

TRANSIT UPDATES

Metrolink

Adding to the confusion at Los Angeles Union Station, 4 cars in Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) maroon and blue are on loan to Metrolink, and last week seen at Track 4. Three tracks down, the two-tone blue cars on loan from Sounder (metro Seattle) are still being used for the 5:40 PM and 6:00 runs to San Bernardino.

MTA Metro Gold Line

Limited-stop service begins Monday, Feb. 13th, as some weekday commute-hour trips will serve only five of the 13 Gold Line stations: Union Station, Highland Park, Mission, Del Mar and Sierra Madre Villa. With no 3rd track along the route, "Skip-stop" some trips are scheduled to depart one end just ahead of another trip, arriving at the other end just behind the previous trip. These trips are scheduled to be 5 minutes faster than all-stop runs. Still no word as to when Metro will shorten commute times for all Gold Line riders by speeding up a bit through Highland Park.

MTA - San Fernando Valley (Charles Hobbs)

A summary of proposed major route and schedule changes, for June 2006. Changes are required to accommodate closure of the Spring Street Contra Flow Lane, improve on-time performance and customer satisfaction, and Metro Rapid Bus implementation. Start-up of the Reseda Blvd. Rapid, however, may be postponed until December 2006.

-- Spring Street Contra Flow Lane Closure --
90, 91, 94, 394 - relocate downtown LA route segment from Spring/Main Sts. to Hill St.
92 - relocate downtown LA terminal from Main and Venice to 11th & Main Sts.

-- Implementation of New Metro Rapid Service -
234-183 - convert up to 1/3 of local service to fund Metro Rapid Line on Sepulveda Blvd
734 - implement new weekday-only Metro Rapid

Service on Sepulveda Blvd.

150/240 - convert up to 1/3 of local service to fund Metro Rapid Service on Reseda Blvd.

741 - implement new weekday-only Metro Rapid Service on Reseda Blvd.

750 - coordinate Ventura and Reseda Blvd. service frequencies.

--Minor Route and Schedule Changes --

761 - consider relocating route segment from San Diego Freeway to Sepulveda between Sunset & Ventura Blvds. (Currently operating via temporary detour)

152, 156 - consider scheduling additional northbound PM trips from N. Hollywood Station 901 - new run time and trip adjustments.

Also, weekend run time improvements will be implemented on Lines 90-91, 92, 152, 156, and 163.

Brea Shelters

The City of Brea wants artists to design panels to decorate some of the city's bus stop shelters. Chosen artists will be paid \$700. Southern California artists should check the city website <http://www.cityofbrea.com> for more information and the entry forms. Deadline is Feb. 15th, 2006.

Holly Trolley

A late-night shuttle in the Hollywood area, operating every 12 minutes on Thursday, Fridays, and Saturdays from 8:00 PM to 4:00 AM. Fare is \$1, or free for LADOT pass holders. Route map at <http://www.ladottransit.com/other/trolley/> 



BULLETIN BOARD

SO.CA.TA MEETING NOTES

Michael Dukakis, former Governor of Massachusetts and Democratic candidate for President of the United States in 1988, will be the guest speaker at our Feb. 11th meeting, sharing his perspectives on transportation issues. Dukakis has had a long time interest in mass transit and was well known as the only Governor who used public transit daily to commute to the state capitol. He also previously served on the Amtrak Board of Directors. His chief topic will be Governor Schwarzenegger's infrastructure proposal and the importance of including the high speed rail plan for California in any serious infrastructure package. The presentation will start at 2:15 PM. Our thanks to Director Ken Ruben for arranging Mr. Dukakis' appearance.

The main business meeting will begin promptly at 1:00 PM. After the main meeting, some committees will discuss their work for 2006.

2006 Committees, Their Chairs, and volunteers so far

Detours chair Edmund Buckley; members Dave Snowden, Mark Strickert

Metro Connections chair Lionel Jones; members John Andoh, Hank Fung, Charles Hobbs, Dave Snowden

Outreach to be included with Public and Legislative Affairs this year

Public and Legislative Affairs chairs Dana Gabbard and Kymberleigh Richards; members Charles Hobbs, Robert Mainert

Special Projects (AKA Transit Guide) chair Armando Avalos; members John Andoh, Lionel Jones, Andrew Novak, Dave Snowden, Mark Strickert

Service Sectors *: Gateway – Mark Strickert/Margaret Hudson; San Fernando Valley – Nate Zablen/Mike Baron; San Gabriel – Hank Fung/Ken Ruben; South Bay – Lionel Jones/JK Drummond; Westside/Central – Ken Ruben

* – *At January meeting, we talked about Service Sectors but decided these were not committees but individuals, who should report their information through the monthly newsletter*

The Detour Committee has finished its initial fact gathering phase and hopes to commence work on standards and recommendations to agencies and jurisdictions.

Rod Goldman and Ed Clifford of MTA will provide a status report on Metro Connections at our March 11th meeting. Public and Legislative Affairs Committee co-chair Kymberleigh Richards kindly arranged this appearance.

AGENCY BULLETINS

Send an email with your name and address to info@trafficsolutions.info to get a Santa Barbara County Bike map or Transit map mailed to you; please specify how many you would like.

The Business, Housing & Transportation Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency are holding meetings this month on Phase II of the Goods Movement Action Plan. For further details contact Cynthia Marvin of the Air Resources Board, at (916) 322-5350 or Gwen Strivers of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency at (916) 323-5404.

Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays now through April 2, 2006 Metrolink and Amtrak

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Shane Goldmacher's article in the Jan. 27 issue of Political Pulse "Governor's Transportation Bond Blasted in Senate Committee" notes a key sticking point of the Governor's infrastructure proposal is "language in his transportation bond which strips power over transportation projects from locals and gives it to the administration." Some worry this could replace local prioritization with pork barrel earmarking. Another problem for negotiators is that various stakeholders have differing priorities. All this makes unlikely a deal being readied by Mid-March, the deadline to place a measure on the June ballot. Some even question whether any deal will be possible, depending on the Governor's poll numbers.

This will likely be the make or break year for California's bullet train proposal. Mehdi Morshed, executive director of the High-Speed Rail Authority, was quoted in the Jan. 7 Sacramento Bee ("Bullet Train Left at Station in Governor's Strategic Plan") that the project will die with the minimal funding envisioned in Governor Schwarzenegger's strategic growth plan. This would result in killing off the project by attrition. By this approach (what I dub a perpetratorless crime) the Governor's beancounters behind this plot hope to avoid acknowledging what is happening and riling proponents. In my estimation only an expression of support by the public will save the project from a stealthy death. I judge in our lifetime we will have a high speed train system if proponents rally to support Senator Perata's proposal of a \$1 billion allocation to purchase right-of-way and upgrade existing inter-city rail service. And the Governor is the key, if he sees that the project is popular and wanted it will be spared a slow

death. Messages to the Governor can be sent via the form at <http://www.govmail.ca.gov/> or call (916) 445-2841.

MARTA General Manager report (item #10, 1/17 MARTA Board meeting) noted while 18,000 Crestline fixed route service free ride tickets were distributed to area residents only 42 were redeemed. Ouch!

At the Jan. 25 MTA Citizens' Advisory Council meeting Richard Hunt revealed North American Bus Industries lost \$35,000 each on MTA's order of 100 45-foot Compobuses. This is \$3.5 million. No wonder NABI's recent acquisition by an affiliate of Cerberus Capital Management LP, a New York-based hedge fund, is widely seen as a precursor to liquidation. Where does that leave MTA, which has depended on NABI for new buses during the past decade?

The Access Services, Inc. Board at the Dec. 12, 2005 meeting voted to terminate its contract with Transit Calls, Inc. for customer service functions. "Issues have arisen with respect to performance under this contract that the contractor has declined to resolve or to meet with staff to further discuss." Oddly the Jan. 6 board box notes that the agency after bringing the Customer Service function in-house hired all the former employees of Transit Calls, Inc. Huh?

In the Jan. Metro Investment Report L.A. Airport Commission Chair Alan Rothenberg notes in passing a part of the recent LAX settlement is Los Angeles will try to reactive the Regional Airport Authority. Ironically it was non-participation by L.A. which led to the Authority to become dormant a few years ago.

In the same issue of MIR the half visionary/half puzzling paradox of L.A. City Council-member Bernard Parks is on display. In an interview he acknowledges the need to densify along major transportation corridors like the future Expo line. But regarding stations he asserts "park and rides are absolutely essential so that we can allow people who live in the immediate communities to drive a block or two, park, and get on the rail system." A block or two? How about walking or biking or even riding a bus? In fact Parks asserts, "On the Gold Line and Blue Line they thought people would access the lines only from the public transit system when in fact many people will access it if they can park and then ride those lines."

The Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Technical Advisory Committee agenda packet for its Jan. 24 meeting includes a comparison of boarding activity at the top 20 intercity passenger rail

stations in the Amtrak West region in FY 2005 v. FY 2000. Boardings are up at Pacific Surfliner stations, including a 40% increase at Los Angeles, 50% increase at Fullerton and a 29% increase at San Diego. Boardings at Anaheim have more than doubled. And Irvine, currently the 7th busiest station in the west region, wasn't even in the top 20 five years ago. The list (agenda item #7A) can be viewed at http://www.sandag.org/uploads/meetingid/meetingid_1209_4939.pdf

I'll conclude by noting the Board of the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District in closed session at the Jan. 17 meeting voted pay a \$10,000 fine plus \$320 filing fee for failure to adhere to all permit conditions at the Calle Real site. This after the DA's office threatened civil enforcement action. Did any heads roll over this expensive screw-up? 🚗

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monthly pass holders may travel free in coach on any Pacific Surfliner train or motor coach north of Los Angeles. Details: <http://www.metroinktrains.com/weekend/>

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is holding a series of community workshops on a draft of its "Renewed Measure M Transportation Investment Plan". The workshops will present information about the plan, answer questions and allow for the public to provide comment on the draft plan. If approved by county voters in November 2006, the ½¢ sales tax to fund transportation programs would be extended 30 years beyond the current sunset of 2011. All workshops are scheduled to run from 5

to 7 PM.

- 📍 Thursday 2/16 - Garden Grove Community Center, 11300 Stanford Dr.
- 📍 Wednesday 2/22 - Huntington Beach City Hall Room B-8, 2000 Main St.
- 📍 Thursday 2/23 - Anaheim Downtown Community Center, 250 E. Center St.
- 📍 Monday 2/27 - Laguna Niguel City Council Chambers, 27801 La Paz Rd.

For additional information on these workshops please contact Marissa Espino, OCTA Senior Community Relations Specialist at (714) 560-5607.

Please check the Meeting Calendar (page 7) and report any changes to us at [busnrail @ yahoo.com](mailto:busnrail@yahoo.com). 🚗

Transit news and photos welcome — [busnrail @ yahoo.com](mailto:busnrail@yahoo.com)

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Chris Flescher had a letter in the Jan. 27th *Salinas Californian* on traffic-calming measures to make the streetscape safer for pedestrians, especially children going to and from school.

Dana Gabbard and Ken Ruben attended the MTA Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting Jan. 25th. Members Roger Christensen

and Kymberleigh Richards are on the CAC.

Bart Reed and Ken Ruben were re-elected to the Rail Passenger Assoc. of California board.

Dana Gabbard, Russ Jones, Henryka Maslowski, and Kymberleigh Richards did outreach to MTA users the afternoon of Friday Feb. 3rd, regarding line 20 status of between Westwood and downtown Santa Monica. 🚌

SOUTH WHITTIER SHUTTLE Mark Strickert

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works has begun operating a shuttle bus route for the unincorporated areas between Whittier and Santa Fe Springs. The South Whittier Shuttle debuted with a Community Transit Fair on Saturday, January 21st. It truly was a transit fare, as nearly all the agencies operating in the area were represented. MTA had separate tables for general schedule information, for their bike program, and for their safety program. Their old GM bus #5193, in two-tone green, was on display across from the safety table. There were also tables for Access Paratransit, LA County Public Works, Metrolink, Montebello Bus Lines, Norwalk Transit (also including the Santa Fe Springs Tram), and the City of Whittier. Others with tables included the County Sheriff's Metro Bureau, CHP, county health, Wally Shidler's transit history, and yes SO.CA.TA.

Dana Gabbard arrived first to set up the SO.CA.TA table. I got there early as well, after admiring the amazing City of Santa Fe Springs bus shelter on westbound Telegraph Rd. at Laurel. One for the planned upcoming photo spread on the best and worst area shelters. How many other shelters are decorated with a fountain? I produced a flyer with an overview of the transit services

available in the area, with two deliberate intentions. One could look it over and say, "Hey, there IS public transportation around here!", only to then realize, "Hey, public transit in this area is a Balkanized mess!"

I am not sure if the South Whittier Shuttle is the answer to that problem, but it's a start. The Southland Transit-operated shuttle runs weekdays and Saturdays, hourly on a zig-zag course between Whittwood Mall on the east, and Sorenson Park on the west. Stops are marked by small signs, For the first few months, they will use two cutaway vans, until their federally-funded new buses arrive this summer. One of the fair activities was to have kids and others draw designs they might want to see on those buses.

The event drew hundreds of interested area residents. The festive atmosphere was enhanced with free food, family-oriented activities and free rides on the shuttle.

Staffing the SO.CA.TA booth were Armando Avalos, Dana Gabbard, Lionel Jones, and Mark Strickert. Dropping by to say hello were Juan Cornejo, Hank Fung, and Charles Hobbs. Our thanks to Facility Director Jo Ann Eros-Delgado, and to her helpful, energetic staff for allowing us to be a part of this impressive and fun event.

Dana Gabbard contributed to this report. 🚌