

BULLETIN BOARD

It is time for members to renew--\$25.00 (regular), \$10.00 (low income).

A proposal has been made to consider an increase of dues to \$30 (\$12/limited income) for adoption during 2008 and take effect for renewing members in Jan. 2009.


Woody Rosner (Chair), John Ulloth, and Nate Zablén make up the election committee which will conduct the voting at our Dec. 8th meeting.

Los Angeles Council Transportation Committee chair Councilwoman Wendy Greuel has posted on her website an online form to provide feedback on the Los Angeles Transportation Strategic Plan. Its results will be made available to other Council members, and used to help guide a consultant who will develop the final plan over the course of the next several months. The form is posted at <http://www.lacity.org/>

council/cd2/strategicplan.htm

We continue to post on the front page of our website items of current interest, such as holiday transit services and member Harold Katz's recent letter of comment to MTA in re the Westside Corridor Study.

Save the date: Mar. 20th, 2008, the first Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transit Summit, to be held at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. The Coalition for Clean and Safe Ports is a coalition of environmental, labor, faith-based, community and public-health organizations working to promote sustainable trade at the Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports: <http://www.cleanandsafeports.org/>

National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) has appointed Justin Walker Acting Team Leader for the Coast Starlight Route Support Team, and can be reached at JWalker64@gmail.com 

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Damien Goodmon was interviewed as part of channel 13's coverage of the November 5th community meeting regarding the Expo Line held at Dorsey High.

Damien along with Robert Meinert was present at the Nov. 6th MTA Downtown Connector meeting held at the Central Library. Meinert's report is on page 3. Mark Strickert spoke at the Eastside Corridor meeting in Montebello Nov. 10th, and also attended the Pico Rivera meeting on Nov. 15th. Strickert's report is on page 6.

Joe Dunn attended the Nov. 12th Metro Westside Service Sector Governing Council meeting.


Jerard Wright and Bart Reed were elected to serve on the Train Riders Association of California Board of Directors. Reed also attended the November Board Meeting of Metrolink, the San Fernando Valley Metro Service Sector Governance Council

meeting, the Caltrans District 7 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting and made a presentation to the Hawthorne City Council on the Green Line on Nov. 13th.

Ken Ruben attended the Nov. 28th MTA Citizens Advisory meeting.

Reed and Kymberleigh Richards attended Westside Transit/Subway Summit held Nov. 19th at the Peterson Auto Museum, several of the November Metro Committee meetings and the Nov. 29th Metro Board meeting.

Richards attended the Nov. 8th conference "The 2006 Infrastructure Bonds: Assessing Performance and Progress" put on by the Keston Institute at USC, and the Nov. 15 Wilshire Corridor Forum on "Moving Wilshire Forward" sponsored by the Wilshire Center BID/Miracle Mile Chamber.

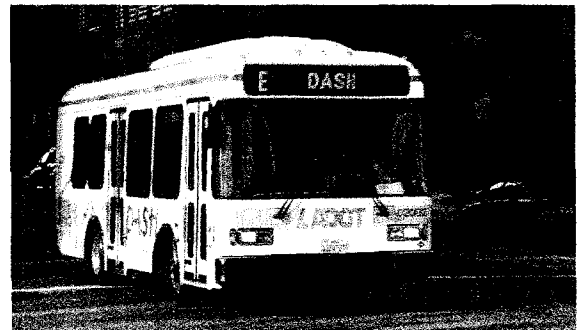
Richards and John Andoh attended the Nov. 13-14 annual California Transit Association Fall Conference. 

MTA REGIONAL CONNECTOR SCOPING SESSIONS – Robert Meinert

Metro had the first of its scouting meetings in a cramped room of the Los Angeles Central Library, underestimating the powerful response this key project will reverberate. Many downtown interests packed the place up to 50 people. MTA began to study the concept of light rail connectors back in 1992 as part of the Long Beach to Pasadena Blue Line, and as money dried up, was shelved in 1993. By 2004, grassroots interests convinced Metro to review the idea. Now the project is part of federal new starts process that will compete with projects across the nation, and will have a fast-tracked timetable possibly leading to approval by June 2008. If a corridor is approved, construction could be well underway by 2011, and completed by 2014. Key reasons for this study are revitalizing downtown, to give people more reasons to visit there, pedestrian access, to provide seamless safe walkability, and in response to the population boom and traffic crunch anticipated in the next 20 years. Current resources that benefit from the connector are the urban, high-rise, dense character of the core, and the rise in residential units. Multiple corridors were considered, including 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Streets across the core to link between Union Station's Gold Line, and 7th Street Metro Center's Blue Line. Metro envisions a route flexible concept that will include 97 miles of light rail in its system. The study area for the project is 2 miles. Factors include whether to run the line at grade, elevate, or tunnel it in portion. Light rail on the surface, with traffic, has a 500 capacity per two-car train. 500,000 citizens are employed in the study area.

Metro opened up the meeting to public comment, and citizens molded the discussion. A key point was to develop a nexus with the line and the Civic Center, with the large number of

government employers. This person favored Temple or 1st over some of the southerly routes. It is also important to have a nexus with the emerging Broadway Theater District, thus favoring a station at 3rd and Broadway, or further south. More than one participant favored expanding the study area boundaries beyond the 2 mile radii, and including Union Station in the plans got strong support. Many favored tunneling as the most efficient way of transporting people, and providing a four-track configuration in the corridor came a close second. Damion Goodmon would like to see Metro explore tunneling beyond the Blue Line portal at 10th Street and continue a four track alignment down to Washington Boulevard. Others favored a loop arrangement linked with the Downtown Connector to bypass downtown if necessary in providing a mix of destination options, giving South Broadway, Santee Alley, and the Fashion District direct access to the system. One pointed out a traffic study is obsolete in the previous district, noting that residence garages are oriented to alleyways, begetting future congestion. Darrell Clarke noted that a diagonal subway connector could be expedient and accomplish what Metro wants to do. Bart Reed followed those comments with corridor projects should focus on density in districts. 🚌



One of the present-day downtown connectors, the LADOT DASH E at Flower/7th — Mark Strickert photo

For the record, I meant foul language last month not "fowl" in describing recent behavior in Santa Monica by a local activist. I must have been half-asleep when I wrote that.

Well, the Nov. 15 *Capitol Weekly* ("Road, transit money pinched, as state revises STIP estimates for budget year") confirms my worst fears. We are probably due to be robbed again by our "friends" in Sacramento.

More and more attending the Mobility 21 summit feels like we attendees are just there to be a backdrop for the requisite photo-op dominated by the usual electeds et al. Held this year in Ontario, the whole event seem dominated by discussion of good movement concerns. Plus what is use does it serve to tip-toe around issue of state stealing of funds? Do the great and powerful worry that we should accept and not challenge this affront happening year after year? Evidently they do, because during the breakout session on funding a question was raised whether transit funds would be raided again to fill the budget gap next year. Caltrans head Will Kempton, one of the panelists, was totally mum on this as the room went silent. And no one called him on it. Frankly I have to question the value of the Coalition when federal TEA-LU renewal was declared the key funding issue that we needed to adopt a resolution on. HUH? But since the resolutions are pointless, why should I care? Hell, the L.A. Times had at least two reporters attend but in the end the event was deemed not even worth a squib. Because it was a meaningless dog and pony show. I even had one local elected try to give me a sales patch on maglev. I barely bothered to explain why everything the consultants at SCAG have told him is mis-leading and I dub the whole thing a de-

bacle in the making. Amazing!

One good thing that came of my visit to the Inland Empire is I was taken to see a new shopping development, Victoria Gardens, in Rancho Cucamonga that is faux urbanism in the suburbs - fake streets running through a complex designed to look like an urban shopping district. Joel Kotkin, Mr. "Suburbs are the new hotbed of innovation", would soil his pants at this repudiation of everything he has built his career on. And it was full of people on a Sunday evening! <http://www.victoriagardensie.com/>

Thanks to Ken Ruben I have seen Damien Goodmon's imperious demanding e-mails sent to the Expo Authority, posted on the Culver City news website *The Front Page*. Words fail me: <http://www.thefrontpageonline.com/articles1-4094/FrustratedExpoActivistPressesOfficialsonCulverCityLine>

Oct. 22 the *Rocky Mountain News* had an article ("Rail cuts path through city's past") by Kevin Flynn in which he walked along a future light rail alignment and provided a combination travelogue/meditation on the impact the line would have on the landscape he walked through. Why isn't someone in L.A.'s media world doing that for the Expo Line, etc.?

Kudos to the L.A. Sniper ("L.A. Times' FALSE subway story", *Citybeat* Nov. 8) for calling out the L.A. Times mis-informed article on westside rail prospects that I attacked last month. He even quoted our own Kymberleigh Richards who sagely noted "the Times changes its transportation beat reporters so much, I'm not convinced anyone gets up to speed to know what they're talking about. You'd think that Metro was abandoning the Wil-

shire alignment."

Cost to replace a bus shelter: \$11,784.32 (per the Golden Empire Transit Nov. 6 Board meeting minutes).

Nov. 13 I went to the Galen Center near USC to see whether the contingent insisting on grade separation near Dorsey High School would show up at the Expo Authority Open House the Authority held there. They didn't. One thing I confirmed is the contingent now up in arms about Dorsey have during the past year been actually pushing for the entire line to be grade separated in a tunnel. The impression is PUC Commissioner Simon is leaning toward mandating some measures at Dorsey, and by the way have any of the folks demanding this or the electeds who have expressed support promised to work to

find the money to pay for this if they get the way? Of course not.

And this should be interesting--the next Expo Open House will be held in January at Dorsey. Bet that will be a fun fest. Think I'll miss it.

I'll conclude with a quote by David Brewster, publisher of a daily online newspaper called *Crosscut*, included in a Nov. 5th *Christian Science Monitor* article ("Mass transit plan makes waves in Seattle ecotopia") regarding the contentiousness of public dialogue on transportation in Seattle: "You've got voters who are cantankerous, contentious, and think they can design a better transportation system because they did it last night in their garage." I roared with laughter at that!

Happy holidays and more fun ahead in 2008!

TRANSIT UPDATES

BALDWIN PARK TRANSIT - 10¢ fare increase takes effect Dec. 10th, to 70¢ general and 40¢ senior/disabled. Discount fare users must be pre-qualified, at the city's Esther Snyder Community Center. For more information, call (626) 337-1555

GARDENA MUNICIPAL BUS - fare increase takes effect 1/1/08. Fare for regular riders goes from 50¢ to 75¢; Students who paid 45¢ would then pay 70¢; Senior/disabled fare increases from 25¢ to 35¢. Also, a new bus terminal and maintenance facility near Rosecrans/Van Ness is scheduled to begin operation next August.

Fares for blind, children under 5, Los Angeles buses?

LADOT - their weekend shuttle from Vermont/Sunset Red Line station to Griffith Observatory returned on Nov. 19th. Operates

every 35 minutes, with first bus leaving NE corner Vermont/Sunset 10:00 AM. Last bus leaves the observatory at 9:56 PM. Fare 25¢.

MTA - express trips on the Metro Gold Line will cease at close after the PM runs on Dec. 14th. As of Dec. 16th, local service will operate every 7½ minutes peak, and 12 minutes off-peak.

SANTA MONICA BIG BLUE BUS - new Transit Store opened on Nov. 12th. The store, at 223 Broadway, is open 7:00 AM-6:00 PM M-F, and opens at noon Saturdays. Passes and Big Blue Bus merchandise will be sold, and maps, schedules, trip planning, and lost & found services offered. The store will have many eco-friendly features, such as flooring using recycled rubber tires, counters made from recycled paper and plastic, and windows designed to light the place with natural sunlight, supplemented by solar panels. ☺

The MTA made some guest appearances out in the hinterlands east of Los Angeles, gathering public input for possible next steps after the Gold Line Eastside Extension opens two years from now. For the first 30 minutes, MTA employees and consultants walked attendees along a series of easels showing a variety of modes to consider, from extending the Gold Line Extension as a streetcar or above-grade, to some sort of busway, to Rapid buses. They also pointed out maps with some possible alignments, including Beverly, Whittier Blvd., Olympic, Washington, and the Pomona Freeway. The second portion of the show was a Power Point presentation with essentially the same materials, though more in text form. All the ideas given were vague, but I think deliberately so...food for thought, to encourage more specific ideas from the general public. Part 3 was public comment, and part 4 (time permitting) was general audience questions.

I attended the 11/10 presentation at Montebello Senior Center. The literature I had seen in advance gave me the impression it was an open house-type arrangement, as in drop in anytime during the stated time-span. By the time I arrived, they were already deep into Public Comment. A problem with this process is that people who do not and will not use public transit can and do tinker with the plans. Most of the comments I heard this morning seemed to be from people who fell into the "But-Head" category ("I support public transit, BUT...") of low-level NIMBY-ism (generally "No light rail at street-level on [name any street]...put it along the [5, 60, and/or 605] freeway!"). While unprepared, I signed up to throw in my 2¢ as a private, transit-using citizen of the corridor coverage area. I thanked the MTA for re-

membering our little corner of Los Angeles County exists (moderate applause), noted service through Montebello and Pico Rivera into Whittier needs improvement, especially the having to take 3 buses to traverse busy Whittier Blvd. (more applause), and an extension of the Gold Line along Whittier Blvd. to at least Uptown Whittier would do the trick (smattering of claps). I then had to dash off to the SO.CA.TA meeting.

I made sure to arrive at 6:30 PM for the 11/15 presentation at North Park Middle School in Pico Rivera, or as close to 6:30 as I could get with the limitations of the Montebello 60 (c'mon folks, 35 and 70-minute headways?) After getting a better look at the easel boards this time, I thought it best to make my more detailed suggestions in writing, expanding on my thoughts for extending the Gold Line on Whittier Blvd. and in-the-meantime connection improvements. I did stick around for as much of the public comment as I could before the mad-dash to Rosemead Blvd. for my bus home. There were more real transit users at this event, and most of those who spoke against street-running rail were much less focused in their comments than at Montebello.

As an actual transit user, I find any extension along a freeway, especially the 60, would be pretty much useless.

The MTA people expected the results to be tabulated and then presented in another round of public meetings next spring. I was pleasantly surprised they noted there was a possibility nothing new would come of all this (being at the whim of the MTA board), and any rail extension would be at best 7-10 years away. For now, watch for news at www.metro.net/eastsidephase2, or check the dedicated hotline at (213) 922-3012. 🚊

The following members have been have been nominated for officers and director positions on the SO.CA.TA Executive Board for 2008:

President

Lionel Jones

Vice President

Charles Hobbs

Recording Secretary

Kymerleigh Richards

Executive Secretary

Dana Gabbard

Treasurer

Hank Fung

Directors-at-Large (3 positions)

Armando Avalos

Margaret Hudson

Robert Meinert

Kymerleigh Richards

Ken Ruben

Candidate Statements


Robert Meinert, background in Urban and Regional Planning, and come from the philosophy that public transit is an integral part of planning, to foster more compact, pedestrian activity in our cities and regional areas. I thank those who nominated me, as I have been with Southern California Transit Advocates for 7 years, and a member for 6, covering a variety of issues such as service changes, event assistance, and provided written coverage of transportation topics during the course of this experience. I have

assisted efforts to inform the public about the Westside subway, and keep up to date with meetings about important regional projects. If elected, I would continue to give the attention to detail that I put in my work. This past year, I have been more outgoing and learning public relations skills, to be more effective in advocacy. As most of you know, periodically we tour the transit system to find out what is working and what doesn't. In this sense, we represent a broader regional perspective, and I hope to continue as a Director at Large.

Kymerleigh Richards

I have considered it a privilege to again serve on the Executive Board, and welcome the opportunity to fill the void left by Edmund Buckley's decision to not continue as Recording Secretary. Although I am running unopposed, I nonetheless appreciate your support and vote. Thank you.

Ken Ruben

Dear Fellow S.O.C.A.T.A. Member: As a deeply committed member of S.O.C.A.T.A., I bring knowledge and a broad background in volunteering and a devotion to S.O.C.A.T.A. activities. I am a lifetime transit user. For most of my adult life, I have been an enthusiast of all things transit — bus and rail. I have served two terms previously as a Director-at-Large, and I presently am S.O.C.A.T.A.'s representative at meetings of the Metro Westside Sector Governance Council and have been for some years. I will appreciate your vote. 

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Due to space limitations, the Calendar of Meetings is taking the month off. Several of the monthly meetings will not be held in December. The transit agency meetings that are being held this month are listed on the SO.CA.TA website, at <http://www.socata.net/calendar/month.php>. Please continue to **e-mail** calendar changes and additions to busnrail@yahoo.com.