

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates
October 2010

Vol. 18, No. 10

ISSN 1525-2892



Inside This Issue:

- Bulletin Board (pg. 2)
- Members in Action (pg. 2)
- Transit Updates (pg. 3)
- Metro Board Report (pg. 5)
- Public/Legislative Affairs (pg. 6)
- Foothill Ecoliner (pg. 7)
- Torrance Trip (pg. 9)
- Photos of the Month (pg. 11)

*Foothill Transit Proterra Ecoliner F2001 in Pomona
on September 3, 2010.*

— Craig Barnes Photo



Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Our thanks to Barbara Ruditis, manager of Thruway bus operations in Bakersfield, for an informative presentation and Q&A session at our September meeting.

Kathryn Engel, Transit Manager for the City of Glendale, will be the speaker at our October meeting. We will also discuss the status of our holiday banquet and the day after Thanksgiving trip.

Congratulations to Jerard Wright who has been elected recording secretary for the rest of 2010.

Nominations for officers and directors for 2011 will be taken at the November meeting. Bylaws section 4.2 specifies "Members in good standing who will have been members for twelve (12) months at the time of assuming office shall be eligible to be nominated for President, Vice-President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary or Treasurer. Members in good standing who will have been members for six (6) months at the time of assuming office shall be eligible to be nominated for Director. Any candidate must have attended four (4) of the scheduled membership meetings, at a minimum, in the previous six (6) months at the time of nomination."

The printed version of the Transit Guide is now sold out and there are no plans to prepare a new edition.

The PDF version is still available for \$10:

<http://socata.net/guide.html>

Gold Empire Transit is now hosting a quarterly luncheon (the most recent held in September) for the other transit agencies in Kern County. Among the attendees at the last luncheon included representatives from the cities of Arvin, Tehachapi and Shafter plus

regional bodies the Consolidated Transportation Service Agency, Kern County Council of Governments and Kern Regional Center.

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website for transit meetings and events.

<http://socata.net/calendar.htm>

Members in Action:

Kymerleigh Richards made an appearance on the Fox and Friends program on September 7th regarding turnstiles in Metrorail stations.

Carlos Osuna has again been given a special award honoring his volunteering at Metro's annual roadeo.

Ken Ruben attended the San Gabriel Valley Governance Council meeting on Sept. 13th.


Ken Ruben, Craig Weingarten and Nate Zablen attended the Westside subway meeting held Sept. 21st held in the Miracle Mile.

Dana Gabbard and Charles Powell attended the Westside subway meeting held Sept. 21st in Westwood

Alek Friedman and Mike Baron attended the Westside subway meeting held Sept. 22nd at West Hollywood Plummer Park.

Dana Gabbard, Nate Zablen, Ken Ruben, Bart Reed, Kent Landfield Hank Fung and Alek Friedman attended the high speed rail open house held in the Metro headquarters building Sept. 21st.

Gabbard and Ruben attended Metro's Citizens' Advisory Council meeting Sept. 22nd.

Andrew Novak, Charles Powell, along with transit enthusiasts Craig Barnes, Scott Richards and Josh Thurman were on hand for the closing of El Monte Station at 12:01 AM on September 12, 2010. 

Transit Updates

Carson North/South Shuttle

Starting September 20th service on the City of Carson North/South Shuttle was reduced to two hours in morning and one hour in the afternoon. Midday and Saturday service was eliminated. For more information contact Transportation Services Manager Cara Rice at (310) 952-1756.

Culver CityBus

Due to low ridership Culver CityBus is proposing a decrease in service along Line 7. The reduced service would run every hour between 6 am—9 am and 2 pm—6 pm with no midday service. Saturday service would also be eliminated. If approved this change would take effect on Monday, January 3, 2011. A public hearing is planned for October 20th.

For more information on this hearing visit www.culvercitybus.com or call (310) 253-6569

Long Beach Transit

On August 28th, Long Beach Transit made several changes to their system. Below is a summary of those changes.

Routes 1 and 71/72 had weekday frequency reductions from 20 minutes to 30 minutes.

ZAP buses were deleted on Route 66 and reduced on Route 96.

Peak hour Route 103 now operates on school days only.

Route 172 service on weekdays ends at the Cerritos Mall. Service to the Norwalk Greenline Station provided by route 173.

Routes 181/182 and Passport B had frequency reductions from 20 minutes to 30 minutes in the evenings.

Passport C had an evening frequency reduction from 15 minutes to 20 minutes.

Montebello Bus Lines

On April 5th, Montebello Bus Lines began selling transit tokens at a discounted price of \$1.00 per token. The tokens are good for one-way fare. An additional charge of 20¢ for Express fare will apply. Contact Montebello at (323) 887-4600 for token sales locations.

On June 28th, at the request of the City of Whittier, the eastbound Lines 10/50 bus stop at Philadelphia/Comstock was removed.



Municipal Area Express (MAX)

Effective October 1st, MAX fares were increased on all three lines. Fare on Line 2 is now \$2.25, Line 3 \$1.75, and Line 3X is now \$3.00. Monthly pass prices were also increased.

NoHo Express (Santa Clarita Transit)

The Santa Clarita Transit Line 757, which operates from Santa Clarita to the North Hollywood Red Line Station, celebrated its one year anniversary in August. Over the past year the line has proved to be a success with approximately 16,000 passengers per month using the service. This line has the highest ridership of any of the commuter routes.

Hahn Trolley

On September 1st, the Hahn Trolley was renamed the Willowbrook and King Medical Center Shuttle. The schedule and route were revised and can be found at:

<http://ladpw.org/PDD/Transit/WillowbrookShuttle.pdf>

(Continued on Page 4)

Transit Updates Continued

OCTA (Orange County)

On October 10th several changes will occur to the OCTA system. Below are a summary of the those changes.

Schedule adjustments will be made on the following routes: 1, 20, 29, 30, 43, 46, 47, 59, 60, 64, 70, 76, 79, 83, 90, 129, 143, 175, 211, and 213.

Other changes to the OCTA system include:

Route 30: eastbound buses will be realigned to turn around on Orangethorpe, Imperial Highway, La Palma, Fairmont, Fairmont Connector and Esperanza to Fairlynn.

Route 59: Improve frequency from 90 minutes to 65 minutes on Saturdays. Frequency on Sundays will be improve from 90 minutes all day to 90 minutes in the am and pm and 65 minutes midday.

Route 76: Service will be realigned to travel on MacArthur, Jamboree, Bison, MacArthur and Bonita.

Route 79: Service will be realigned to travel on Campus, West Peltason Drive, Academy Way, California and University.

Route 83: Service will be realigned to serve the Anaheim Way/Orangewood intersection northbound and the Manchester/Orangewood intersection southbound.

Route 129: Weekend frequency will be improved from 90 minutes to 65 minutes.

Route 143: Weekends frequency will be improved from 75 minutes to 65 minutes.

Route 175: Service will be realigned. Northbound buses will travel on University, Campus and current routing to North Irvine. Southbound buses will travel on Campus, Bridge, Harvard and University to Mariposa Villa.

Route 211: Service will be realigned for eastbound buses exiting Golden West Transportation Center to travel on Center, Gothard, McFadden, Beach, Center, 405 Freeway to current routing.

Route 213: Service will be realigned to travel on Harvard, Bridge Road/West Peltason, Academy Way and California.



Tustin Metrolink Station Changes

In preparation for construction at the Tustin Metrolink Station, Routes 70, 90, 472 and 473 will not go inside the station, but will serve stops on Edinger at Jamboree Plaza. For more information call OCTA at: 1-800-724-0353 or visit:

http://www.octa.net/tustin_parking.aspx

OCTA has leased additional parking spaces on the north side of the station. A map on the OCTA website shows the revised boarding locations for the station. 🚌 🚗 🚗



After a month off for the Metro Board of Directors, much of what was on the agenda for September was relatively routine. In fact, one of the more interesting items was a motion which was withdrawn just before the committee meetings.

Left Hand? Right Hand? Both Hands?:

With the passage of Measure R and its close alignment with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), there has been some confusion over which Board committee is supposed to review specific actions on projects. Board Chair Don Knabe and Director Pam O'Connor have asked the key questions: What is the function of the Measure R Project Delivery Committee as compared to the Planning and Programming and Construction Committees?

The problem, as you might expect, is that some issues are interrelated and this results in several agenda items being heard in multiple committee meetings, with the exception of those where staff can clearly focus on a single committee. Knabe and O'Connor are now saying that the Metro committee structure "should be part of a framework that seeks to integrate priorities such as Measure R, with non-measure R components to create usable transportation-related multi-modal facilities." They brought forward a motion to have CEO Art Leahy bring forward recommendations for clarifications and screening criteria. Then, for reasons that have not been revealed, the motion was suddenly withdrawn.

My guess is that this relates to the Parsons Brinkerhoff report on MTA policies, practices and organizational structure that the Board received in June (see my column in the July newsletter). If that is the case, I believe we will see a reorganization of the Board committees, sooner rather than later.

For Once I Almost Agree With John

Walsh: The latest staff report on Director John Fasana's near-obsession with distance-based fares was released this month and was immediately condemned by gadfly John Walsh as "a waste of time." Well, perhaps not completely, but the report has a lot of information that we already knew or suspected:

- Distance-based pricing is more common on express bus services than any other mode.
- Distance-based fares are more common on systems where service radiates from a single central business district.
- Applying distance-based fares to rail requires that all stations be gated.
- Distance-based fare schemes are inherently more difficult to enforce, and if not universally applied to all services (rail, express bus, local bus) creates complexity in programming fare media such as TAP.
- Higher fares for distance-based services will force many lower-income passengers to take less-expensive parallel services instead, which results in a higher cost to provide those parallel services.

And now for the key new revelation of staff's research: The gates alone aren't enough infrastructure for distance-based fares to be implemented ... there also have to be "add fare" machines on the paid side of the gates at every station in case a passenger doesn't have enough value on his or her card to exit! One wonders how much that's going to cost, on top of the gates, station attendants, etc., etc., etc.

(Continued on Page 8)

Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

Kymerleigh Richards shared with me some perspectives on my recent comments on the use of the phrase transit hub: "Line 750 has had 'Warner Center Transit Hub' as its west-bound destination since it began operation in June 2000. Similarly, the Orange Line has always shown that destination. Metro was stuck with the name (they wanted 'Warner Center Transit Center') but LADOT named it 'Hub' when they created it. In addition, Line 645, shortline Line 164 and 165 trips, and Line 150 owl use the same headsign. So the jargon spread in the opposite direction, and took ten years to do so."

Via LAist I learned of a blog that tracks the uses of the City of Los Angeles Street Furniture Revenue Fund. These are the funds derived from the revenues generated from advertisements placed in or upon street furniture like bus stop benches and shelters:

<http://www.hollywoodunbound.com/>

When the Downtown News (Sept. 13th "The Station Equation") asked me about the possibility of dropping the 5th/Flower station for the proposed Regional Connector to aid in the extra cost of the underground option in Little Tokyo. I noted that staff now recommends that having four stations along a two-mile path would likely slow trains down. "At that point you're not really talking about rapid transit. It's more this slow-pokey thing that doesn't really have time and the distance to pick up any speed."

The pile on of Purple Line extension critics claiming the "revelations" that the Westside subway extension would provide only marginal congestion relief meant it was a big waste of money prompted me to crank out a commentary "Subway Critics Attacks Based on Faulty Logic" Sept. 24th for L.A. Streets-

blog. I noted more than a few have asked who said the purpose of rail transit is to solve the problems of auto congestion? I also see the entire argument as a strawman: traffic is not a static situation. Any relief would be unnoticed as latent demand (drivers who otherwise would decide not to drive due to congestion) refilled the roads. New York has a stupendous subway system yet still suffers from gridlock. Does that make the subway a failure?"

I'll conclude by saying I was a tad puzzled by the recent comments by Bart Reed, executive director of the Transit Coalition who was quoted in the L.A. Times ("MTA plans 4% cut in bus service", Sept. 24) about Metro's bus service cuts for the December shakeup. He commented that a weak route at Metro is not necessarily a weak line at another transit agency such as Culver City. Ironically Culver CityBus has just announced possible cutbacks to its Line 7 in part due to "low ridership levels". Line 7 took over a portion of Metro's Line 220 from Culver City to Marina del Rey. Metro Line 220 still runs from Culver City to the Beverly Center. In the past other Metro line turn overs to Municipal operators has resulted in complaints from the users that the service frequency and span are almost immediately reduced. I am left befuddled just what Reed is referring to. 🚌🚌🚌



Foothill Transit Ecoliner

On Friday September 3rd, Foothill Transit unveiled three new Ecoliner buses at their Pomona yard. These three new buses numbered F2001-F2003 are electric powered buses and can be recharged in 10 minutes. This 10 minute quick charge is an improvement over previous electric buses that needed multiple hours to charge. The buses were built by Proterra LLC of Golden Colorado.

Foothill plans to use these buses on Line 291 which operates between Pomona and La

Verne. A quick charge station has been built at the Pomona Transit Center to recharge these buses while on Line 291. These three buses were purchased with money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

If the 35-seat buses prove successful Foothill hopes to purchase more of the electric buses for other routes in the system. SO.CA.TA members Erik Griswold and Bill Vallow along with transit enthusiast Craig Barnes were on hand for the unveiling. 🚌 🚌 🚌



These three photos show the quick charge device on top of Ecoliner F2001 at the Pomona yard on September 3, 2010. The two photos on the left were taken by Erik Griswold, the photo on the right is by Craig Barnes.

Metro Board Report Continued

Service Changes And Micro-Managing: To no one's surprise, the Board was unable to leave the decisions of Metro's five governance councils alone without nitpicking. In response to public comment on the ill-conceived Boyle Heights Shuttle (Line 620) – including one poorly-informed, self-described “community activist” who claimed the line was created in the wake of a class action suit by the Bus Riders Union against Metro (it wasn't; it was created under RTD, long before the BRU came into the picture) – the Board ordered hourly Line 620 service to continue for six months and then reevaluate. Given that this will result in two-thirds less service than operates at present, I think we all know what the outcome will be.

The other micro-managing involved the San Fernando Valley's poorest-performer, Line 168 (Lassen-Paxton), the cancellation of which has been put on hold, briefly, while staff generates a report to the Board explaining why it was proposed for cancellation. As many might guess, this happened because of the continued push by a well-known “transit advocate” who considers the northeast Valley to be the center of the universe and therefore opposes any service reduction in that area, even when that opposition flies in the face of the facts. My prediction is that once the Board sees the full 35 year history of Line 168 they will realize how much has been spent keeping this dog of a line afloat, and said advocate will lose a considerable amount of credibility for pushing his agenda so forcefully.

To her credit, Director Gloria Molina complimented staff for doing a “competent job” on the June service change program and didn't object to the changes. The BRU, of course, wanted the Board to override all the govern-

ance councils' decisions and (as usual) said Metro was “undoing our gains under the consent decree.” Like bringing that up is going to change the Board's collective mind ...

There Are ALWAYS Consequences: Congressman Elton Gallegly of Simi Valley has introduced a bill which would increase the liability cap for passenger rail incidents from the current \$200 million to \$500 million. As if that weren't bad enough, Gallegly wants that cap raised retroactively to the Metrolink Chatsworth incident of a year ago, which prompted Director Richard Katz to point out that the proposed legislation would cause a “ripple effect” that would likely cause many passenger rail systems to start thinking about lowering or eliminating service. Director Ara Najarian wondered why Gallegly wasn't instead supporting positive train control and double-tracking; of course, we all know the reason why ... Gallegly will get more headlines with his attempt to get more money into the hands of the families of those killed or injured in the Chatsworth incident than he would supporting means to prevent any future such incidents.

Two of the passengers who survived the Chatsworth incident spoke in favor of the bill at the Board meeting, but to no one's surprise the Board voted to oppose it. (Not that it has a chance of passing this Congressional session anyway.)

TAP Gets Slapped Again: One of the lesser-known but more important performance reviews was released this month. The Triennial Performance Audit, which is required by the state Transportation Development Act for transit operators and regional transportation planning agencies

(Continued on Page 9)

Metro Board Report Continued

(and Metro happens to be both) gave reasonably high marks to such things as fulfilling the terms of the consent decree, the LRTP update, expansion of the Metro Rapid network, completion of the Gold Line Eastside extension, and allocation of Measure R local return funds. But, hidden in the recommendations for improvement is an independent review of the TAP program. What really hurts is that three years ago, the audit had recommended an evaluation of technological improvements in TAP ... which wasn't undertaken. Me thinks Matt Raymond and Jane Matsumoto are going to putting in some overtime responding to this.

Quote Of The Month: This month, the honors go to the Bus Riders Union's Eric Romann, commenting on the new Board policy on disruptive behavior and off-topic public comment: "We have always tried to comply with decorum." Does that include the May Board meeting when your fellow organizer Esperanza Mar-

tinez seized the podium in the middle of an agenda item and demanded the reopening of the general public comment period? Surely you remember that, Eric: You and the rest of the yellow-shirts started your usual chanting, forcing the Board into closed session for two and a half hours, and capped off with two of your members being arrested ... sound vaguely familiar? Either the BRU has a definition of "decorum" that is 180° removed from the one the rest of the world operates under or you are guilty of hypocrisy. Either way, the new policy means zero-tolerance for your antics. And it's about time.

Incidentally, discussion of the new Board policy at the Executive Audit and Management Committee had as its highlight the public comment of John Walsh, who not only called the Board members "ayatollahs" but also quoted from Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf". I can't top that for an ending to this month's column.



Torrance Transit Trip By Dana Gabbard

For our first study tour of the year we decided to ride Torrance Transit. Paul Castillo kindly volunteered to plan the itinerary and we settled on Saturday June 19th as the day to do it. At 9:30 a.m. we caught Line 2 (New Flyer #302), a hybrid in the new color scheme, southbound at Alameda/Cesar Chavez outside of Union Station. There was a notice on the schedule rack that no bus schedules were available (evidently they were being reprinted with the new color scheme) and we didn't see any the whole time we were riding Torrance Transit that day. Participants included Paul Castillo, Carlos Osuna, Kymberleigh Richards, Ken Ruben and Dana Gabbard. Beside our group four passengers boarded with us. As we made our

way through downtown we passed the temporarily closed Angel's Flight. One boarded at Venice/Hill (all ride counts exclude trip participants). Dana spotted a large statute of Fred Flintstone on the corner of a lot just before the bus passed under the Santa Monica Freeway. It wasn't clear what it was there for as Hill St., in this area is mostly industrial. Then we entered the Harbor Transitway and began to fly down the freeway.

The P.A. system on the new bus had a glitch so the announcements screeched like a demon screaming. One boarded at Figueroa and Imperial while seven boarded at the I-105 stop just after we left the freeway (adjacent to the Green Line station).

(Continued on Page 10)

Torrance Trip Continued

Some seemed confused about boarding because of the resemblance of the new color scheme to that used by Gardena.

At the El Segundo turn two got off while four got on. Three more got on at Vermont. Continuing we passed Caesar's, a former Denny's (we could tell due to the shape of the sign and of the building). Then we entered a business/industrial district.

One passenger boarded at Western. Ken Ruben began making his weekly call to the Let's Talk Train online radio program via cell phone. A golf course was passed, followed by several blocks of apartments stretching alongside the street. Then we came upon a community car wash, the sort done as a fundraiser with folks standing curbside waving signs to promote it. One boarded at the Crenshaw turn, where we spotted in a strip mall an eatery with the modest name The Fabulous Grill. We also discussed the nearby Baskin Robbins we had seen that was in a converted Pup N Taco or Wienerschnitzel. *(Ed. Note, many of the early Baskin Robins were "A" Frame structures so this one may be an original Baskin Robins.)*

We continued into a commercial district. One boarded at 147th Street. Then we passed an ambulance, fire truck and police car parked alongside the street with a small crowd but nothing to indicate what had happened (robbery? car crash?). One boarded at Manhattan Beach Bl. and had to ask the driver if it was the right bus (evidently also confused by the new color scheme). We were now passing El Camino College. Four got off and one got on at Redondo Beach Bl. We continued on passed a KFC/A&W combined location. One got on at Artesia. We noticed a paper bag taped to the farebox for trash and also that a metal receptacle for same is at-

tached to the front panel of the vehicle. Evidently the bags are a long-time practice at the agency, to the extent of having a large pile of bags in the assignment room of the yard for drivers to grab some to take with them when starting a shift. *(Ed. Note I have observed many drivers instructing passengers to drop transfers directly into these bags by the farebox. I presumed this was done to avoid any germs that may come from passenger's transfers.)* Two got off at the first stop at South Bay Galleria, followed by five more deboarding at the Galleria adjacent stop at Firmonia. It was now noticed the bus had three seats flush with the sides of the bus facing the back door much like Metro's low floor New Flyer 3000s. Zipping by us in the opposite direction was a bus that we realized was part of the Lawndale Beat system.

We passed the Pacific Crest Cemetery, followed by the Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center. One deboarded at Halison/Anza. We continued through a very nice upscale neighborhood and then another long row of apartments. Three boarded at Emerald/Anza before we passed a combined KFC/Long John Silver. Two got off and one got on at the Torrance Bl. turn. Now we passed the Providence Little Company of Saint Mary hospital complex, followed by a Howard Johnson's.

To Be Continued...



Torrance Transit Photo



Photos of the Month



*Laguna Woods Village Orion 970 at the Laguna Hills Mall on June 18, 2010. Laguna Woods is one of the largest retirement communities in the United States. The shuttle service is available to residents of the community and several routes pass through the Laguna Hills Mall.
-Craig Barnes Photo*

*Metro NABI 8396 at El Monte Station a few minutes after midnight on September 12, 2010. This bus was due to leave El Monte at 11:55 pm and was the last scheduled bus out of the Station before it closed at 12:01 am.
-Andrew Novak Photo*



How to join SO.CA.TA: Yearly dues are \$30.00 (\$12.00 low income). Dues are prorated on a quarterly basis.

Submission of materials: ALL materials for the TRANSIT ADVOCATE newsletter go to Andrew Novak at P.O. Box 2383, Downey California 90242 or to rtd1121@yahoo.com. Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope for returns.

Newsletter deadlines are the Fridays a week before SO.CA.TA meetings, at 6:00 p.m. Pacific time, unless otherwise announced.

Opinions: Unless clearly marked as "Editorial" or "Position Paper", all written material within, including all inserted flyers and postcards, are the expressed opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates.

Copyright: © 2010 Southern California Transit Advocates. Permission is freely granted to reproduce/reprint ORIGINAL articles from the Transit Advocate, provided credit is given to both the author and the Southern California Transit Advo-

cates. In all other cases, permission must be secured from the copyright holder.

Disclaimer: The Southern California Transit Advocates is not affiliated with any governmental agency or transportation provider. Names and logos of agencies appear for information and reference purposes only.

SO.CA.TA officers, 2010

President:	Lionel Jones
Vice President:	Charles Hobbs
Recording Secretary:	Kymerleigh Richards
Executive Secretary:	Dana Gabbard
Treasurer:	Hank Fung
Directors at Large:	Ken Ruben J.K. Drummond Nate Zablen

Newsletter Editor:	Andrew Novak
Newsletter Prod. Mgr:	Dana Gabbard
Webmaster:	Charles Hobbs

NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Oct 9th** and **Nov 13th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

October 2010 — Issue 215



Southern California Transit Advocates
3010 Wilshire #362
Los Angeles, CA 90010

213-388-2364
<http://www.socata.net>
dgabbard@hotmail.com

44¢
First
Class
Postage

FIRST CLASS MAIL