

MTA undertook a major upgrade of service during the June shakeup. This included adding 66 buses for peak hour service on the top twenty lines to achieve the maximum 125% load standard mandated by the consent decree. Plus additional service on many lines during mid-day and even weekends.

Interesting statistic of the month: weekday Red Line boardings as of early July are at 64,000 and rising (pre-extension it hovered around 38,000).

Significant route changes (some associated with the opening of the Red Line extension to Hollywood/Vine):

- #1: eliminated; #217 continues serving Hollywood Blvd. to Sunset/Vermont. During late night and owl hours #217 extends to downtown Los Angeles, changing line number at Vermont/Sunset Red Line station to #2.

- #14: re-routed to Beverly Hills via Canon and Beverly Dr to Pico. The Century City late night early morning service is discontinued.

- #18: re-routed to terminate at Wilshire/Western Red Line station.

- #22 :Sunday MacArthur Park shortlines eliminated, all service goes to downtown Los Angeles.

- #66: re-routed to terminate at Wilshire/Western Red Line station.

- #161: now has hourly headway on weekends, westbound schedule adjusted to allow transferring from #245.

- #163 - re-routed to serve Hollywood/Vine Red Line station.

- #212 - terminates at Hollywood/Vine Red Line station.

- #357 - now operates mid-day and Saturday.

- #418 - new alternate route reverse commute service.

- #420 - terminates at Los Angeles City College

Red Line station. Owl service operates to downtown Los Angeles.

- #429 - terminates at Hollywood/Vine Red Line station

- #434 - reverse peak express service added plus some downtown Los Angeles to Malibu trips added Saturday/Sunday; most service now operates via Venice Blvd. instead of I-10 freeway between West Los Angeles Transit Center and downtown Los Angeles.

As of July LADOT realigned two of its Commuter Express routes. Line #438 has been extended to Redondo Beach via Hermosa Ave and Catalina Ave. Also it now serves Imperial Highway in El Segundo, has a stop at Aviation Green Line station Park/Ride lot and reaches downtown via the 105/110 HOV lanes. The Culver Blvd. portion of its route has been picked up by line #437 which now serves West L.A. Transit Center before continuing to downtown Los Angeles via the I-10 freeway.

Long Beach Transit has replaced their #31 and #32 (the Downtown Loop lines) with a new service called "Village Tour D'Art". This new service has been reworked to tour the downtown art neighborhoods in Long Beach, and costs \$1 for an all-day pass (purchased on board)

LBT is now offering a "Day Tripper All-Day Fun Pass", valid on all Long Beach Transit buses, plus two rides on the Aquabus. This pass is available at the LBT customer service centers only (not on board)

Other LBT routes with minor schedule changes include #1,7,21,22,111, 112, 172 and 173.

In Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines news, line 10 was declared "Best Bus Line" in the annual Best of LA Issue of New Times L.A. (<http://www.newtimesla.com/bola/1999/goods/042.html>). Also member Mark Panitz on our member board announced he is among the participants in Blue Bus's Metrocard phase 3 testing. (cont'd on pg. 7)

BULLETIN BOARD

We regret omitting Kymberleigh Richards name in last month's issue from the list of members participating in the Red Line tour.

Our booth at the celebration of the Red Line extension to Hollywood June 12-13 was a great success. 35 copies of the new Transit Guide (a prototype) were sold and over 1,000 flyers about SO.CA.TA distributed along with material on various other organizations and transportation related information. Our new banner, paid for with funds donated by our Executive Committee, was eye catching. John Ulloth has our thanks for overseeing banner production and shepherding it under heavy time pressures. Also our thanks to Warren Morse of MTA and the many MTA staff people whose cooperation made our booth possible. We look forward to having a booth at the North Hollywood opening next year!

After final corrections the new version of the new Transit Guide will be ready by mid-July. We will start planning an extensive campaign to publicize it.

The T-Shirts have arrived and will be distributed at our July 17 meeting. Members who do not (or can't) attend will have their shirts sent to them. Woody Rosner and John Ulloth have our heartfelt thanks for taking on this project and doing a smash up job!

The July 17 meeting will have a presentation by Dan Leavitt of the California High Speed Rail Authority beginning at 2 p.m. Come and learn about the proposed bullet train from L.A. to San Francisco (and other points).

Members in the news: Kymberleigh Richards had an op-ed piece in the June 13 Valley edition of the Los Angeles Times, "Rail's Condemnation May Haunt Us", which can be viewed on her website: <http://home.pacbell.net/krichrds/> Also Richards was quoted as stating "Transit is not about solving society's problems" in the July 11 LA Times in its coverage of MTA's fare hearing on July 10 ("Raucous Protesters Denounce Proposal to Raise Bus Fares"). Member Perias Pillay had a letter in the June 21 Downtown News lauding its critical coverage of the BRU (see PLAC Report for details). And member Chris Flescher was quoted in RailPAC's June/July e-letter on SANDAG's vote to support double tracking of the coast line between Oceanside and San Diego.

June 4 President Gabbard and Director Anthony Loui attended a presentation by Jane Holtz Kay, author of Asphalt Nation, at the Eco-Village (members Perias Pillay and Pat Moser had attended prior Kay appearances in Santa Monica and Pasadena respectively). Her slide show was in keeping with the book's subtitle: "How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take it Back". Given Kay's position as a contributor to the Nation magazine it was interesting to hear her clear preference for rail in urban settings.

July 31 we plan to an all municipal operator trip to explore muni service. Call our voice mail for further details.

Upcoming events: Aug 14, a presentation on light rail on the Exposition Right-of-Way; Sept. 11, a talk by RailPAC Director Richard Silver; Dec. 11 our 3rd annual Holiday Buffet (also known as trinket fest '99).

Free docent-guided group art tours of Metro Rail stations can be arranged by calling (213) 922-4ART (tour participants must pay applicable transit fare).

As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs articles, letters, Transit Tips, 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. (or e-mailed to transit@lerami.lerctr.org). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting

The first thing that struck me about the July 10 MTA fare hearing was how few members of the public attended. After all, the 1994 hearing drew hundreds of ordinary citizens and lasted into the early evening. The moderate sized crowd was mostly composed of BRU members, various MTA staff and about a dozen SO.CA.TA members. I think no more than twelve ordinary citizens bothered to show up. Besides the difference in the amount being asked (twenty-five cents in 1994 versus ten cents this time) maybe the difference is the economy is a lot better now than it was then?

Spokesperson Kymberleigh Richards stated our point of view: if it is used to improve service we don't oppose the increase. Richards was quoted in the L.A. Times' coverage of the hearing ("Raucous Protesters Denounce Proposal to Raise Bus Fares" July 11) on the key point that transportation is about moving people not solving society's ills.

The BRU's antics at hearing essentially consisted of mugging for the cameras. They barely bothered to make substantive comments beyond raucous opposition and repetitive chants heralding their impending fare strike. And in a blunder the National Lawyers Guild had as its representative a drawing room liberal who declared solidarity with the BRU and stated maids need good bus service to get to and from their jobs. Eric Mann's book on the UAW campaign against G.M. he helped organize ("Taking on General Motors", 1989) leaves me puzzled as to why so many of the pillars of that effort Mann emphasizes aren't present in the Bus Riders Project. The UAW effort was inclusive and drew allies from all over the political spectrum. In contrast the BRU is divisive and solidly sits on the far left, often burning bridges with potential allies whose sin consists of not being 100% in conformity with the BRU party line.

A glaring contrast was apparent when former MTA Treasurer Tom Rubin, speaking on behalf of three environmental organizations, in brief comments quoting a few statistics starkly painted a picture of the economic status of much of MTA's ridership. Why does the BRU, many of whose members are exactly the people that Rubin was describing, never personalize the issue? Instead Mann always emphasizes ideology. BRU members are treated as a mass, to protest and mouth sound bite slogans. The result is they lack texture or reality, existing as an abstraction.

A fact the BRU avoids admitting: MTA will receive half of the new transit buses manufactured in the U.S. this year!

Some wonder if the BRU project is starting to wind down. Mann must know a consent decree can't have a two billion dollar price tag. Maybe he wants the process to break down as part of an exit strategy that includes denouncing the establishment for breaking promises. The recent peculiar anti-NFL campaign the BRU has announced carries a whiff of being the next Labor Community Strategy Center project.

In a groundbreaking series, Downtown News reporter Eddie Rivera explored the BRU and its inconsistencies ("What Does the Bus Riders Union Have Against Light Rail?", June 7 and "Making Way for the Blue Line" June 21). I was even quoted in the second part regarding concerns that the BRU's tactics could undermine support for transportation funding. It was fascinating to read about the stonewalling engaged in by the BRU when they encountered a reporter unwilling to give them their usual free ride (both articles can be seen on the archive of the Downtown News at <http://LADowntownNews.com>). Could this be another sign that the facade is cracking? (see our website for research I have done on the BRU's funding).

Interesting fact of the month: MTA is paying more for the BRU's lawyers than it is for its own (under the terms of the consent decree MTA pays the legal expenses of both parties).

Who else had a good laugh at Mayor Riordan's attempt to put a good face on his term as MTA Board Chair? ("Riordan Reflects on MTA Progress" Daily News June 26; "Riordan Ready to Leave MTA Driver's Seat" LA Times June 28). All the reforms Riordan touted only happened after the bureaucrats of the Federal Transit Administration cracked down and forced MTA to come clean about its finances. If anyone is a hero, it is the FTA that deserves accolades. Not a politician who sat on his hands while millions were wasted purchasing property for the Red Line east extension when it was obvious to all the project wasn't financially viable. Another reason why board reform is the #1 problem needing to be fixed at MTA.

A new feature of MTA's website (<http://www.mta.net>) is analysis on pending legislation and other inter-governmental matters prepared by its Government Relations Dept. A great tool for monitoring the status of bills effecting MTA.

Wayne Moore, MTA Deputy Executive Officer of Finance, stated at the May 26 MTA Citizen Advisory Council meeting that the policing partnership of MTA, the LAPD and Sheriff's Dept. hasn't quite worked out as anticipated. I certainly will be trying to get more information on this in the months ahead.

Hopeful sign of the month: Robert Hertzberg is rumored likely to be the next Assembly Speaker. And while from the San Fernando Valley he has the distinction of being the only politician from that area whose involvement with transportation issues has been more substantial than soundbites and parochialism (including an impressive white paper).

Member Roger Christensen is keeping an eye on the process to identify alternatives to the suspended rail projects in mid-city, mid-Valley and the eastside. MTA board members already are meddling, adding various proposals to those that were identified in the RTAA.

Alex Padilla's successful L.A. City Council campaign to succeed Richard Alarcon (who is now in the State Senate) may signal the death of the San Fernando Valley transit zone. Padilla stated his opposition to the Zone during the campaign ("Candidates Differ Over Valley Transportation Authority" LA Times Valley Edition May 2). And transit isn't sexy enough for any of the other Valley councilmembers to pick up the slack created when zone booster Alarcon decamped to Sacramento. Without a political patron the always suspect Valley Zone proposal may well start circling the drain (versus the Foothill expansion proposal which continues chugging along, at least until the bar begins to be raised by the realities of the process).

I joined Directors Anthony Loui and Hank Fung plus member Roger Christensen in attending the June 14 briefing by the Southern California Association of Governments on its Regional Transportation Plan. One interesting incident was when a staff aide to L.A. Councilmember Laura Chick attempted to tout the west San Fernando Valley smart shuttle as a great success.

She was nonplussed when several of the SO.CA.TA members present pointed out smart shuttles' many questionable aspects. SCAG staff half heartedly defended it as a great idea that suffered from poor execution in its initial test. Also when I questioned 300 MPH mag-lev regional rail lines being able to use freeway medians I was assured it is technically feasible. I guess the follow-up question should have been whether Caltrans has been consulted on this issue. Our thanks to Jim Stewart of the Southern California Council on Environment and Development and Gloria Ohland of the Surface Transportation Policy Project for organizing this enlightening event.

I have a theory about why SCAG is so gung ho for mag lev. SCAG has in the past developed ideas (such as Metrolink and the Alameda Corridor) which at a certain level of development were handed off to other bodies to implement. SCAG desires a nameplate - a showy project it controls from start to finish that bears its stamp. Which could override small matters like whether the project makes sense. Further mag-lev coverage includes "Maglev' Attracts Optimism" (Pasadena Star News June 1) in which I point out its infeasibility and an interview with SCAG Executive Director Mark Pisano in the June 1999 Metro Investment Report (<http://www.ablinc.net/mir/>).

Monorail proposal of the month: along Wilshire between Miracle Mile and Western Red Line station. My May 21 letter to the Westside Weekly cattily asked where the yard and maintenance facility would be located.

AQMD is accepting proposals for a \$11.3 million program to pay the incremental cost difference between vehicles with diesel versus alternative fuel engines. Which sounds impressive until you realize if the incremental difference is on average \$50,000 that will pay the difference for only 226 vehicles. Oops...

May 11 I spoke before the Torrance City Council regarding the Torrance Transit restructuring (for recorded information on its status call (310) 781-6925). The turnout of residents was impressive considering it was a weekday evening and the meeting dragged past 9 p.m. My prepared written statement is posted on our website. And my comments were reported in the Gardena Valley News (cont'd on page 6)

(PLAC, from page 5)

(<http://home.earthlink.net/~jfujita/torrancebus.html>)

A community forum in Torrance may occur Saturday July 24 (call our voice mail for further details). Certainly a public process beyond council hearings should occur.

S.B. 62, the Solis El Monte Busway bill, by the time this is published will be on the Governor's desk. Members should write Governor Davis and request he veto this ill conceived measure: State Capitol, Sacramento CA 95814 or fax to (916) 445-4633.

A pair of bus stops in Westwood at Kinross and Westwood Blvd appear slated for elimination at the request of a new business that wants the curb space for valet parking. Members who wish to participate in our effort to reverse this regrettable action should contact me via our voice mail - (213)

388-2364 ext.2.

The concept of a Southern California Transportation and Land Use Coalition continues to solidify. Also we hope to soon confer with the California Futures Network about becoming an affiliate. These coalition efforts are exactly what SO.CA.TA was formed to facilitate.

I attended the farewell party for Lillith Terry, webmaster of the MTA Rumors page. (<http://home.earthlink.net/~lilith/mta.html>) All our best as she joins the San Francisco Airport expansion project (and the good news is she will continue the site as long as employees and interested persons submit material).

TRANSIT TRIVIA *Kym Richards/Joe Dunn*

Last Month's Question:

Which bus lines serve a single pair of stops (one in each direction) along Wilshire?

- Where did the former SCAT lines 9 and 17 go?
- What (if any) scheduled service replaced either?
- What unusual service did Line 17 provide on its pull-out and pull-in?

The answer:

A. Line 9 operated a 60-minute primarily loop route between Centerpoint Mall and the beach communities of Oxnard Shores, Hollywood-by-the-Sea, Silver Strand, and Channel Islands. Line 17 operated a loop route through the city of Santa Paula with every other trip extending via Telegraph Rd. to connect with Line 10/11 at Wells Center. Since there was only one bus assigned all day to Line 17, the extension resulted in an odd alternating between 40 minutes and 1 hour 20 minutes headways.

B. The connection between Santa Paula and Wells Center was replaced somewhat by the VISTA Line 126 route.

C. Line 17 also operated eastbound service along Vineyard Ave. between El Rio and Saticoy during its pull-out (leaving Oxnard Transportation Center at 5:15am) and westbound service along that same route during its pull-in (arriving OTC at 6:55pm). That route segment had no other service (and still doesn't).

This Month's Question:

Which train line is west of the San Diego Freeway (I-405) and is free of charge to ride?

The answer will be presented at the July SO.CA.TA meeting, and printed in the August Transit Advocate!

CALENDAR OF TRANSIT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Note: All meetings subject to change; please call contact number to confirm.

Jul 22
10 a.m.
LA Board of Transp. Comm
201 N. Figueroa, Rm 201, Los Angeles
213-580-1186

Jul 22
9:30 a.m.
Los Angeles County MTA Board
Boardroom, MTA Headquarters, One Gateway Plaza, (near Union Station)
Metrolink, MTA Red Line, MTA and municipal buses serving Union Station
213-922-4600

Jul 22
3 p.m.
Riverside Transit Agency
RTA Headquarters, 1825 Third St, Riverside
RTA #1
909-684-0850

(Transit reports, from pg. 2) Lastly, now that MTA has ceased regional stops on its Wilshire and Santa Monica Blvd. services in the westside, Santa Monica is resuming its former transfer policy of taking inter-agency transfers only where MTA and its lines 1st intersect SMMBL services on Wilshire and Santa Monica Blvd. plus the the stops immediately before and after this location (<http://199.172.96.92/service.html>).

Torrance Transit on its restructuring information line [(310) 781-6925] states the line 1 changes will be delayed until Oct. The City Council is due to hear the General Manager's recommendation at its July 27 meeting. The line 2 changes are now projected to not occur until January of next year.

Lawndale Trolley is due in late July or early August to implement a fare increase to fifty cents (but seniors and disabled can ride free). Also the two routes will be restructured - one will be an express, the other a residential line. For further details call (310) 970-2100.

Riverside Transit Agency has slightly modified #31 and #32 in Hemet to provide better service to Downtown Hemet.

Director Hank Fung has brought to our attention that Inland Empire Connection lines 100/110 (Montclair-San Bernardino-Riverside) now offer a day pass for \$2.50 (\$1.25 for senior/disabled). The pass is good for base fare on all connecting transit service. ■