

TRANSIT UPDATES

The following LADOT Commuter Express routes have changed:

#409 (Sylmar-LA)

New stops at Sunland Blvd, Lowell Avenue and Colorado Blvd (off Hwy 2, near Eagle Rock) have been provided. Service now operates every 30 minutes

#549 (Encino-Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena)

Service now operates on Burbank Bl between Sepulveda and Laurel Canyon, making limited stops. Running time is only slightly changed. Service now operates every 30 minutes in both directions, peak hours

#573 (Centuy City-Granada Hills-Santa Clarita) Southbound midday service has been cancelled, and other off-peak service has been reduced.

#574 (El Segundo-Granada Hills)

Additional stops are to be provided at Balboa/Roscoe and Balboa/Vanowen

OCTA's new logo is now being applied to buses and bus stop signs. Their new bus stop design features a second, eye-level sign containing route and schedule information.

Foothill Freeway (I-210) carpool lane is now in service between Pasadena and Glendora, see page 5.

Transit Updates are compiled by SO.CA.TA members. If you notice any new, changed or discontinued transit services, please call us at (213) 254 9041 so that all members may be informed.

ABOUT SO.CA.TA

The Southern California Transit Advocates meetings are held every month. Please call (213) 254 9041 for current time, location and directions.

Letters and articles for the TRANSIT ADVOCATE newsletter may be sent to P.O.Box 41198, Los Angeles, CA 90041. Please enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of materials.

With the exception of articles clearly marked "Editorial" or "Position Paper", all opinions expressed are those of the article authors and not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates.

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*President: Vice President/Newsletter Editor
Pat Moser Charles P. Hobbs*

FROM THE EDITOR

by Charles P. Hobbs
Vice President/Newsletter Editor

Meetings: Most of our recent meetings have been taken up with endless debates on various transit technology and routing issues. To date, SO.CA.TA's stand on these issues has not been clarified. And of course, there is a possibility that additional issues of this nature might present themselves in the future.

In order to have productive meetings and an effective organization, these disagreements must be resolved and/or set aside at some point.

At the next meeting, some strategies will be presented for dealing with these differences of opinion. All members are encouraged to present other ideas. (Copies of the presentation can be mailed to anyone unable to come to the meeting)

Newsletter Contributions: *The Transit Advocate* always needs articles, letters and research (newspaper clippings, etc.) from all members and interested non-members. If you see an interesting, transit-related article in the newspaper, consider sending a copy (preferably two copies) of the article to Box 41198, Los Angeles 90041. Material for publication should be sent by the first Saturday of the month.



METRO RED LINE UPDATE

The Los Angeles County MTA is now in the process of re-paving Wilshire Boulevard as segment 2A of the Red Line heads towards completion.

Word from Metro construction workers: The 3-mile subway extension from the current line terminus at MacArthur Park to Wilshire/Western is already a year and a half AHEAD of schedule. They now hint at a late 1994/early 1995 opening date for the Wilshire Blvd segment, instead of the previous Summer 1996 opening date.

So far, the MacArthur Park lake has been rebuilt, now full with water again, and landscape projects are underway at the park, which is planned to re-open in Spring '94. By the time of the second segment's opening, Wilshire Boulevard itself, for the length of the subway extension, will feature a landscaped median in the middle of the street, as well as landscape improvements to the sidewalk.

Segment 2B, A northern branch of the Red Line sprouting from Wilshire/Vermont to Hollywood and Vine is coming along. Metro crews have demolished three buildings at the corner of Santa Monica and Vermont, where a construction staging area will exist for the next 3-4 years. Utility relocation continues along Vermont, and at 3 locations they have built subway ventilation shafts in the middle of the street. Meanwhile, on Hollywood Boulevard, tunneling continues steadily.

-Elson Trinidad

MTA'S METHANOL BUSES



Even though the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is dissatisfied with its methanol-fueled buses, at least 66

more will be ordered while other alternate fuels undergo further testing.

MTA (then RTD) bought 30 methanol buses in early 1990 as part of its "Alternate Fuels Testing Program". This initial fleet was the largest fleet of methanol-powered buses in the U.S. In order to comply with state air quality regulations passed in 1991, RTD bought 333 more methanol buses in 1992. (Methanol was the only low emission fuel readily available at the time. Most smaller transit agencies were allowed to continue using diesel buses, with certain restrictions)

The methanol buses have virtually none of the smoke and soot which diesel engines are famous for producing; nitrous oxide emissions (a component of smog) are again only half as much as diesel. The lack of visible pollution has made the buses popular with the general public; however, there have been serious problems with these vehicles.

Methanol (a form of alcohol) is an extremely corrosive substance, causing bus engines to wear out faster than their diesel

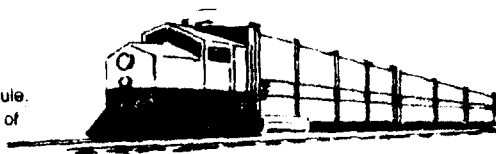
counterparts (e.g. about every 4,000 miles, compared to 8,000 miles or so for a diesel-powered vehicle.) It is also more hazardous to handle than diesel, but provides less than half the energy of an equal quantity of diesel fuel. (so converting the entire MTA fleet to methanol, if prices for methanol and diesel are equal, would more than double the fuel costs). And because these buses require extra maintenance, the use of methanol has driven up MTA's operations costs.

Although several MTA board members remarked that the methanol fuel program had not proven effective, the board voted to spend \$19.5 million for 66 new methanol-powered buses, while purchasing 170 natural gas powered buses.

MTA currently runs some experimental natural gas buses. Although this fuel has not been as problematic as methanol, special fueling techniques must be used. It also requires more time to fuel a natural gas powered bus than one fueled by diesel or methanol.

Expect A Train On Any Track At Any Time

Most trains do not travel on a regular schedule. Be cautious at a grade crossing at any time of the day or night.



FEDERAL TRANSIT CUTS?

As part of an effort to reduce the Federal deficit, about \$800 million in Federal subsidies to transit operators across the United States could be cut.

This would work out to \$45 million less for the Los Angeles County MTA, which is already facing a \$120 million deficit of its own.

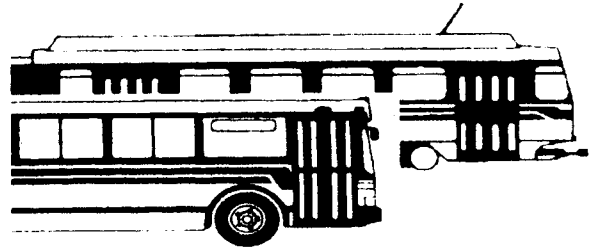
Although federally-funded transit construction (such as the Red and Blue line extensions) might not be affected, the reduction of operating subsidies may result in higher fares, reduced service or both.

Currently, Federal operating subsidies represent about six percent of MTA's

operating costs. MTA officials have asked Federal officials not to remove the operating subsidy; there has of yet been no response from the Government.

At this time, it is not clear if the funding reduction would actually take place, or its effect on current transit services.

The MTA is currently reviewing its fare structure and considering a fare increase. MTA plans to hold a public hearing on fares during February.



I-210 HOV LANE

The new HOV lane on the Foothill Freeway is now open in both directions between Lake Ave. (Pasadena) and Sunflower Ave (Glendora).

Carpools with two or more passengers may use the lane; Foothill Transit express route #690 (Claremont-Pasadena) will also take advantage of the new exclusive lanes.

Construction of a westward extension (to Bubank, Glendale and North Hollywood) is scheduled to start this fall.

SO.CA.TA. meetings are held, on the second Saturday of each month, at:

**4640 Hollywood Bl, Los Angeles
(1/2 block east of Vermont)**
(subject to change without notice)

Use MTA bus routes:

#1-Downtown, Sunset Bl, Hollywood Bl.
#180-181-Los Feliz, Glendale, Pasadena
#203-204-Vermont Bl.
#206-Normandie Bl.

Parking is available at the rear of the building.

RESPONSES TO 'WORLD WITHOUT CARS'

An article by Pertti Tapola of Finland, entitled "What if a private car had never been feasible" was posted on the USENET electronic mail network (and also reproduced in the December 1993 Transit Advocate). Here are a few of the many replies that this article generated .

"What if all the wealth that so far has been used for acquiring cars, motorways, parking lots, supermarkets, etc. would have instead been used to develop railways, trams, interurbans, etc?"

The former was paid for with private funds, for the most part, and the latter (traditionally) with public. We could assume higher taxes, or less money for other projects. Or perhaps very little development along that line, since at the time the motorcar was becoming popular, I don't think the government would have been overly generous with its funding for public transportation.

—Vickey Kalambakal (city unknown)

"There would be no need for subways (tubes, metros, underground) as the streets would not be congested".

People used to (and still do, come to think of it) complain about the appearance of els, etc., so subways might have been more of an aesthetic effort, rather than a practical one.

—Vickey Kalambakal

Subways developed in London, Boston, New York, and I think Paris BEFORE the automobile was anything but an extremely unproven experiment. London's was way

before a "horseless carriage" had even been tried.

Here in Boston (and I assume that the same was true elsewhere), we built America's first subway because the congestion of trolley cars and horse-drawn vehicles on the downtown streets was intolerable - worse if anything (probably because it was far less regulated) than the automobile congestion of today. Getting the trolley cars off the streets was the reason for the subway. In that purpose, it succeeded admirably. I have seen photos of Tremont Street in Boston with lines of trolley cars as far as the eye can see caught in a motionless jam of drays, wagons, and other horse drawn vehicles, mostly carrying freight to or from the stores.

—Len Bachelder, Bedford MA

This turns out not to be the case. The underground lines in London were built because of congestion in the streets due to horse traffic, horse buses, and horse trams.

—Clive D.W. Feather, Watford, UK

"What if no suitable fuel had been found for the private car or for some other reason it would never have been feasible to produce them in masses?"

Alternative transport: horses and bicycles. Horses produce a rather unaesthetic byproduct that certainly produces air pollution. In addition, it supports flies and sparrows which were a serious pest problem at the turn of the century.

—Paul J Hollander, Iowa State University

SO.CA.TA DUES AND NEWSLETTER POLICY

(as ratified by SO.CA.TA at the December 1993 meeting)

1. SO.CA.TA Dues Structure

a. Regular - \$12 per year (prorated: \$1/month)

b. Special - \$5 per year. This rate applies to:

i. Low income members (eligibility to be determined by SO.CA.TA)

ii. Additional group members (family, organization, etc.)-only one copy of newsletter per group

will be sent

c. Dues may be waived for extremely low-income members

(eligibility to be determined by SO.CA.TA)

d. For continuing members, dues are collected each January. Members joining later in the year may subtract \$1/month (regular) or \$.45/month (special).

Example: A member joins in June 1994 would pay only \$7 (\$12 - first five months) for 1994. The member, in order to continue the membership in 1995, would then pay \$12 (or the prevailing rate) in January 1995.

e. Additional donations over and above the dues amount are welcomed and encouraged.

2. Sample issue policy

Sample issues of *The Transit Advocate* will be sent to:

a. Prospective SO.CA.TA members, upon request (limit of one free sample per year)

b. Anyone contributing material will receive issue containing contribution

c. Issues containing articles about a particular transit agency will be sent to that agency free of charge.

d. For the purpose of recruiting new members, a limited number of sample issues will also be available in selected public libraries, transit facilities and other public places. A nominal charge per issue may apply in certain "outdoor" locations.

3. Back issue policy

Back issues of *The Transit Advocate* will be made available to anyone for \$1/issue.

4. Newsletter exchange policy

SO.CA.TA is interested in exchanging newsletters with other transit advocacy groups.

a. Copies of *The Transit Advocate* will be sent out at the same frequency as the other organization (e.g. an organization sending out a quarterly newsletter will receive three copies of *The Transit Advocate* at a time, four times per year)

b. All newsletter exchange arrangements are subject to continuing review and termination if the exchange is not maintained to SO.CA.TA's satisfaction.

5. Library collection policy

SO.CA.TA also encourages libraries of all types to make *The Transit Advocate* part of their collections. We request an annual contribution of \$4.00 to cover postage costs if mailed copies are desired.