

TRANSIT UPDATES

Effective October 4, additional weekday service has been added to the Metrolink San Bernardino Line:

- One new roundtrip will leave LA at 2:20 p.m. and return from San Bernardino at 4:00 p.m.
- The two shortline trains between LA and Covina will be extended to San Bernardino
- As part of a demonstration project (funded by San Bernardino County), early morning service will be provided between San Bernardino and Montclair. This will allow commuters from the western part of San Bernardino County to arrive in San Bernardino by 6:10 or 6:50 a.m. Omnitrans will provide a new shuttle (#201) connecting the San Bernardino Metrolink station with Downtown.

Blue-and-white Sounder cars (from Seattle) are being used on some of the Metrolink trains to San Bernardino. Additional cars are also being added to trains throughout the system.

As part of its Short Range Transit Plan process, Omnitrans plans to add early morning service on #20 in Fontana to connect to the Metrolink, as well as more frequent service on #61 (Pomona-Fontana) and #66 (Foothill Bl)

One final Omnitrans note: labor negotiations are ongoing, and as of this writing, the drivers have voted to reject the proposed contract, and in favor of striking. Stay tuned....

On Riverside's RTA, service changes (effective September 26) include:

- #1 and #10: performance-related schedule adjustments
- #3: all trips to serve the Corona Main Metrolink station (weekdays and Saturdays) . Service along Magnolia will be reduced to four weekday round trips. Corona Cruiser also operates along Magnolia, and the two agencies will accept each others fare media at specified points.
- #12: two additional trips added
- #74, 79: rerouted to serve the new West Hemet High School

The demonstration fare (\$1) on #202 between Temecula and Oceanside has improved ridership from 411 boardings in September 2003 to 801 boardings in July 2004. This fare is in effect until the end of December.

During construction of I-15 near Devore this month, VVTA will provide expanded service on both its Rancho Cucamonga and San Bernardino commuter routes. At least three commuter round trips (and an equal amount of reverse commute trips) will be provided on each route. And, no fare will be charged.

LADOT is slightly reducing service on #409 (LA-Glendale-Tujunga-Sylmar) and #413 (LA-Burbank-Van Nuys) routes. About half the #409 trips would turn back at Sunland/Foothill, while #413 would run four (down from five) round trips. These changes would be effective sometime later this year.

Finally, the cancellation of LADOT #430 (Pacific Palisades) has been delayed at least until November 15.■

BULLETIN BOARD

Notice: effective immediately, our new website address is <http://www.socata.net>. The system at socata.lerctr.org is being taken out of service by its owner, Larry Rosenman. We at SO.CA.TA would like to thank Mr. Rosenman for all of the years of free hosting of our website.

Co-founder Steven Crosmer will share his perspective on the upcoming presidential election and its potential impact on public transportation and Amtrak at our Oct. 9 meeting.

The speaker for our Nov. 13 meeting will be Bruce Lash who will discuss the proposal for a streetcar line in Angelino Heights.

Topics for early 2005 presentations will include Terisa Price of the city of Redondo Beach on the proposal for a Beach Cities Transit System and a representative of Via-com/Decaux with a progress report on the Los Angeles street furniture project.

At our Oct. 9 meeting we will select the destination for the annual day after Thanksgiving trip. Also at this meeting we will discuss a proposal to adjust dues as of Jan. 1, 2005 to \$24 per year (\$9.60 limited income).

The fall study tour of Foothill Transit will be Saturday Oct. 16 beginning at 11 a.m. at the fish tank in the East Portal building (next to the Gateway Transit Center). Participants may wish to bring along jackets since riding will stretch into the late evening.

Wednesday Oct. 13 a hearing on the environmental documents for the Union Station run through tracks project will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the MTA building, 3rd floor.

The next meeting of Friends of the Green Line will be on Thursday, October 21, 2004 at 7 p.m. at the Boston Market Restaurant near the Rosecrans/Douglas Green Line station.

The Rail User's Network will have an organizational meeting Saturday Oct. 23 in the 3rd floor Union Station conference room at the MTA building from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Further information: Richard Randolph at (207) 642-5161.

Save the date: the 2005 American Public Transit Association Commuter Rail Conference will be held April 3-5 in Los Angeles with Metrolink as the host agency ■

Sept. 17 I attended the 2nd annual summit of the Better California Campaign. This is the organization that Phoenix-like arose from the ashes of the defunct California Futures Network. BCC is building a coalition to influence California policy on smart growth issues. Among the attendees was Derek Chernow, the new head of Odyssey, who indicated they plan to join BCC. After listening to the presentations I've concluded while BCC has many goals we share as a regional group focused on local issues I don't see us joining at this time. I see the appropriate avenue of our involvement being via our participation in Odyssey.

Kudos to Assemblyman Gerorge Nakano of the South Bay for passage of AB 2785 which makes it an infraction after Jan. 1, 2005 to drive a school bus or transit bus while talking on a cell phone. The Sept. 15 San Jose Mercury News article "Phone limits for bus drivers" notes the bill was inspired, in part, by complaints in Los Angeles about bus operators who drove erratically or missed scheduled stops because they were socializing on cellular phones. Hopefully soon the sight of a bus operator distractedly chatting while whizzing along will be a thing of the past.

Ron Deaton is Chief Legislative Analyst for the Los Angeles City Council and the ultimate insider. In a rare interview that appears in the Sept. issue of the Metro Investment Report Deaton opines that the LAX consensus agreement engineered by councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski will be approved by the City Council before the end of the year. And if nothing else Deaton is someone who knows how to count...

Things are getting a bit testy at Metrolink. Bombardier initially on technical grounds was disqualified from competing for the new railcar contract, despite the company having provided all the passenger cars the agency had purchased heretofore. Bombardier filed a protest and forced the procurement to be restarted. Meanwhile Amtrak has been found non-responsive to the request-for-proposal to operate Metrolink's trains. This despite Amtrak having been the contractor to operate service since Metrolink began operations. Amtrak claims aspects of Metrolink's proposal specifications as written would expose Amtrak to unacceptable liability hazard and evidently Metrolink will not change the objectionable language. It should be noted for similar reasons Amtrak recently withdrew from bidding for the contract with the Boston commuter rail agency which heretofore it also had held. Some see a trend of re-trenchment by Amtrak in these moves (along with its recent announcement that it will cease carrying mail and freight).

Another problem for Bombardier is the beleaguered Las Vegas Monorail project, for which it supplied the equipment and operates the system. Since startup in July three times parts (wheels, drive assemblies) have fallen off trains and forced shut downs. Currently a consultant has been brought in for a thorough safety review before service resumes (every day the monorail is idle it foregoes \$100,000 in fare revenue). transition of the month: former Santa Clarita Transit general manager Ron Kilcoyne after a two-year stint at Korve Engineering has recently been hired to be General Manager and CEO of the Greater

Bridgeport Transit District in Connecticut. The August Delaware Valley Rail Passenger newsletter reports New Jersey has just passed a law requiring all vehicles (except emergency vehicles) to yield the right of way to buses reentering traffic after dropping off or picking up passengers. If we don't have a similar law it certainly sounds worthwhile.

For those keeping score, the non-profit Access Services Foundation which is supposed to raise funds for ASI has been given \$50,000 by ASI for the Foundation's 2004/05 budget along with six ASI staff members spending approximately 5-20% of their time on Foundation business. Half the funds (\$25,000) are to hire fundraisers. I hope this effort pans out instead of turning into a money pit...

The Antelope Valley Transit Authority recently moved into its new facility, which

included a headquarters building and adjacent bus yard. As often happens some tweaks have had to be made to improve the facility which hadn't been contemplated when it was designed. Amusingly among these tasks is obtaining a large sign saying "AVTA" to put on the front of the building. Oops...

quote of the month: "In few areas are so many academics and other theoreticians as divorced from reality as in urban transportation." Vukan R. Vuchic (in "Livable Cities", TR News #229 Nov.-Dec. 2003).

I'll conclude by noting David Armijo's assumption of the General Manager post for the MTA's Westside/Central Service Sector after the sudden departure of Jim McElroy. Richard Hunt is succeeding Armijo as head of the San Fernando Valley Sector. Best of luck to Armijo and Hunt in their new positions. ■

For years I had been envious to hear glowing accounts from fellow advocates like Anthony Loui and Roger Christensen of their experiences attending the annual Rail-Volution conference, devoted to smart growth through transit. So it was with no little excitement I greeted the news that the 2004 Rail-Volution conference was to be held in Los Angeles Sunday Sept. 19 through Tuesday Sept. 21. Finally I would have an opportunity to see what all the fuss was about. And thankfully Rail-Volution provides an opportunity for activists to apply for scholarships to defray the conference fee. I crossed my fingers, applied and was overjoyed to be awarded a full stipend. All that was left for me to do was apply for time off from work and start preparations.

Soon I became aware that the conference is a nexus for various organizations and events. Among these was the Unity Reception being put on by various local groups for which I acted as SO.CA.TA's liaison. This was to be on the Monday night and our chief contribution would be warm bodies to help at the event. The planning progressed via a number of conference calls. At some point I stopped getting e-mails and for a time wasn't sure where things stood. After regaining contact my impression was things were moving apace but with disappointing ticket sales.

Meanwhile I learned another entity that intersected with the conference was the National Alliance of Public Transportation Advocates (NAPTA), which SO.CA.TA belongs to. On Tuesday evening there would be a membership meeting--my first chance to have a face to face with representatives of the group (which is based in Washington,

DC).

I decided to spend \$20 of my own money and attend a Sunday morning symposium on advocacy strategies. Thankfully the conference was held at the Hollywood Renaissance Hotel adjacent to the Hollywood/Highland Red Line station which made it easy for me to get there even on a Sunday morning. After about 90 seconds I was registered and handed a program book and spiffy carry-bag with the Rail-Volution logo. The small room the symposium was held in was full of activists from all over the county, along with myself, Nate Zablen and Mark Strickert representing SO.CA.TA The presentation by Stephanie Vance (aka the advocacy guru) was informative and gave me some new ideas to ponder. I even ponied up \$8 for her booklet on how to influence your Congressperson. Walking by the Unity Event table after Nate and Mark were drafted to watch it and take ticket orders.

Frankly I was a tad tired so I made my way downstairs to the lobby, bought a snack in the gift shop, and enjoyed the trendoid decorations and relaxed atmosphere while awaiting the late afternoon "early bird" workshops. I choose a session titled Building Good Habits, Building Good Systems on how to lure people out of their cars. Werner Broeg of German's Socialdata presented their findings on how marketing can get people to switch to public transport (see <http://www.socialdata.de/switche.htm> for more details). Karla Karash of Transystems (<http://www.transystems.com/>) provided similar perspectives to make transit appealing. Alan Hoffman of the Mission Group (<http://www.missiongrouponline.com/>) was of interest to me because he is the architect

of the transit vision plan for San Diego. I soon became aware watching his presentation that he is very market research oriented--everything seems reducible to public opinion from a focus group or survey. Statistics always raise my suspicions since they nearly always are presented as if numbers alone can shape decisions and are impartial. I became aware of a rather large bias on the part of Mr. Hoffman toward certain technologies and strategies. Maybe they have some merit but his "magic-bullet" like exalting seemed to excess. At one point he had a slide of an empty Red Line car allegedly at Wilshire/Western and then juxtaposed it with a slide with a crammed Metro Rapid vehicle. He seemed to be slamming rail and our rapid bus system. By then I was sure Mr. Hoffman's good points must be weighed against these faults. But it certainly was a very well put together PowerPoint presentation.

Then via subway with Kym Richards I made my way to the welcome reception at the Old Ticket Room in Union Station in the early evening. We were among the first there and grabbed a table to sit at. Soon the room filled up with attendees, chattering and networking. I met some activists from around the country in between sampling the nibble food offered (egg rolls, chicken kee-bobs, flautas, assorted veggies and cheese/cracker combos). After things wound down I made my way home and tried to get some rest before an early start next morning.

Monday morning I brought with me a hand truck to haul SO.CA.TA's leftover supply of the Ed Simburger Metrolink guidebooks, which he recently donated to us. I figured to give them away that evening at the Unity event. So I arrived at the hotel just before

the start of the opening plenary session. We received a welcome from various dignitaries include MTA CEO Roger Snoble. This segued into a progress report on the state of livable community initiatives conducted by Revolution founder Congressman Earl Blumenauer and the President of the American Public Transportation Association (public transit's trade group) William Millar.

The first workshop I attended was Transportation Funding and Land Use Control. What I found most compelling was a presentation by GB Arrington of PB PlaceMaking on the evolution of the land use component of the awarding of full funding grant agreements under the new starts process for federal funding of rail projects. At lunch Kym Richards and I enjoyed Wolfgang Puck catered box lunches. At the front of the giant Grand Ballroom a panel discussion was held on Community Building, Transit, and Global Sustainability but frankly I could hear little of what they said. We spotted Anthony Loui and he came to sit with us for a while before he had to run off somewhere.

My early afternoon workshop choice was Working with the Media. The advice wasn't earth shattering (hone your message, be presentable on camera, etc.) but certainly important to keep in mind when shaping campaigns, etc.

Ken Ruben and I had arranged to meet at the Unity table circa 3:30 p.m. and we'd find out what was going on with the evening event. I noticed that a sign had been posted that we had sold out. Evidently ticket sales has been brisk at the conference. Ken let me know we were needed at City Hall, where the event was being held. So once more off we went on the subway!

After passing thru security me & my hand truck went to the top of city hall. John Ulloth was already there, along with Ken Ruben and Kym Richards. I helped stuff the goody bag for attendees then helped hand out the bags (assisted by Ken Ruben and a late arriving Mark Strickert) plus gave away the Metrolink books (which many seemed glad to take). The venue was the Tom Bradley Room at the top of City Hall, with a breathtaking view of Los Angeles from balconies ringing the outside. Among the milling crowd I spotted Bart Reed, Anthony Loui, Nate Zablen, Darrell Clarke, James Rojas and Steve Brye. The event was a huge success -- Katherine Perez and the staff of the Transportation & Land Use Collaborative of Southern California (<http://www.tluc.net>) who did a lot of the heavy lifting to make the event possible (with help from Bart Reed, among others) should feel proud of what was accomplished.

Strickert and I made our way to the Denny's at Western/Wilshire for a late meal before he went to the hotel in Hollywood he was staying at while I went home to crash.

Tuesday I arrived in time to grab a roll or two before making my way to the Grand Ballroom for the last time. Some folks from Salt Lake gave us a preview of the 2005 Rail-Volution followed by comments by Jennifer Dorn, administrator of the Federal Transit Administration. Then they tried to have another panel, this one on the Market for TOD. As before the room was too big and echoey to hear much of what was being said and so I passed the time trading banner with my tablemate Strickert.

My morning workshop was on Mobility Centers, Bike Stations, and Other Key Link-

ages. The interesting presentation was by Graham Hill of Boulder, Colorado. They raised funds to put a Transportation Resource Center (<http://www.gettingthere.com/>) in the heart of downtown to support various programs to encourage use of transit, bikes and walking.

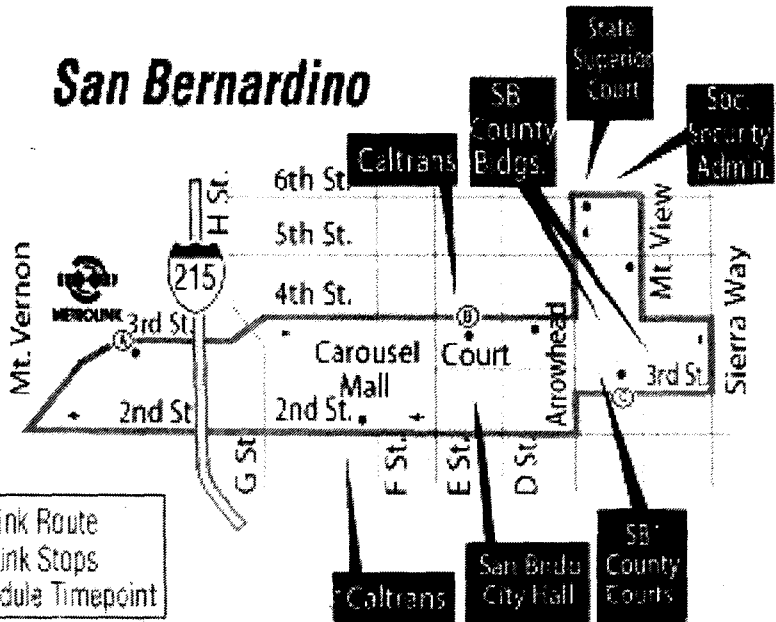
After grabbing another box lunch I picked the New Starts Working Group session for my lunchtime session. The Working Group is a coalition of agencies, companies, etc. that are engaged in advocacy on behalf of the federal new starts program. The room was packed as we had a briefing on TEA21 reauthorization and other tidbits. It was electrifying to sit amidst all these hands-on folks who make things happen! In the same room during the next workshop period was a related panel on Achieving Success in New Starts, which shared case stories from the front lines. For a policy wonk this was pure heaven...

My last workshop was "Responding to the Critics", which shared strategies to deal with the naysayers who making a living going from town to town bashing transit and working to defeat ballot measures.

I ducked out early to attend the NAPTA meeting. Mr. Millar from APTA shared with us the latest scuttlebutt from Washington followed by a discussion about what direction the coalition should take. All that was left was to attend the ending reception, take a look around the exhibit hall (I grabbed some packets of wildflower seeds the Salt Lake folks were giving away for my Mom) ate my last helping of nibble food and happily made my way home, satisfied if exhausted. ■

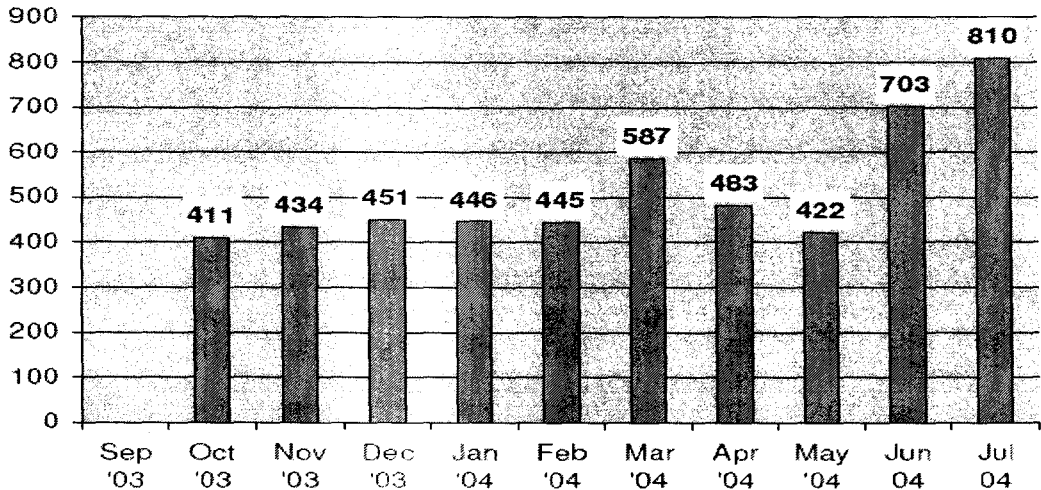
OMNITRANS "CITYLINK" ROUTE #201

San Bernardino



- CityLink Route
- CityLink Stops
- Ⓐ Schedule Timepoint

RTA Route #202 Ridership



Source: Riverside Transit Agency

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Addenda to last month's column: Joe Dunn also attended the Sept. 2 MTA Westside Sector Governance Council meeting.

Roger Christensen was quoted in the Sept. 2 Citybeat article "Westside Connection". He also had a letter published in the Oct. 4 Los Angeles Downtown News responding to columnist Sam Hall Kaplan: "... Kaplan's dismissal of mass transit because there is still gridlock in New York, Paris and Tokyo despite huge transit investments displays a basic misunderstanding. It is exactly this investment that makes these cities so desirable and livable. Their freeways will always be jammed but there is no gridlock for the millions of people in those cities who use the rail."

Attending the Sept. 28 LOSSAN Draft PEIR/PEIS Hearing in Los Angeles were Ken Ruben, Roger Christensen, Kevin Devlin and Woody Rosner.

The Sept. 23 MTA Board meeting was attended by Ken Ruben, Roger Christensen, Kevin Devlin and Bart Reed. Mr. Ruben spoke on behalf of SO.CA.TA in support of item #12 on issuing bonds which among other things provides funding for the first phase of the Expo light rail project.

Attending the Rail-Volution conference (or related events) were Ken Ruben, Dana Gabbard, Mark Strickert, Anthony Loui, Nate Zablen, Roger Christensen, Bart Reed and John Ulloth.

Ken Ruben and Nate Zablen attended the RailPAC Oct. 2 member meeting in Fullerton.

If you attend a meeting, have a letter published in a newspaper, are quoted in the media or otherwise engage in active advocacy please inform the Executive Secretary so he can be sure it is noted in the next edition of this column. Thank you! ■