

Signal prioritization along Washington Boulevard near downtown Los Angeles for the **Metro Blue Line** is being tested between Sept. 30th and Oct. 11th. This will allow Metro Blue Line trains to save three minutes of travel time between Grand and Washington stations.

While MTA hasn't determined what caused the fuel tank rupture of one of its CNG buses the vehicles are being returned to service after pressure tests and being fitted with shields for the tanks. At least initially the tanks are being filled at a lesser pressure than before. Also the buses sent to Atlanta have finished rehabilitation and are now appearing in service with distinctive signs signifying them on the back wall. In the redeployment more CNG buses are being placed in service along the Wilshire corridor than had previously been the case.

MTA #561 has been rerouted in the Sepulveda Pass area to serve the (soon to open) Getty Center museum. #561 now leaves the freeway at Getty Center Drive and operates via Sepulveda to Sunset and Westwood. (This also means that trips on #561 between Westwood and Sherman Oaks are now local fare trips.)

MTA #254 (serving South-Central and East Los Angeles) is the first route in the second group of lines to be contracted out. This group of lines (which will include routes in East Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley) will be operated by

Charterways Transportation Management. As with the existing ATE-operated services, older MTA buses, with a single red stripe, will be used.

LADOT DASH FLASH: Major changes will go into effect on Downtown DASH routes on October 28, including a new route, extensive reroutes and new Sunday Service. Stay tuned...

Torrance Transit express routes #1 and #2 are now using the new Harbor Transitway express lanes.

West Hollywood has had major changes to its **NightLine**, now renamed the Boulevard Line. Thursday and Sunday service has been cancelled and the fare raised to 50¢ (still 25¢ for the DayLine, which has had no changes). Service operates Friday 7:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 3:30 a.m. The Sunset Shuttle was discontinued in mid-1995 due to low ridership.

Member Mark Panitz reports that **Norwalk Transit** now accepts the Metrocard.

At the last moment the planned enhancement of **IEC** Route 100 between Riverside and San Bernardino was not implemented due to **RTA** budgetary constraints. It continues to operate once an hour while the agencies search for funds to go forward with 30 minute headways.



Transit Center of the Month & Transit Trivia

will return next month.



BULLETIN BOARD

As stated in the previous issue, our next meeting will be primarily devoted to discussing the Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines restructuring, with Stephanie Griffin of that agency. Co-founder Steve Crosmer is also scheduled to attend. There is a large possibility that representatives of other community groups will be at the meeting as well. All members are encouraged to come to the meeting, and endeavor to impress our guests by providing for a smooth-running and productive meeting. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Don't forget that nominations for 1997 Officers and Directors-at-Large will be taken at our November meeting, with the election to follow in December.

Also in November (the day after Thanksgiving), SO.CA.TA may have another long-distance all transit excursion, similar to the San Diego, Ventura County, and Big Bear Lake trips we have done in years past. This year, a trip to the Antelope Valley or even Kern County is being considered. If you have any other suggestions or comments, please let us know.

We have arranged a tour of the Metrolink dispatch facility (San Fernando Road), on October 22 at 1 p.m.. Call our hotline (213 388 2364) if you are interested in participating .

Chris Ledermuller is the new chair of our Special Projects Committee, replacing Michael Ludwig who continues to head the HOV Committee.

We'll soon be issuing the 3rd updated printing of the first edition of the Transit Guide. This is due to selling out the first two printings of 100 copies each! The new edition is hopefully to be readied in the first quarter of 1997 with new features still under discussion plus a more vigorous publicity campaign. Anyone who wishes to participate in this process is welcomed to join the Special Projects Committee.

MTA has issued (months after first announcing them) sector maps for various parts of the county. Now available are those for Downtown Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, North County, San Fernando Valley and South Bay. Due to be issued shortly are San Gabriel Valley & Mid-Cities. Despite some errors these are still quite useful and we have encouraged the agency to make sure they are distributed through Customer Service Centers and libraries. Members wishing to obtain these can contact MTA Customer Relations at (213) 922-6235 or 800 464-2111.

A MTA Board workshop on the update of the Long Range Plan is scheduled for November 8th.

We may soon start subscribing to California Corridors, a monthly newsletter on transportation issues at the state level. Just a glance at this month's PLAC Report on the possible super-Metrolink taking over the San Diegan should suffice to prove how events in Sacramento can affect us here.

Rose & Kindel has discontinued their MTA Report but they will maintain a mailing list for sending periodic agency organizational charts plus a new monthly Alameda Corridor Report. To receive these write: Rose & Kindel, 900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1030, Los Angeles CA 90017

There is a new in-depth Metrolink guide available in bookstores or at the Metrolink information window in Union Station (the latter sells it for \$13, three dollars off the list price!)

As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs your articles, photos and newspaper clippings. Send them to **3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010**. Thank you.

I've now seen to consent decree settling the lawsuit between MTA and the Bus Riders Union et al. Highlights include:

monthly pass reduced to \$42 and a off-peak fare of 75¢ for certain lines serving transit dependent populations plus a possible low-income pass in the future

purchase of 51 addition buses (beyond replacement vehicles) by December and an addition 51 by next June

gradual reduction of load factor (ratio of persons seated to standing) during peak hours from 1.45 to 1.2 by 2002

all overseen by a Joint Working Group made up of representatives of MTA and the plaintiffs with a special master to resolve disputes and the ability to petition the District Court as a final recourse

Mayor Riordan was a key player, using the lawsuit to press his concerns about the bus system. The bus system improvement plan is now going to have teeth. Whether the plaintiffs can actually get down to the unexciting work of dealing for years with intricate fiscal and technical issues remains to be seen. And in the midst of conflicting agendas on the Board and tight finances making this deal work will be some feat.

S.B. 1755, the formula freeze bill, was signed by Governor Wilson. S.B. 457, which provides for the possibility of the San Diegan to be turned over to a 9 county Metrolink-like Joint Powers Board, was also

signed. An interim group is being formed to study costs and benefits of taking over from Caltrans administering the intercity-passenger rail service Amtrak operates between San Luis Obispo and San Diego. A key issue is to avoid having local subsidies supplant state funds for the current service.

The planned restructuring of Omnitrans service discussed last month includes a glaring gap - Route 71 between Country Village and Montclair (replacing in part IEC 496) wouldn't run past Ontario on weekends. I've written the agency to request reconsideration. Should people getting off the Foothill line 480 at Montclair on weekends wishing to go on to Riverside be expected to ride 2-3 buses (perhaps via San Bernardino?). And as Chris Flescher pointed out, previously we have asked for better coordination at Country Village and no stranding of persons riding the final connecting buses.

A trio of demonstration projects for the mobility allowance were pulled at the last moment from the agenda of the September MTA meeting. Partly this was to work out concerns raised by the bus drivers' union. The agency admits it is having trouble communicating what this process is supposed to be about - alternative services for low demand areas and times of service. Many proposals made clearly misunderstood this. The MTA staff doggedly continue to hope such service could save funds. So far the concept has resided on paper and we're interested whether it can actually translate into appropriate service.

Because of the constantly changing Southern California transit situation, as well as frequent changes within SO.CA.TA itself, it has often been very difficult to keep ourselves apprised of our progress in improving a particular project (bus line, train station, outreach, etc.)

In order to help us organize our time and efforts better, I propose that SO.CA.TA's activities be divided into seven 'activity centers'. (Activity centers are not to be confused with committees.

Committees are groups of members assigned to a specific project.

Activity centers are merely a classification system into which a particular SO.CA.TA project would fit).

Two of the activity centers (Levels A and B) deal with how SO.CA.TA relates to itself (administrative functions) and how it relates to the outside world (outreach functions). The other activity centers handle transit issues, from the simplest (Is my bus clean and on time?) to the most complex (How do we plan the regional rail system?)

I hope that all members will take a look at this organizational framework and think about whether it would make SO.CA.TA more effective.

Level 5 - Major concerns

- rail system reroutes (e.g. Red Line on Wilshire)
- evaluation of agency long range plans
- technology selection (rapid transit, light rail, ART, etc.)
- right-of-way preservation
- transit and land use policy
- transit financing (government and private)
- legislation affecting transit

Level 4 - Improving transit: area/regional basis

- development/evaluation of area restructuring plans
- development /evaluation of regional services (IEC, Metrolink, etc.)
- monitoring number and scope of transit operators

Level 3 - Improving transit: route by route basis

- overcrowding relief
- development of new routes and markets (e.g. suburb-to-suburb commute)
- rural transit
- paratransit

Level 2 - Transit connectivity issues

- bus to bus (transfer centers, timed transfers, etc.)
- bus to rail
- transit to other transport (airports, bus stations, ferry terminals)
- Interface with other modes (park/ride, bikes, HOV, taxi, etc.)

Level 1 - Quality of service

- bus stop signage
- information (schedules, telephone access, etc.) availability and quality
- relations with agencies (public meetings, etc.)
- safety and security
- presentability (vehicle cleanliness, driver courtesy, etc.)
- fare cost and fare media (tokens, passes, transfers, etc.) availability

Level A - External functions

- community/corporate/government/academic/media relations and outreach
- publications (Transit Guide, Newsletter, Internet) production and distribution.
- advertising

Level B - Internal functions

- SO.CA.TA meeting provision, governance and decorum
- financial affairs (dues and fundraising)
- internal communication (phone system, bulletin board)
- Archival (and future library) services
- Facilities management

The Southern California Transit Information Page (<http://socaltip.lerctr.org>) is a project designed to be a one-stop transit information site for Southern California on the Internet. It is patterned after the successful Bay Area Transit Information Page (<http://server.berkeley.edu/Transit>).

The Page covers transit systems in Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. This includes the 5-county interest area of SO.CA.TA, plus all areas accessible by transit and the Amtrak San Diego from Southern California, plus Imperial County (which is accessible only by Greyhound). We will also have information about Citizen's Area Transit in Las Vegas, plus information for the Arizona communities along the Colorado River.

SoCalTIP began as the brainchild of member Ray Mullins (currently in Arlington, TX). In May 1996, he posted a note on the [la.transportation](#) and [misc.transport.urban-transit](#) Internet newsgroups asking who might be interested in helping develop a transit information site for Southern California. After several positive responses, he then was able to procure free space on a system owned by his co-worker Larry Rosenman. With the help of the various contributors, slowly information has been placed online and can be accessed via the Internet.

The current "members" of SoCalTIP are (in alphabetical order):

Hank Fung
Dennis P. Hildenberg
Charles P. Hobbs
Steve Hoskins

Chris Ledermuller
Ray Mullins
Kirk Schneider

Charles is of course the president of SO.CA.TA. Kirk Schneider is the publisher of the excellent California by Train, Bus & Ferry guidebook, and named the page.

A concern from the beginning has been the possible duplication of information between the SO.CA.TA Transit Guide and SoCalTIP. This has been alleviated by putting the information such as hours of operation, fares, etc. on separate pages, thus making it difficult for someone to print off every agency page and effectively have their own free copy of the Transit Guide.

As of this writing, we have information for

about 20% of our target agencies online. We also have (or will have) information pages about getting to various places via public transit.

In the future, we would like for SoCalTIP to contain schedules and maps for every agency in our area. This involves contacting all of the agencies, announcing our presence, and asking for their cooperation. Dennis Hildenberg will also eventually be designing neighborhood maps so people will be able to see what transit lines serve their area.

Comments, assistance, etc. are welcome. I would like to see SO.CA.TA support the efforts of SoCalTIP in providing current transit information for Internet users.



Southern California Transit Information Page