

At our Oct. 13 meeting we will review the core principle statement of the California Alliance for Transportation Choices [a statewide coalition dedicated to progressive transportation policy reform] and consider endorsing it. It can be downloaded (in Word format) at <http://www.odyssey2020.org/upload/CATCPrinciples.doc>

We hope at our November meeting to have a presentation on the status of the city of Los Angeles street furniture proposal (which includes bus shelters).

MTA will have a public hearing on service change proposals Saturday, November 10, 2001 at 10:00 AM in the MTA Headquarters Building, located at One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles. Details about the proposals are post on the front page of our website. At our Oct. 13 meeting an ad hoc group will review the proposals and provide input for our position which will be presented at the hearing. Also we will select our destination for the day-after-Thanksgiving trip.

Monday Oct. 15 from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. MTA will have a stakeholder briefing on the San Fernando Valley transit zone application process in its Board Room (3rd

floor of the MTA Headquarters Building). Details (along with documents for download) at: [http://www.mta.net/press/public\\_meetings/meetings.htm](http://www.mta.net/press/public_meetings/meetings.htm)

Our 2nd owl service study tour of the year will begin Saturday Oct. 27 in the evening and stretch into the following morning (call out hotline or attend the Oct. 13 member meeting for time and place of the tour's start). Tentative plans are to explore late evening service on the westside plus two MTA owls: routes 18 and 4. Director Phillip Capo is planning this trip.

Sunday Oct. 14 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines will hold a celebration on the Third Street Promenade to mark the installation of bike racks on its buses. Buses with the racks will be on display along with giveaways, refreshments, a bike workshop and free bike trail maps.

Public hearings on the Draft EIS/EIR and the Draft LAX Master Plan have been rescheduled. Please see the calendar for meeting times.

The deadline for written comments has been extended until Friday November 9.

Submit comments to:  
Los Angeles World Airports  
LAX Master Plan Office  
P.O. Box 92216  
Los Angeles, CA 90009-2216

The schedule of public events on El Toro reuse can be seen at <http://www.eltorofacts.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=dsp&page=events>

The Public Utility Commission administrative hearing regarding Pasadena

Blue Line grade crossings is tentatively scheduled for Monday Nov. 5th at the Reagan office building in downtown Los Angeles.

Saturday Nov. 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Burbank Airport Hilton, the Train Riders' Association of California (TRAC) presents its annual meeting. Speakers include retiring TRAC Executive Director Ric Silver, Planning and Conservation League Executive Director Jerry Meral, OCTA CEO Art Leahy, Metrolink CEO David Solow and Amtrak West CEO Gil Mallery. Cost is \$45 for TRAC members, \$60 for non-members (luncheon included). Send your name, address, daytime telephone number and e-mail address with check to:

TRAC  
926 J Street, Suite 612  
Sacramento CA 95814

The 2001 Rail~Volution conference has been re-scheduled for Thursday, November 29th thru Sunday, December 2nd, 2001 in San Francisco. Details at <http://www.railvolution.com/>

The Self-Help Counties Coalition (the Counties with local sales taxes for transportation) presents its 12th annual conference: Focus on the Future Sunday Oct. 21 to Tuesday Oct. 23 in San Francisco. Registration is \$349 per person (\$369 after Oct. 7). For more information email [westdir@aol.com](mailto:westdir@aol.com) or call (916) 442-7195. The conference schedule is posted at <http://www.sfcta.org/Focus%20on%20the%20Future/Focus%20on%20the%20Future%20-%20Welcome.htm>. ■

## **MEMBERS IN ACTION**

Tom Rubin is Co-Chair (Transportation) of the Environmental Justice Group in the Bay Area Chapter of the Sierra Club and recently joined the Transportation and Compact Growth group.

Kymerleigh Richards' letter questioning why consent decree pilot line #530 and upgraded line #426 were not implemented was posted Sept. 14 on the "We Get Mail" page of the MTA website. Also Kym will join Dana Gabbard in representing us at the Transit Riders Summit in Oakland November 6.

J.K. Drummond attended the Sept. 24 Torrance Transit public hearing at the Torrance Airport on proposed service changes to its line #4.

Mark Strickert attended on our behalf the west coast summit for the Surface Transportation Policy Project New Directions Initiative, which is building coalitions in anticipation of TEA21 renewal in 2003.

Chris Flescher's photos of Southern California transit equipment (an a surfliner train) can be viewed on the internet at <http://web2.airmail.net/ahhughes/transitpictures/SanDiego.htm>

Chaffee Yiu also has placed many transit photos on his website <http://www.chaffeeyiu.com/>

Ken Ruben was accidentally omitted from the list of attendees of the Riders Federation meeting in last month's column. ■

**PUBLIC &  
LEGISLATIVE  
AFFAIRS**



An excellent interview with outgoing MTA CEO Julian Burke appears in the Sept. Metro Investment Report (on the web at <http://www.ablinc.net/mir/archive/sept2001b.html>). Especially of interest are his comments on the challenges our region faces regarding mobility needs:

"The bottom line is we need more money to improve mobility on a variety of fronts. On the public transit side, Sacramento and Washington must give us more flexibility to use transit dollars to operate our bus and rail service ... the vast majority of trips in the county are not made by public transit.

It's primarily commuters and others jamming already crowded streets and freeways. Bicyclists and pedestrians also are part of that equation. We need a comprehensive transportation system that addresses these and other components bearing in mind not only today's needs but those 10 and 20 years from now. The Legislature and Congress must make transportation a higher priority than they have in decades past and then give us sufficient resources and the broad authority to allocate those funds to where they're needed most."

Meanwhile the BRU scored another coup

by having a New York Times article on the consent decree endorse its image as a grassroots David v. Goliath ("A Los Angeles Commuter Group Sees Discrimination in Transit Policies", Sept. 16). I bet a mailer with a copy of the article is being readied to be sent to the BRU's funders to convert favorable press coverage into gold. While a rather uninformative article that hardly goes beyond repeating BRU propaganda (along with mis-stating the cost of subway construction) one key revelation appears toward the end: the active membership of the BRU numbers 200 (not the thousands they regularly claim).

Oct. 3 KNX broadcast my reply to their Sept. 22 editorial on the consent decree (see pg. 6) suggesting MTA negotiate a close-out of the agreement with the BRU. Essentially I stated given the BRU's propensity to seek the pound of flesh nearest the heart from MTA for signing the decree that in our judgment continued appeals are the only option.

Bizarre discovery of the month: in an Access Services Advisory Committee agenda packet I stumbled across a Funding Sources Matrix prepared by MTA Regional Transportation Planning and Development. This is the Rosetta Stone of local transportation funding. One would have thought it would have been a useful handout to the stakeholders involved in advising revision of MTA's Long Range Plan during the past year. I now have this invaluable resource available as a PDF file for forwarding via e-mail as an attachment to any interested parties.

Accolades to David Abarca, a Coach Operator at Foothill Transit, who upon finding a wallet on his bus located the

owner and returned it (per comments by Foothill Transit Executive Director Julie Austin in the minutes of the Aug. 24 Foothill Transit Executive Board meeting).

Guess what? The Southern California Association of Governments already has prepared a timeline for preparing a 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (meanwhile the printed version of the Plan adopted earlier this year isn't even available yet). We need a new volunteer to attend RTP task force meetings on our behalf. Here is a chance to be a voice a reason.

Reports of the perilous condition of the proposed statewide High Speed Rail network are not overly exaggerated, as the Authority tries to go forward with a meager budget allocation this year. There are hopes of drawing on various funding sources to sustain the process. The Western Rail Passenger Review Sept. issue reports new Authority Chair Rod Diridon hit the ground running and seems ready to reinvigorate the effort. Also a draft First Screening Report has been released that narrows candidate corridors and technologies (no more maglev!):

[http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/public\\_workshops/files/Draft\\_First\\_Screening\\_Report\\_091501.pdf](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/public_workshops/files/Draft_First_Screening_Report_091501.pdf)

Also Amtrak may be back from the brink, as its post Sept. 11 role seemed to answer the question: do we need a nationwide rail network?

I was surprised to have learned in the latest Inside 7 (newsletter of Caltrans District 7) that the Los Angeles Dept. of Transportation will also occupy space in new headquarters building District 7 is building in downtown L.A. (tentative completion date: Spring 2004). I thought LADOT had backed out of being a tenant in the building. Guess things were finally worked out.

This month I'd like to conclude by congratulating Andre Colaiace of Foothill Transit on the occasion of his recent election by the Los Angeles County Municipal Fixed Route Operators to represent them on the Access Services, Inc. Board of Directors. Way to go, Andre! ■

*(Transit Updates, from pg. 10)*

The new Coastal Express service between Ventura and Santa Barbara has enjoyed increasing ridership: at least 156 weekday riders, 62 Saturday boardings and 35 Sunday riders.

There have been issues with park-and-ride use of the Government Center lots. Also, some Goleta commuters, dissatisfied with the longer travel times, have started their own buspool; fares are about \$135/mo.

The San Diego Air Pollution Control District has provided funding for Friendship Transportation Service, a private company, to expand its commuter service between Temecula and San Diego.

Metrolink service changes, originally planned for October, won't happen until next January. Also, the Montalvo (Ventura) station may lose \$5 million in state funding if it is not started by December. ■

## **POINT/COUNTERPOINT**

Southern California Transit Advocates generally agrees with the recent KNX editorial on the consent decree regarding MTA bus service. Strides have been made to improve quality and efficiency since the decree was signed in 1996. The rapid bus pilot project is especially noteworthy in that regard, and we applaud MTA for its plans to substantially expand this successful program on corridors throughout Los Angeles county in the coming years.

It is shocking a lawsuit was necessary to preserve monthly passes and compel the purchase of new buses to replace the dilapidated MTA bus fleet. But as KNX notes MTA's actions in response to the decree have addressed most of the key issues that motivated the filing of the original lawsuit.

But in our view KNX's well intentioned suggestion that MTA drop its appeal and negotiate with the Bus Riders Union isn't viable. The so-called Bus Riders Union to this day refuses to admit any bus service improvements have occurred. They instead persist in pressing demands that would result in flooding the streets with hundreds of additional buses for no good purpose.

Instead of bus service improvement their main focus seems to be perpetual agitation to generate publicity and facilitate prodigious fundraising (public records reveal the Bus Riders Union parent organization Labor Community Strategy Center had an income in 1999 of one and a half million dollars).

Given the foregoing there is little hope the Bus Riders Union would ever negotiate in

good faith. In our view MTA has no choice but to continue pursuing its appeal.

Response by member Thomas Rubin: Speaking as someone who has been very much involved in this entire process, I am shocked at this position.

You appear to believe that it is BRU that refuses to negotiate. The facts are, there is nothing to negotiate. MTA has NEVER done anything on ANY terms but its own. MTA refused to negotiate the Consent Decree on any terms EXCEPT load factors. I agree fully that attempting to run a transit agency with this sole indicator is a very odd and sometimes dysfunctional process. However, this was MTA's measure, and it has never been willing to make any changes, except on its own, unacceptable terms. Worse, it has consistently insisted that it is the sole judge of what the CD requirements are and if it is in compliance, totally rejecting the findings of the Special Master (twice on load factor compliance alone), Chief Judge Hatter, and now the Ninth Circuit. How can anyone negotiate with an entity that totally refuses to comply with its past contractual commitments? The only logical course of action is to hang on to what you have in the contract until the other side at least shows that it is willing to show some signs of a good faith approach -- which is a concept that MTA has evidently never been introduced to.

What we are talking about here is NOT an occasional overload. Even with the generous averaging factors built in, at MTA's insistence, to the load factor rules (overcrowding does NOT apply to single buses, but to ALL buses on a line during 20 minute periods in the peak and hour periods off peak), the average

four-hour observation period generally has produced a violation. Violations of the CD are extremely common, occurring virtually every day on most busy MTA lines. MTA has done virtually nothing to respond to its requirement to keep load factors down. BRU has no choice but to fight very hard to ensure that the legal requirements are strictly complied with - as the Special Master and two Federal courts have insisted on -- because to let MTA off the hook on this will ensure that the CD will soon be totally meaningless.

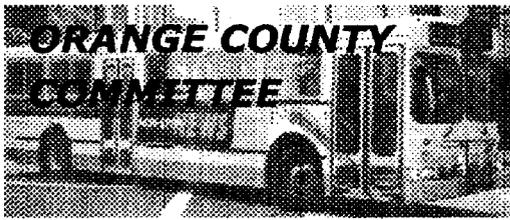
People who have not been in meetings with MTA on this and other matters have absolutely no idea how difficult it is to even get MTA to consider an idea that it did not originate. No one who has come in from the outside and reviewed the full picture has ever reached any conclusion other than MTA was in the wrong.

MTA has also totally refused to add the buses for new service, on top of the highly successful new Pilot Project lines, that were recommended by the Special Master, in compliance with the CD requirements, over two years ago. It has shut down the ridechecks that it had performed for decades - and are specifically required by the CD. Why? Well, I cannot get into the minds of MTA decision makers, but this does mean that there is a lot less data on what is likely to be MTA load factor violations than there would be if MTA was doing what it contractually promised to do -- and a lot less information that would be useful in fine-tuning transit service.

The fact is, the load factor, coupled with the holding off of fare increases and other CD actions, has had an extremely important impact, one that the plaintiffs

always expected, but that MTA never even considered. Very simply, if there is capacity added on overcrowded MTA buses, there is a huge latent demand out there that will come to use it. Since the CD has gone into effect, MTA bus ridership -- which had dropped an average of 15 million riders a year since the 1985 peak through 1996, the last full year prior to the CD going in effect -- has totally turned around and has increased 50 million (MTA's own budget projection for FY02), even as MTA has added two rail extensions that have taken riders from buses and given away routes to other operators -- and refused to add the service that it is required to under the terms of the CD. The plaintiffs had absolutely no doubt that adding buses to reduce overcrowding would attract new riders -- which, in turn, would require adding more bus service to maintain the load factor requirements. There is absolutely no evidence that MTA ever considered this.

Running a transit system by court order is the second worst methodology that I have ever encountered. The worst is leaving MTA to its own devices. BRU should not be looked at as the "bad guy" in this. If BRU had NOT been doing everything it could to force MTA to actually serve transit riders, right now, the cash fare would be \$1.70, tokens would cost \$1.35, and there would be no passes. Bus ridership would well under 300 million a year, bus service hours would be significantly reduced from its prior, inadequate levels, and both would still be falling -- and the transit-dependent of LA would be at wit's end trying to get around this town. Yes, BRU has been tough on MTA -- and every transit rider in LA should thank them every time they use transit to get anywhere. ■



**TRANSIT ADVOCATES OF ORANGE COUNTY** - Mark Strickert, with Barry Christensen and Jane Reifer - 866-476-2282 ext. 4, or [zineland@yahoo.com](mailto:zineland@yahoo.com)

#### TOUR DU JOUR

Our thanks go out to LA county attendees Armando Avalos, Phil Capo, Dana Gabbard, Russ Jones, and to OCTA's Jose Solorio and his son for coming along. Orange County regulars Barry Christensen, Dan Dalke, Tina Erickson, Jane Reifer, TJ Stiller, and oh yes Mark Strickert also made it. Special thanks to our Balboa restaurateur Jaime Tyson, gracious host and enthusiastic bus supporter. Of course, there will also be the Pacific Coast Highway adventure sometime next year, covered in these parts appropriately enough by route #1.

#### ALWAYS THE TRAIN SHALL MEET

Next TAOC meetings, Thursday 10/11 and 11/8, 6pm. Location TBA. Next Rail Advocates of Orange County meeting, date/time/location to be announced...we have been busy with the hearings in the first 3 CenterLine route cities. The RAOC website, <http://www.railadvocates.org> is up and running, and brochures are available. Comments welcome, especially input on the "FAQ" page. TAOC's new rail committee made its public debut at the 9/24 OCTA meeting.

In place of a RAOC meeting, we will be attending the Santa Ana city council

meeting on Monday, October 15th, 6 PM, at Building 20, near Santa Ana and Ross. The Rail Advocates study tour of San Diego will be on Saturday, October 27th. We'll be meeting at Fullerton train station, at a time to be determined. We will be checking out the Mission Valley leg of the San Diego Trolley Blue Line.

#### CENTERLINE BACK ON TRACK?

The city councils of Costa Mesa and Irvine have passed resolutions asking OCTA to study a new CenterLine alignment through their cities. Santa Ana's city council will be voting on it October 15th (see above). The show of support by these cities may revive the project, which was put on hold last spring.

#### SEPTEMBER CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

I was on the first Sunday #25 run out of Fullerton Park & Ride (7:24am) from simple curiosity, and Jane Reifer was on it as it was her main route for years but it only just now gets every-day service, hurrah! No riders until we reached Knott Ave., but from there we had a light but steady stream of riders. Much less action on the 10:58am back north from Huntington Beach, though a few folks at the regular Goldenwest College swap-meet obviously noticed the presence of a bus where once was none.

The first run of the new #213 express, Monday morning 9/10, had a very good load, maybe 25 passengers. Many of these are Hunt-Wesson employees who used to have a private shuttle bus from Fullerton Trans. Center down to Irvine. The new added #213 run makes no stops between Fullerton Trans. Ctr and Michelson/Jamboree in Irvine.

Oh yeah, odd to see "71 Balboa

Peninsula", the 71 schedule has shifted slightly in the morning, and a LOT in the afternoon.

The #79 extension along Irvine Blvd. to Larwin Square restores a segment of the former route #65 service lost last September. Although the Bus Book has the Irvine Blvd. portion running weekdays only, the full #79 really operates every day.

#### COMPLETE THE ENTIRE SET!

I now have up to 4 individual OCTA schedules, for the 29, 43, 57 and 60. As of now, still not encountered on the route they were made for. Any other routes have them? Has anyone yet found one on the route it was for? Should we actively be for or against them?

#### TAOC IN THE NEWS

Jane Reifer has been quoted in the Irvine World News and the 9/26/01 Orange County Register, in regards to the CenterLine revival. "We're excited that cities are taking the initiative," she said. "The unfortunate part is that they're cutting out north county. But hopefully, if they build this half first, it will lead to doing the full line." Hear, hear...

Roy Shahbazian of Rail Advocates of Orange County was interviewed in the 10/5/01 OC Register, speaking favorably about safety on OCTA buses.

Frank Forbath was quoted in the 10/4 Daily Pilot, saying that although he may never get to use CenterLine, he would like to see it implemented for his grandchildren. "Whether you like it or not, all professional projections show that California will continue to grow. Something has to be done," he said.

The following bits were in the OCTA Board Actions newsletter: "Bus service upgrades now occur four times a year, and these latest have the support of the Transit Advocates of Orange County."

"Barry Christensen of Fullerton announced the formation of a citizens group called Rail Advocates of Orange County. The Advocates' plan is to extol the advantages of rail transit in public forums and elsewhere, he said."

Linda Weiand thanked the OCTA board for restoring service along Irvine Blvd.

#### YOUR 1/2¢ AT WORK

Over the next 10 years, the OCTA would like to make almost \$4.6 billion in transit improvements with your contributions to Measure M. The wish list includes:

1. Complete 22 Freeway carpool lane and north I-5 widening projects: \$700 million
2. Improve travel on 91 Fwy, including express buses and new Metrolink line: \$180 million
3. Fix freeway bottlenecks: \$380 million
4. Encourage car pooling on toll roads: To be determined
5. Invest in street and road improvements: \$720 million
6. Midday and double peak-hour OC Metrolink commuter rail service: \$250 million
7. Expand local bus frequency and service to seniors: \$260 million
8. Add express bus service on some highways: \$40 million
9. Provide BRT along PE ROW, Beach, Harbor, Katella, and Edinger: \$1.03 billion
10. Build starter segment of CenterLine: \$1.1 billion ■



A public hearing for the following MTA service changes, effective July 2002 or later, will be held November 10:

- Delete MTA #18 entirely, turning over this service to Montebello.
- Also delete #56, as ridership is very low, and both #55 and the Blue Line are nearby.
- Reduce headways on #55 by half
- Cancel weekend #214, also extend to the Harbor Fwy Green Line station
- #378/379 limited stop trips to become regular #78/79.
- Either cancelling #471, replacing it with other service (extension of Foothill #280?) or just running it to the county line, with OCTA #116 possibly taking over
- Cancel #491 between El Monte and L.A. (this segment runs peak hour only)

All MTA/LADOT Smart Shuttle operations (Southside, Koreatown, and the San Fernando Valley operations) have ceased effective Sept 30, a victim of a funding dispute between MTA and LADOT.

Torrance may reduce service on its little-used, high-subsidy Line #4, to peak hours only, and only on the Hollywood Riviera section. The funding saved would be reallocated to the Torrance "Senior Ride" service.

The West Covina shuttle has just added new service. The new "Green" route provides half hour service from the local senior center down to that little sliver of

West Covina that touches Industry. This supplements Foothill Transit Line 179. Also, they added a shuttle connecting the senior center to the Covina Metrolink, in addition to the current shuttle between West Covina City Hall and Baldwin Park Metrolink. They also have decided to call the shuttle "Go West". Fares remain at a quarter for all non-Metrolink routes. <http://www.westcov.org/events/transit.pdf> (Hank Fung)

The Santa Clarita Transit/ATC Vancom strike is over. All September monthly passes will be accepted through October 31.

Monday Oct. 1 AVTA began operating a new route 2. Its main purpose is to serve the newly opened South Antelope Valley Medical Center (40th Street East and Palmdale Blvd). The hourly service operates from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. between Antelope Valley Mall and 55th Street East near Dominic Massari Park stair-stepping along Avenue P, 10th Street W., Technology, Sierra Highway, Ave. Q, 30th E, Palmdale Blvd. and a one way loop of 40th St. E, Ave. R, 55th St. E and Ave. R-8. (Dana Gabbard)

Also effective Monday, Oct 1, RTA has taken over the UC Riverside "Highlander Hauler" shuttle bus service on and around the campus. The former "Green" and "Gold" routes will now be known as RTA #51 and #52.

Finally, RTA plans to improve service headways on #7 and #8 (Lake Elsinore), #22 (Riverside-Perris-Lake Elsinore) and #27 (Tyler Mall-Perris-Hemet) by Jan 2002.

*(continued on Pg. 5)*