

TRANSIT UPDATES *Have anything to report? Call 213 388 2364*

Metrolink holiday train ridership broke last year's record: 1,349 boardings on the Ventura Line, 1,718 on the San Bernardino Line, and 5,757 on the Santa Clarita Line.

Due to construction on 6th St. in Downtown Los Angeles, eastbound MTA bus routes #16, 18, 53,460,462, 466, 470 and 471 will operate via 7th St. for approximately six months.

MTA routes #33,333,55 and 60 are now using the Union Station Gateway Plaza transit center.

At least one elevator at the Cal State Busway Station will be out of service until mid-April.

Effective February 4, 1996, Foothill Transit will restructure service in the Pomona Valley, as part of its continuing restructuring plan:

- Line #187 will no longer travel to Pomona. However, it will provide service to the Montclair TransCenter. (New #292 replaces service to Pomona.)
- Lines #191, #193, and #195 will replace #192/194: #191 will travel east-west through Pomona between the Pomona and Cal Poly TransCenters via Murchison, Fairplex and Orange Grove. #193 will travel east-west through Pomona between the Pomona and Cal Poly TransCenters via Temple, Mission, Ninth and White, and #195 will travel east-west through Pomona and Phillips Ranch between Pomona and Cal Poly TransCenters via Temple, Village Loop, Rio Rancho, and Reservoir. (Peak hour trips on #195 will continue from Pomona TransCenter to North Claremont via Towne, San Bernardino and Indian Hill)
- #291 now has 15-minute service between 5a.m. to 9a.m. and 3p.m. to 7 p.m. and runs as

late as 11 :00 p.m. It will travel north/south on Garey Ave. between Foothill Blvd. in northern Pomona/La Verne and County Road in southern Pomona.

- Line #292 will travel from the Pomona TransCenter to Montclair TransCenter via San Antonio, Towne, Foothill and Indian Hill.
- Line #293 is being replaced by #292 for faster, direct service to Pomona and Claremont.

Lines #480 and #482 will serve both the Cal Poly and Pomona TransCenters. #480 will travel to Cal Poly TransCenter via Mission, Temple and Kellogg Drive via Temple, Village Loop, Rio Rancho, It will also travel to the Pomona TransCenter from Mission. #482 will travel to the Cal Poly TransCenter via Temple and S. Cam pus and also service the Pomona TransCenter.

The Pomona TransCenter is the Metrolink Station at Garey Avenue (Metrolink service to start later this year) , while the Cal Poly Transcenter is located on campus at Oak Lane (near the Administration Building). (MTA #484 and #490 still use their current stops.)

A low cost (\$1/trip) taxi service is available for Metrolink commuters within four miles of the Pomona and Claremont Metrolink stations. Call 800-400-1374 for information and reservations.

Omnitrans has a new route #120, providing weekday express service between Downtown San Bernardino (Transit Mall) and Redlands. Service runs all day, with certain trips also serving the San Bernardino Metrolink station. Omnitrans has more frequent service on #10 (every 20 minutes instead of 30), new Sunday services on #22, and slight time changes on #2,15,16,18,72 and 74.

BULLETIN BOARD

Finally! The Transit Guide will be available starting this month; they cost \$5 (\$4 to all SO.CA.TA members and anyone visiting us at our monthly meetings). If you can't make it to the meeting, call us at 213 388 2364 and leave a message requesting a Transit Guide and we will send you an order form.

In December 1995, Michael Ludwig wrote a letter to SCAT (South Coast Area Transit in Oxnard) asking why the seven members of SO.CA.TA who went on the Ventura County excursion (Jan 1996) had to pay two fares on SCAT #1 (Oxnard-Port Hueneme). In January, he got a nice reply from the agency. It explained that since the seven of us rode Route #1 all the way around to arrive back at the point we boarded at (Centerpoint Mall) then continued farther on that bus, we had to pay again. The reply stated that this fare policy was set up "to discourage a person attempting to take shelter on the bus". The person who wrote it also said that "SO.CA.TA "sounds like an interesting group". It looks like at least one person in SCAT's administrative office cares about the passengers.

From Elson Trinidad: The long, long, long, long, loooooong-awaited return of the Angel's Flight funicular railway in Los Angeles comes Saturday, February 24. On the weekend of the 24th-25th there will be a street fair/carnival along Hill St. between 3rd and 4th (in front of Grand Central Market) and live entertainment at the California Plaza Watercourt.

The Transit Advocate needs articles, letters, photographs and research (newspaper clippings, etc.) from all members and interested non-members. All materials should be sent to **3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010**. Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting date.



EDITED BY
KIRK D. SCHNEIDER

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PUBLIC AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE REPORT #4 *Dana Gabbard*

Updates on topics of previous columns:

- Alternate Rail Technology doesn't come before the MTA board until March. Glendale and Burbank have been slow to make firm financial commitments if their corridor is chosen.

- The process has begun for municipalities to propose projects for the mobility allowance. In a few months we should have a better idea of just what this involves.

*Implementation issues of the bus improvement plan are still being decided. The first phase should be ready for approval this month.

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Recently a local gadfly was urging me to get SO.CA.TA to take various positions, publicize them, call reporters, etc. He was peeved when I responded we aren't quite ready to be active in that way. Frankly we aren't yet that well known.

We have expertise and a desire to be involved. Visibility and a organization structure that allows distribution of labor are key needs if we are to get beyond being on the sidelines.

Outreach is vital. Our flyers and other materials need to be placed in libraries, campuses, community centers, etc. to get us more members.

And, people need to have in place a framework for them to participate. Just attending meetings isn't enough. A feeling of ownership comes when members undertake assignments and participate. The value of even a single letter on a topic of interest to a local newspaper or government body cannot be overstated.

As an exercise to clarify this process I hope to bring to our February meeting a one page worksheet outlining how you can aid in the process of the consideration of the bus improvement plan in Los Angeles county. Even if you don't live in the area it may be useful to have a case study of public activism. Also take a look at the latest issue of the Delaware Valley Rail Passenger, which comes to us on exchange. Their committee reports are textbooks of what an activist organization does. I'll have it in the file folder I pass around each month (other contents of the folder: letters to agencies, agendas of meetings, the latest issue of the Rose & Kindel MTA Report).

HIGH-TECH HIGHWAY OPENS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA *Steve Scheel*

On December 27, 1995, the first privately owned and operated toll road built in this country in the last fifty years made its debut in Orange County. Complete with cameras, antennae and lasers, a 10-mile stretch of the Riverside Freeway (SR91) ushered in a new era for commuters. Motorists now have a choice. They can sit in gridlock during peak-periods on conventional lanes, or, for a small fee opt for the convenience of the less congested toll lanes named the "91 Express Lanes." Without using a cent of federal or state tax money, it was constructed by California Private Transportation Co., located in nearby Anaheim Hills.

Designed to relieve congestion along a stretch of freeway that carries more than 250,000 motorists daily, this project began in 1993 and cost \$126-million. The toll road extends from the Costa Mesa Freeway (SR55) to the Riverside County line. Four lanes, two in each direction, run adjacent to the highway's median. Instead of conventional tollbooths, vehicles are equipped with a pre-paid, toll-tracking transponder that works similar to an electronic debit card. Pre-payment is implemented by check, credit card or bank account debit authorization. The Automated Vehicle Identification (AVI) device, which is roughly the size of a hockey puck, attaches to the inside of the windshield or on the dashboard. One benefit is that it can be transferred from one vehicle to another.

Electronic signs at both entrances to the road post current rates and driving conditions. Commuters pay one of five prices, from a low of 25

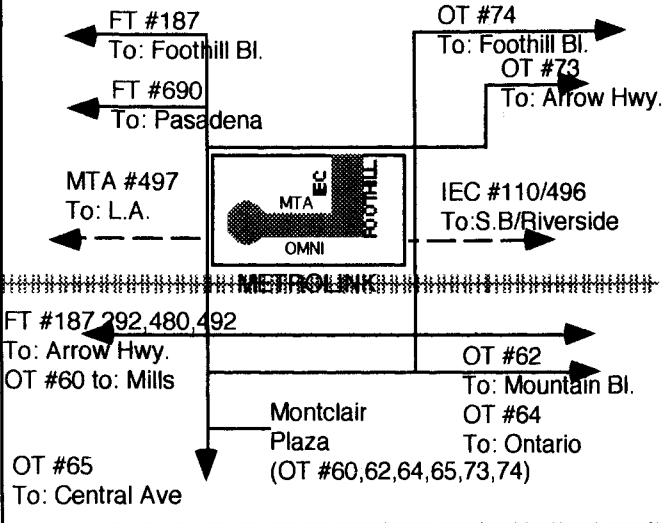
cents to a maximum of \$2.50. Three factors determine the prevailing rate: time of day, amount of congestion and direction of travel, with the average toll around \$1.50. 3-person carpools can use a special lane and travel for free, although the AVI device is still required. Vehicles using the road without transponders are caught by cameras that record their license plates. Violators can be fined from \$100 to \$300.

Here's how it works: as a vehicle passes beneath the Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) apparatus, antennae read the account information contained in the transponder's microchip and instantly debits the pre-paid toll for that trip. Customers receive a monthly statement, and if they are not satisfied, a refund can be obtained for the unused portion in addition to the tolls paid for on their five previous trips. To counter speeders attempting to evade detection, the ETC device is able to scan cars traveling up to 100 m.p.h. With the aid of 35 video cameras set up to monitor toll road conditions, on-road customer service patrols assist stranded motorists. The California Highway Patrol is contracted to enforce traffic laws, as well as the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV3) rule.

Although the nation has several other toll roads either partially automated or privately operated, the 91 Express Lanes is unique because it relies exclusively on technology that has no human or mechanical coin collectors. The company will spend an estimated \$120-million on maintenance and operations during their 35-year contract with the State of California.

TRANSIT CENTER OF THE MONTH

MONTCLAIR TRANSCENTER



Bus Routes (at station bus stop):

- MTA #497 (Montclair-Pomona-Los Angeles Exp.)
- Foothill #187 (Pasadena-C Claremont-Montclair)
- Foothill #292 (Pomona-C Claremont)
- Foothill #480 (Pomona-W. Covina-Los Angeles)
- Foothill #492 (Arrow Hwy)
- Foothill #690 (Pasadena Express)
- Omnitrans #60 (Chaffey Coll-Montclair-Indian Hill)
- Omnitrans #62 (Upland-Chino)
- Omnitrans #64 (Upland-Montclair-Ontario)
- Omnitrans #65 (Montclair-Chino)
- Omnitrans #73 (Fontana via Arrow Route)
- Omnitrans #74 (Fontana Via Foothill Bl.)
- Inland Empire #110 (Montclair-San Bernardino)
- Inland Empire #496 (Montclair- Riverside)

LOCATION: 5091 Richton, Montclair (north of Arrow Hwy, between Monte Vista and Central)

TRANSIT ROUTES:

Metrolink San Bernardino County Line (to Los Angeles, San Bernardino)

OTHER FEATURES:

- Commuter parking
- Childcare

TRANSIT TRIVIA *Michael Ludwig*

Last month's Transit Trivia question was:

Out of all the stations on the Red Line, Blue Line, and Green Line, which is the only one to not be served by an MTA bus route?

The answer:

Wardlow Station on the Metro Blue Line (served only by Long Beach Transit)

This month's Transit Trivia question:

Which bus routes in the Los Angeles metropolitan area run on some weekdays but not all weekdays?

(The answer will be in next month's Transit Advocate, and announced at the February SO.CA.TA meeting!)

There have been complaints of late that the agendas at our monthly meetings were getting cluttered and endangered our efficient dealing with key issues versus being bogged in minutiae. As the preparer of the agenda I have taken these suggestion to heart and mulled how to deal with issues I feel are important and allowing members to be aware of what we are undertaking in response. It has also been pointed out many of our members are unable (for various reasons) to attend our meetings and they are not having the benefit of the discussion and information shared. After some thought I decided upon a proposal approved by our membership at the September 9th monthly meeting.

I will coordinate what will be known as the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee. It has no meetings and draws upon the skills and knowledge of all our members. Many times I will simply be aware of when members are involved with various issues and fit that into the larger scheme of things. The mandate is broad - to analyze and take part in the public discussion of various issues relating to transit. Every month I will prepare a report for our newsletter (the first is in the November issue). These may be informative briefs on a current issue or status reports on various matters.

To clarify, here is a list of some of the issues we are keeping an eye on:

Long and Short Range Plans - planning documents transit agencies prepare that indicate their future plans. We have obtained copies of plans for several agencies (Long Beach, RTA, Omnitrans, Foothill, MTA) and find them helpful as a guide to potential future issues (e.g. the status of Foothill line 481 when the subway extension to Western Avenue opens next year).

agency agendas - we have in the past seen these now and then but will make an effort to be added to the mailing list of all major agencies. Invaluable resources and often full of political and technical information. (Thanks to Bryan Allen for this idea)

Mobility Allowance - a cryptic proposal in MTA's 20 Year Plan involving the shift in an area from full sized fixed route service to alternatives (jitneys, dial a ride) operated by local entities. Two pilot projects are due to be proposed this current fiscal year. We will be analyzing its potential effectiveness and possible pitfalls.

Political atmosphere - funding cutbacks are staggering the entire public transit sector. It will have a significant effect on service levels, fares, etc. Republicans favor highways and commuter rail as transportation serving their voting demographic. The extension of the Pasadena Blue Line as a single track into the San Gabriel Valley is an example of new political realities having their effect.

Restructuring - MTA, OCTA and Long Beach are among the bus operators who have undertaken reviews of their bus routes. Done correctly this can improve service where needed by shifting vehicles from non-performing routes. Several SO.CA.TA members have attended hearings on these proposals and made suggestions. We'll continue to be involved.

MTA continuing problems - the troubles with its rail construction projects (chiefly subway) has distracted and dazed the agency. The debate on what to do gets mired in Not In My BackYard (NIMBY) as MTA's bad reputation precedes it (Runyon Canyon and the issue of subsurface easements illustrates this) which makes community relations during construction tense. MTA slowly, fitfully, is trying to get its house in order. We are pressing the agency to go forward and avoid bogging down in parochial myopia that dominated decisions heretofore.

Alternate Rail Technology - self-propelled rail cars being considered by MTA for operation along otherwise fallow rights-of-way. We are working to publicize this to increase public scrutiny.

Elevated structures - budgetary and geologic factors have brought these back into consideration after years of being shunned as too controversial. We hope to suggest new technologies may erase fears of rickety, noisy structures.

LANI (Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative) - federal funds funnelled to local boards spread throughout Los Angeles charged to improve infrastructure (bus benches, signals, lights, sidewalks) along key corridors. We wonder if this duplicates services city agencies are already budgeted to provide? And how does it improve mobility?

Western extension of the Red Line - the discovery of significant pockets of toxic materials beneath the Pico routing have put this entire project on hold. The politics are snarled and no one has the upper hand. We are curious whether the agency will eventually be able to go forward, given that some segments on elevated will almost surely be necessary to avoid tunnelling troubles if the Red Line is to extend past Western Avenue.

Municipal Operators - recently most of the major agencies besides MTA and LA Dept. of Transportation formed a Coalition which will share the cost of hiring a lobbyist to represent them in Sacramento. This grows out of discomfort over MTA's conflict of both operating service and dispersing funds to operators. AB 152 (which created MTA) froze the way local return funds are dispersed for the first few years under old formulas used by the County Transportation Commission. That expires in a year or two and obviously the MUNIs want a voice in any battles that erupt over how MTA slices the pie. Our dispersed membership can provide information on what smaller but no less significant agencies are doing.

Mid-City Commuter Shuttle - an intriguing multi-jurisdiction venture to provide peak service between residences, employers and Metrolink stations using cellular phones in the vans to speed dispatching. A prototype for the future? It starts operation early next year.

If you have questions or want to get involved, give me a call. Our members are our best resource and a better transit future won't occur without a cooperative effort among all concerned citizens.

Dana Gabbard
(213) 388-2364