

TRANSIT UPDATES

Due to safety concerns (MTA wanted to take more time to test the rail cars), the Metro Gold Line to Pasadena will not open on June 21 as planned. In fact, it may not open until as late as October... Meanwhile, all of the bus route changes will take place at the June 22 shakeup except that #401 (LA-Pasadena Express) will not be cancelled. In addition, a temporary bus service, serving all the Gold Line stations, will operate until the Gold Line opens.

MTA route changes for June (based on latest staff recommendations):

- Deletion of the Beverly Hills portion of #3 (largely duplicated by #14)
- #58 and #76 will serve the Chinatown Gold Line station.
- #176 will serve the Av. 57 Gold Line station
- #177 will serve the Del Mar and Allen Gold Line stations.
- #92 will lose its short segment north of Glenoaks. #93 will be cancelled, with #603 taking over its portion of Allesandro Bl. Also #410 will be cancelled.
- All-day, 7-day service on limited stop #304 and #333. #304 will be rerouted to serve Union Station, while #333 will end at 7th/Main. (The routes of #4 and #33 will not change, though)
- #22 will be cancelled (duplicates Santa Monica #4)
- #236 will be extended from Granada Hills to Sylmar, via Balboa and Foothill (Cascades Business Park).
- #243 will run Saturday
- In Pasadena, #260 will run along Fair Oaks instead of Los Robles. Service along Los Robles will be operated by new #687.
- #264 would extend to Duarte via current #188 route. Current #264 south to Montebello would be operated by Montebello Bus Lines.
- #418 and 426 will lose their Downtown LA segments and terminate at the North Hollywood Red Line station. They will be renumbered

#352(?) and #363, respectively, and will provide peak-hour limited stop service.

- #561 will be replaced with new Rapid Bus #761 on Van Nuys Blvd. The portion of #561 south of Westwood (via I-405 to LAX) will be deleted.
- Additional Wilshire Rapid Bus #720 service will be provided between Downtown LA and Westwood. Also, more late night service will operate.

The Los Angeles Dodgers are providing a new shuttle bus route between Union Station (Pat Plaza) and Dodger Stadium. It will operate for all Friday night games. Roundtrip fare is \$2 (no passes or transfers accepted). Buses will leave Union Station every 10 minutes or less from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Return service from Dodger Stadium will begin no later than the top of the 8th inning. The last bus will leave 30 minutes after the last out, but no later than 11 p.m.

Long Beach Transit is getting some new 60' articulated buses. Although they will run on all routes, look for them primarily on their limited-stop "ZAP" line on 7th St.

All three MAX (South Bay-El Segundo commuter bus) routes have been extended to serve the County Courthouse at Sepulveda and Imperial. The routes will also stop at the Aviation Green Line station as well.

Ventura County's VISTA plans a fare increase to \$1.25 (to match SCAT)

Foothill Transit continues to accept MTA tokens, but due to a recent fare increase customers must now also deposit 20 cents in the farebox along with the token to pay base fare.

North County Transit District held a contest to name the DMU rail line it is building between Oceanside and Escondido. The winner? "Sprinter".

BULLETIN BOARD

Our thanks to Scott Holmes of OCTA for a marvelous presentation at our March 8 meeting. At our April 12 meeting we will be testing a new procedure, having members submit forms if they wish to give a verbal statement under item X. Time will be granted at the President's discretion and be no more than 5 minutes.

Co-founder Steve Crosmer will be attending our May 10 meeting while vacationing in the area. We also hope at that meeting to have a representative of the Gold Line Authority give a presentation.

SO.CA.TA and TAOC/RAOC will have booths at the annual Fullerton Railroad Days (adjacent to the train station) the weekend of May 3rd and 4th. Drop by and say hello. As always we anticipate a great turnout and a fun family event.

Kymerleigh Richards and John Ulloth will be staffing a booth for us at the Environmental Expo held Saturday April 26 at California State University San Bernardino. For more information see <http://expo.csusb.edu/> or (909) 880-5690.

MTA's public hearing on the fare restructuring proposals will be held Saturday, April 12, 2003, at 10 am in the MTA Board Room (Union Station). The changes if approved by the MTA Board would go into effect January 1, 2004. President Kymerleigh Richards will attend and present our position.

Gold Line station dedications will be held at various stations (check the calendar or <http://www.metrogoldline.org/>):

Community workshops for the US 101 Freeway Corridor Improvement Study [<http://www.communityspeakup.com/101/index.html>] will be held from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Again, check the calendar for

dates.

The draft report on the L.A. to San Diego rail corridor upgrade project has been posted on the High Speed Rail Authority website: http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/whats_new/LOSSAN_screening.asp

The next Port of Los Angeles Waterfront Red Car Line Open House will be held Saturday May 31. Car 1058 is in the car barn tent (22nd and Miner St.) while Cars 500 and 501 are at the Wilmington Red Car Works (Berth 155A - 877 Pier A Street). [information from April issue of Wheel Clicks, newsletter of the Pacific Railroad Society]

Thursday April 24 Michael Zega will speak on streamliner trains at an event sponsored by the Los Angeles Museum of railroading. Starts 5 p.m. at Phillippe's (near Union Station) followed by the talk in the MTA Board Room. Cost is \$20, check payable to L.A. Museum of railroading, 1 S. Fuller Ave., Los Angeles CA 90036. Further information: (323) 931-6757 or <http://www.lamor.org/>

Planning and Building More Livable Communities is a smart growth conference sponsored by the Local Government Commission to be held June 27-28, 2003 in San Diego. To receive more information contact Michele Kelso, Sr. Program Manager at 916-448-1198 ext. 308 (mkelso@lgc.org) or Dave Defanti, Project Coordinator at ext. 330 (ddefanti@lgc.org)

As always, The Transit Advocate needs articles, letters, Transit Tips, photographs and research 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.

**PUBLIC &
LEGISLATIVE
AFFAIRS**

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

The current situation with the Gold Line is simple: due to delays caused by the PUC (during its protracted hearing process evaluating the demand for grade separations made by NIMBYs) the project schedule slipped. MTA wishes to avoid any further trouble with the PUC and intends to be scrupulous in its pre-revenue testing of the line and the P-2000 vehicles that will run on it. At this point the anticipated opening is in October (per a presentation at the March 20 Gold Line Transition Committee meeting). While annoying I think we all agree doing things right is what matters and a small delay is worth enduring for safety's sake.

March 14 I was interviewed by Professor Margaret Weir of the Dept. of Sociology at UC-Berkeley. She is undertaking research on patterns of political involvement in urban investment and transportation policies. A special emphasis was placed on who we consider our most important allies. Which made me consider how we have done in building alliances. Certainly our involvement with entities like the Mobility 21, California Futures Network and the Riders' Federation have allowed us to move beyond our original parochialism. Yet I sense we have much more to do in the way of coalition building.

One little remarked on aspect on MTA's fare

restructuring proposal is their reducing the base fare ten cents to increase MTA's share of funds allocated in the Formula Allocation Procedure. I should note this increase in MTA's funding would not take full effect until the 2006/07 fiscal year. Those wishing further details should check out the discussion of this arcane process posted on the front page of our website. That this is a matter of some interest is confirmed by comments made by AVTA Executive Director Bill Budlong at the Feb. 24 AVTA Board of Directors meeting: if MTA's rates do down that could mean as much as a 6 million dollar funding gain for MTA which would result in a loss for AVTA.

It saddens me the BRU sees fit to mis-state MTA's fare proposal in their latest flyer. Frankly there are aspects of the proposal I look askance at or question. But shouldn't the debate be based on the real proposal? Yet the BRU omit any mention of the day pass MTA proposes as a replacement for tokens and transfers, leaving the impression MTA wants people to pay full fare however many times they board a bus. We should have an honest debate instead of one shaped by deception and fear tactics. For shame, Eric Mann!

YEOW! At the Feb. 28 Foothill Transit Board of Directors meeting the Board voted to discontinue developing the Covina Transit Plaza project the agency had been pursuing and instead undertake development of an office building to be the headquarters of Foothill Transit as a stand alone project. But before the vote Mayor Truax of Covina publicly made comments on the long history of the project and expressed disappointment that Foothill was not going forward with it. The minutes than describe him stating "Covina will continue to address transportation needs in the city,

and with or without Foothill Transit, but cannot wait any longer for Foothill Transit to decide, therefore, the City is moving forward with the MTA to explore bringing MTA bus lines to Covina to serve the needs of the greater area. He said there is still an opportunity for Foothill to work with the City, but Foothill has to decide soon". Julie Austin, Executive Director of Foothill, expressed regret at how things turned out but explained when the project cost reached \$30 million it became untenable and there was a consensus among members of Foothill's Board that a complete re-evaluation was necessary.

question of the month: why was L.A. County Supervisor Antonovich surprised at complaints that MTA's rail stations lack service attendants to assist disabled passengers? Has he never visited one? (item 32, March 27 MTA Board meeting)

I guess it is appropriate since Indian Gaming has become such a feature of California's landscape that MTA has decided to get in on the action with its plan to borrow money up front for priority projects like the San Fernando Valley BRT, Eastside light rail and consent decree bus purchases and gamble the state will be in a position to repay the loan beginning in 2006 as part of a process known as AB 3090. Hopefully this will work, but I am worried given all I am hearing that the state government budget shortfall is largely structural. In 2006 maybe the funds just won't be there. Then what? I understand MTA would lose matching funds and expiring bids if it hadn't taken this leap of faith. But boy am I crossing my fingers at the end of the day all will turn out right.

Faithful Reader brought up an interesting question when we were recently having a chat: how can MTA hire a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Captain as its new Chief of Transit Police and have him remain a member of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department while serving as Transit Police Chief? Considering that the Sheriff's Department is a contractor for MTA this appears to create a conflict of interest. I have no doubt the gentleman hired, Dan Finkelstein, is someone of sterling character. But I remember the original staff report recommending the creation of this position specifically stated its purpose was to provide independent oversight of entities contracted to provide policing services. Why was it decided this criteria no longer applied in making the selection? John Walsh, who joined the conversation, had another pointed question: is the Chief being paid two salaries? Sadly we seem to have only troubling questions and no answers...

Riverside County Transportation Commission state lobbyist D.J. Smith stated at the Commission's Feb. 12 meeting polling shows support for the infrastructure fund measure (ACA 11) that will be on the March 2004 ballot, opposition to suspending Proposition 42 (as Governor Davis has proposed) and opposition to lowering the threshold for passage of transportation sales tax measures.

Currently two measures (ACA 7 and SCA 2) are working their way thru the legislature that would allow county transportation sales tax measures to pass with less than a 2/3 vote. Given the polling information in the previous paragraph, their prospects appear problematic (*cont'd on pg. 10*)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMPASS

A new project, Southern California Compass, has started to plan for the region's future. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has formed a Citizens Advisory Committee to address the impacts of future growth in Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial counties. The goal: come up with a plan for a Southern California that by 2030 is expected to grow by 6 million people. Workshops will be held over the next year to get the public's opinion on the major areas affecting our region: homes, jobs, transportation, the environment, etc.

People will gather around tables in groups of 8 to 10 with detailed maps of what the region looks like today. There will be a presentation describing the details of what has been happening, and the participants will be provided with tools to prepare their personal vision of the region in 25 years. This way Southern California can start planning for the future based on a vision derived from public input. Make sure that your concerns about the future of transit are heard!

You must pre-register at www.socalcompass.org or at 1-800-337-4819

Locations:

- April 22, 2003 - Downey
- April 22, 2003 - UCLA
- April 23, 2003 - Santa Clarita
- April 23, 2003 - Palm Desert
- April 24, 2003 - Camarillo
- April 24, 2003 - Garden Grove
- May 08, 2003 - San Bernardino
- May 08, 2003 - Hemet
- May 09, 2003 - Imperial Valley
- May 10, 2003 - Lancaster
- May 21, 2003 - San Gabriel Valley
- May 21, 2003 - Northridge

SAFETY FOR PARK PLACE TRANSIT USERS

by Barbara Gossett

I work in a big office complex in Irvine, Park Place, which I reach via OCTA bus each day, along with some 50 or 60 other transit riders. The complex is served by Lines 212, 213, and 470.

The buses leave us at one of two stops serving the complex: either at Michelson/Carlson or at Michelson/Riparian. Both of these involve a walk of about a half mile; the latter also crosses a busy parking lot, with arriving vehicles zooming past the unwary pedestrian; after all, drivers are much more focused on finding the closest parking stall than on not hitting pedestrians. There is a traffic signal on Prince, a street midway between these two stops, which reduces the walk by half and avoids busy parking lots and outdoor, often rainy sidewalks. The only drawback at that location is the lack of a pedestrian signal and painted crosswalk.

In September 2002, I began a one-woman campaign to add a signal-activated crosswalk at Prince Street. Only vaguely aware of the bureaucratic hurdles I would encounter, I contacted an engineer with the City of Irvine and a route developer at OCTA. Both of these individuals have worked hard to get the crosswalk in, exploring ways to get it done quickly and efficiently, and sorting out who would pay for which features. The situation is complicated by the fact that any new infrastructure (like this crosswalk) must meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, so a curb cut and concrete pad would be needed to allow handicapped passengers to use the stop. So far, so sensible.

Unfortunately, the site for the proposed stop borders the San Joaquin Marsh Restoration project, a lovely wildlife sanctuary developed by the Irvine Ranch Water District. The IRWD apparently took issue with the project, since it would somehow have a deleterious effect on the critters within the sanctuary. The fact that there are already 16 buses a day driving past the sanctuary, or that both existing stops also border the Marsh, seems to make no difference. I've tried to contact an engineer at the IRWD to learn exactly what their concerns are, but so far have gotten nowhere.

So, here's the situation: Some 60 riders a day get off the bus each morning. Technically, they must walk a considerable distance, rain or shine; in actuality, most drivers, realizing that a traffic signal indicates a legal crossing area, whether or not there are painted stripes and a light, let the riders off at Prince Street. We then cross, looking carefully in both directions lest the 50 mph+ traffic knock us clear into the marshland. It's frustrating, though, since I don't believe we're asking for too much: there are already two stops bordering the Marsh, and creation of the new one would likely lead to closure of one of the other two.

Stay tuned for further developments--



TRANSIT ADVOCATES OF ORANGE COUNTY - Mark Strickert and Jane Reifer - 866-476-2282 ext.4, or zineland@yahoo.com

CenterLine Call to Action.

If you believe in CenterLine, we need you now! A June 3 Irvine special election will probably make or break the CenterLine effort. There are 2 competing initiatives, one in favor of CenterLine (Measure A), and one against (Measure B), which would prohibit the City of Irvine from participating in the Centerline project or any other future rail projects. We need people to express their opinion by writing letters and talking with their Irvine friends and neighbors. To get involved, please call (866) 4-SOCATA, ext. 4

Airport Access

OCTA has suspended service on the grounds of John Wayne Airport, affecting routes 76, 212, and 470. Route 76 stays on MacArthur Blvd. The eastbound runs still have their usual stop just outside the airport at MacArthur and Michelson. The nearest westbound stops, however, are south of Birch and up at Main and

MacArthur. In this case, the best bet would be to take the 76, 53, or 86 to Main St. between Red Hill and MacArthur (the "southern" one - remember there are 2 places that MacArthur crosses Main). Catch the free airport parking lot shuttle bus from the "Main Street Parking - John Wayne Airport" lot. They will bring you right to your terminal, and are wheelchair accessible. They run at least every 15 minutes from 4 am to midnight, 7 days a week, and sometimes at 5 to 10 minute frequency. The ride is about 4 minutes. For more info, call OCTA at 636-RIDE or the parking shuttle operator at (949) 252-6260.

Traveling to or from the Disneyland area, another option is the privately-operated Airport Bus. For information, call (800) 772-5299

U-Turns Return

A crew from the City of San Clemente laid down some red curb and yellow street stripes this past weekend, clearing the way for a return of the Camino de Estrella U-turns south of Kmart Plaza. As a "compromise", only Route 91 buses will use the U-turn, replacing the Estrella/Camino Capistrano/Mira Costa loop that was even less popular with area residents. Route 1 buses remain permanently re-routed directly on to Camino de los Mares, skipping K-mart Plaza.

Fullerton College to Publicize Transit Options

As the result of a meeting with TAOC and Fullerton College management, all future Fullerton College Class Schedules will now include bus stop listings on their campus parking maps, and information on where to buy student bus passes on campus. Informal TAOC polling of Fullerton College bus riders showed that most students didn't know they could buy discounted passes on campus.

More Time for Times

The OCTA Customer Information Center is now open 3 extra hours on most days. The call center now answers 636-RIDE from 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM each weekday, and 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM weekends. Holiday hours will remain 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Santa Ana Pedestrian Safety Campaign

A report released in 2002 by the Surface Transportation Policy Project named Santa Ana the 19th most dangerous city in California for pedestrians.

In response to the high number of pedestrian-motorist injuries and fatalities, the City of Santa Ana is aggressively working toward creating a safer community by introducing a public education campaign that enjoyed success in Los Angeles' Westside communities. Through a partnership between the cities

of Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, Culver City and Santa Monica, the Westside campaign used a character called the "Moving Violator" to spread the campaign's key safety messages. The Moving Violator, an actor dressed in an orange suit, represents the dangerous behaviors that people exhibit daily while walking and driving. By making an example of himself, he helps to educate others.

The goals of the Santa Ana Moving Violator Pedestrian Safety Campaign are to increase awareness of pedestrian safety issues among school children and their parents, increase understanding of dangerous behaviors exhibited by pedestrians and motorists and increase safe pedestrian and traffic behaviors among Santa Ana residents, particularly school children.

The campaign will run advertising on OCTA buses, on street banners, and on KLVE-FM from April through June this year. The project is funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety and is assisted through partnerships with the Orange County Transportation Authority, KLVE-FM radio and the Automobile Club of Southern California. ■

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Kymerleigh Richards and Bart Reed participated in their first meeting as members of the MTA San Fernando Valley Sector Governance Council April 2. Nate Zablen was among the members of the public in attendance.

Kirk Schneider and Ken Ruben attended a regional meeting of the National Association of Railroad Passengers held in San Diego March 29.

Ken Ruben also attended the annual meeting of the Rail Passenger Association of California on April 5.

Attending the April 1 MTA Westside/Central sector public hearing on proposed route changes held in Westwood were Ken Ruben, Anthony Loui, Russ Jones, Kevin Devlin and Dana Gabbard

Jane Reifer was the subject of a laudatory profile in the March 20 edition of OC Metro in an article titled "10 Women Making A Difference"

Kymerleigh Richards had a letter published in the March 17 Downtown

News ("Take Two on Filming Downtown") on the impact of filming on transit users and March 21 Daily News responding to comments on raising the vehicle license fee made by columnist Chris Weinkopf.

Participants at the March 5 meeting on the Union Station Run Thru Tracks Project included Ken Ruben, Barry Christensen, Roger Christensen and Anthony Loui.

Michael Divindo April 4 attended the Ventura County Transportation Commission's monthly meeting at Camarillo City Hall and gave public comment on the proposed VISTA fare increase.

Responding to anti-Centerline comments Barry Christensen had a letter in the April 1 Orange County Register and Mark Strickert had one in the April 3 Register.

March 27 Barry Christensen attended the public workshop for the LOSSAN (Los Angeles to San Diego) rail corridor strategic business plan held in Anaheim along with rail advocate Dick Hutchins. James Gusky went to the April 3 LOSSAN meeting in Norwalk. ■

(from pg. 9) (especially since they need to attract Republican votes to get on the ballot). One also wonders whether a similar initiative the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group has proposed bankrolling would fare any better.

My March column was quoted in the March 28 edition of the newsletter Political Pulse in the "Tracking the Rails" column. What caught their eye? My commending OCTA CEO Art Leahy for not caving in when Costa Mesa pressed the agency to study the cost of having the Centerline rail project in a tunnel near the South Coast Plaza shopping complex.

Quiz of the month: Did you know the 2003 Federal Appropriations bill included \$2.9 million for preliminary engineering of Phase II of the Gold Line extension project? Obviously our friends in the San Gabriel Valley have political clout...

This month we close by expressing our regrets to Al Liega, a long time Gold Line supporter and member of the LA to Pasadena Metro Blue Line Construction Authority Board, who recently lost his bid for re-election as a city council member in Claremont. ■