell. Needless to say, I was terribly uncomfortable. This bus stop provides absolutely no protection from the elements. There are two benches with green wooden seats and concrete legs. Diagonally across the bus stop is the county jail and directly across lies a barren parking lot.

While I, and about 8 other public transit users lingered on that desolate street corner, a handful of transit users from far-flung cities such as Santa Monica, Downey, and Lakewood waited for their buses in the security and comfort of the Patsaouras transit plaza just a few feet away. It is so lavish that it has the feel of a vacation get-away. There are manicured gardens, fountains, and even sculptured overhangings to shield lucky transit users from the rain and sun. Not only are these transit users protected, they are protected in style while transit users heading to the eastside are not protected at all. There are no covered areas at the Cesar E. Chavez Ave. and Vignes St. bus stop. There are no murals or sounds from running water to entertain the weary riders.

This situation is unjust and must be addressed! There is no doubt that riders originating from the eastside will use the subway. In fact, many more will start to use it once the Hollywood extension opens in the coming months. The MTA must not continue to degrade and humiliate riders heading to the eastside by forcing them off to the street to catch their bus. Not only have eastside transit users been robbed of a long-promised subway, they are now being treated like second-class riders when they arrive at the subway station. Riders heading to the eastside are entitled to the benefits of waiting in the comfort and security of the transit circle, one of LA's most admirable public spaces. If the MTA hopes to lure more riders onto its subway, it should start by treating eastside riders with dignity and give them a bus stop inside the Patsaouras transit plaza. ■

(PLAC Report, from pg. 4) on the situation the proposed bullet train project is in serious trouble. The \$20+ billion dollar pricetag has created sticker shock among legislators ("Legislators Could Derail Bullet Train" San Jose Mercury Aug. 17). Dana Reed, a member of the California Transportation Commission, has proposed the Commission should take over the project when the Authority sunsets next year according to the Aug. 27 California Corridors ("CTC's Dana Reed Eyes Takeover",

<http://www.capitolalert.com/pulse/corridors.html>). Wrangling over the routing is an additional obstacle the proposal faces. Frankly this one is in a state of flux.

Two goodbyes this month: to Douglas Haberman of the Daily News, who has done excellent even-handed coverage of MTA and zone issues, and [www.mtala.com](http://www.mtala.com), which first publicized the MTA rumors page, went offline mid-August. Adios! ■

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(Bulletin Board, from pg. 3)

John Panico reports Santa Clarita Transit's ambassador program continues strong. Members meet with contractor staff six times a year to consult. Some ambassadors are preparing to make a presentation before the City Council on the program and the benefits of using transit to commute. Recently ambassadors attended a town hall meeting held by Congressman McKeon and spoke regarding funding for a new transit maintenance facility. We hope this program could be a model for other operators in the region.

Wednesday Oct. 6 the California Futures Network is sponsoring an all day symposium on Smart Growth. This will be held at the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Speakers will include elected officials, agency representatives and various organization representatives. Registration deadline is Sept. 27 and the cost (including lunch) is \$75. For further information on registration contact Kristen Paulsen at (530) 792-1751 or [kristen@cbdcom.com](mailto:kristen@cbdcom.com); for Symposium content questions contact Julia Fiskin at (510) 238-9762 or [cfn@igc.org](mailto:cfn@igc.org). If a member can attend as a delegate we'll pass the hat at our Sept. meeting for funds to help defray the expense of attending.

<http://www.no710.org> is a website dedicated to fighting the 710 extension

Corridor Chronicles is the new newsletter of the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority. To be added to the mailing list call ACTA at (310) 233-7480.

The Planning and Conservation League has reactivated ZEVolutions, a newsletter on electric and alternative fuel transportation. Also it has published a research report "The Negative Impact of Automobiles". Both can be read on their website - <http://www.pcl.org> or requested free: 926 J Street, Suite 612, Sacramento CA 95814 or [pclmail@pcl.org](mailto:pclmail@pcl.org)

Thursday Oct. 21 the L.A. Section of the American Planning Association will hold a program on the proposed high speed rail network. Dan Leavitt of the California High Speed Rail Authority is the featured speaker. This will be held at the MTA Headquarters - time yet to be determined but lunch is included. Cost is \$25 until Oct. 12 (\$30 thereafter). To RSVP contact Conal McNamara: (661) 255-4349

Mr. Robert Saxon is interested in acquiring transfers from Southern California transit agencies and has duplicates to trade (including historic transfers from the PE and LA Railway systems). He can be contacted at: 199 Laurel Circle, Princeton NJ 08540 or [saxon@sprintmail.com](mailto:saxon@sprintmail.com)

If anyone is interested, we have a small quantity of videotaped copies of our May 15 Subway Excursion for \$5. (They are copied from another videotape, so the quality is not great. . .)

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** Joe Dunn

**Did you know that 1-800-COMMUTE can directly connect you to other transit agency information lines? And without waiting through 1-800-COMMUTE's recorded messages?**

**First dial 1-800-COMMUTE (266-6883)  
then when the very 1st recording starts dial the following...**

### **DIAL THESE NUMBERS SLOWLY TO AVOID MISDIALS**

- 111 for mta (los angeles)**
  - 112 for octa (orange county transportation authority)**
  - 1131 for rta (riverside transit agency)\***
  - 1132 for sunline (palm springs)**
  - 11341 for banning bus**
  - 11361 for corona dar(dial a ride)**
  - 1141 for omnitrans(san bernardino)\***
  - 11421 for victor valley transit (victorville)**
  - 11431 for marta(big bear, lake arrowhead)**
  - 11441 for barstow transit**
  - 11442 for barstow transit dial a ride**
  - 115 for ventura county\***
- (\* this agency also has its own 800 number)**

**VERY IMPORTANT-if you screw up DON'T HANG UP press the infamous "STAR KEY" this is under the number "7" this will take you to the previous menu. (this doesn't work once connected to the transit authority).**

*(Transit Reports, from Pg. 2)* The downtown route has been discontinued.

Riverside operates the Univ. of California-Riverside route only Friday evenings and all day Saturday. The downtown route has been discontinued.

All Riverside Transit Agency fixed route and dial-a-ride services will be free on Wednesday Sept. 15. in celebration of Transit Appreciation Day

Ventura County's VISTA buses have a new schedule effective Aug 30:

- Two new routes serve the new Cal State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) campus (ex-Camarillo State Hospital). The CSUCI-Camarillo Metrolink route operates every 15-minutes (30-minutes on Sat.) between the campus and Camarillo Metrolink (where a connection can be made with the VISTA Highway 101 route). The

CSUCI-Oxnard route runs between campus and Centerpoint Mall, a major SCAT transfer point in Oxnard.

To meet a deadline for federal funding the Ventura City Council hastily approved a Metrolink station being built at Montalvo, where the trains currently layover at night.

In other Ventura County news VCTC's smartcard will be undergoing an upgrade. During a transition period of 9-12 months the debit option won't be available.

In a tragic accident Brian Keith Williams was electrocuted while waiting at a bus shelter in San Diego on August 8. Inspection revealed the shelter had faulty grounding. The electrical charge came from an adjacent street light power circuit. Currently all shelters in San Diego are being inspected. Our condolences to Mr. Williams' family.