

# **BULLETIN BOARD**

## **SO.CA.TA MEETING NOTES**

At our Sept. 9 meeting, we hope to discuss next steps for the Committees on Wilshire corridor meetings and on detours. We may in Oct. have Paul Lennon, head of intelligence for Metro, speak on the politics of homeland security and transportation, especially at federal level.

And, likely in January, Phil Aker of LADOT will share with us the latest on the DASH system.

"Shaping Southern California: Transportation and Water" is a one-day symposium examining the history of these crucial building blocks of the area's growth. It is being held Saturday, September 30, 2006 from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the Huntington Library, Ahmanson Classroom, Botanical Center (1151 Oxford Road, San Marino). Conference Fee and Lunch - \$45; students \$15. Deadline to register is Sept. 25. Send check payable to:

LA Regional Planning History Group  
P.O. Box 5682  
Pasadena, CA 91117

(or) pay by PayPal at <http://www.larphg.org/paypal.htm>.

For additional information, please contact Alan Jutzi at the Huntington, (626) 405-2178 or [ajutzi@huntington.org](mailto:ajutzi@huntington.org)

The Rail 2 Rail program now has a website: <http://www.railtorail.org>

A recent notice from RailPAC noted Amtrak's Citizen Advisory Committee (ACAC), seeks candidates for membership who are frequent Amtrak passengers. This year the ACAC is specifically targeting Southern California and

is looking for a commuter and/or very frequent rider on the Surfliners.

Applications for ACAC membership should include (1) a letter of interest explaining how the candidate's travel, customer, educational, and work experiences can benefit Amtrak and the Committee's work, (2) a resume, (3) a list of the short and long-distance Amtrak trips that the candidate has taken during the past twelve months and (4) planned trips for the next twelve months. Completed applications may be sent via e-mail, fax, or mail to:

Ms. Kate Warr

Amtrak Customer Advisory Committee  
900 Second Street NE, Suite 308  
Washington, DC 20002.

Fax: 202-408-8287

E-mail: [acac@amtrak.com](mailto:acac@amtrak.com)

The next Mobility 21 regional meeting is being held Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2006 from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Kirk Douglas Theatre, 9820 Washington Blvd. in Culver City. Attendance is free.

The California Transportation Plan is now available for viewing at <http://dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/osp/ctp.htm>

The Los Angeles Women's Transportation Coalition is sponsoring a lunch with Metro Board Chair Gloria Molina Wednesday Sept. 20 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at The California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities, 1000 N. Alameda Street in downtown Los Angeles (just north of Union Station). Members \$25, non-Members \$35. Send check to the Coalition at 22815 Framp-ton Ave., Torrance CA 90501-5034. RSVP: (310) 530-3935

RailPAC will hold a special membership meeting on Saturday, October 7 starting at 1:30 p.m. in the Rail Restaurant near Fullerton Station.

The Pacific Bus Museum is having an excursion aboard Omnitrans' restored 1958 GM TDH 4801 on Saturday, October 21. More details to follow.

Save the date: The Orange Empire Railway Museum is having its 50th Anniversary Banquet on the Museum grounds in Perris the evening of Saturday, October 28th.

Transit district meeting news that came along too late to make the calendar on page 11:

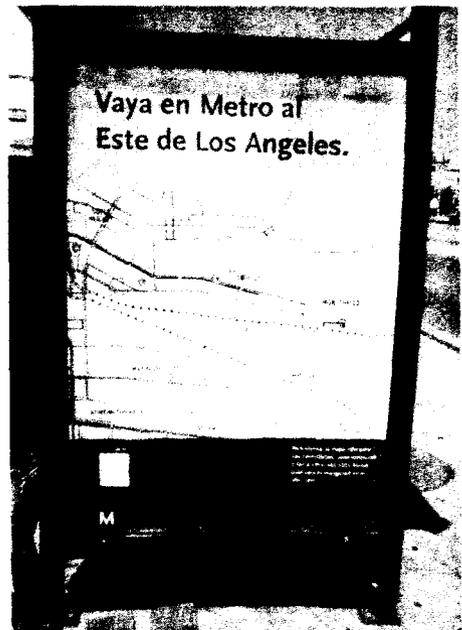
The next Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority (PVPTA) board meeting is on Octo-

ber 19th, 4:00 PM, at the Rolling Hills Estates City Hall, 4045 Palos Verdes Drive North. Walk from Metro line 444 at Hawthorne east to the City Hall, or ride PVPTA Green Route from Western.

The next policy steering committee meeting for Municipal Area Express (MAX ) is 5:00 PM on Monday, October 2nd, in the Commission Meeting Room at Torrance City Hall West Annex, 3031 Torrance Blvd. Further information: (310) 781-6930.

Norwalk Transit's service change proposals for Whittier Transit will be discussed at the city of Whittier's next Parking and Transportation Commission board meeting, Thursday Sept. 7th at 6:30 PM, Whittier City Hall Council Chambers, 13230 Penn St.

*Feeling Safe and Informed at Whittier & Atlantic Blvds. — Mark Strickert photos*



I have no problem with people being opposed to the infrastructure bonds on the November ballot. But I ask that it be based on what it actually does. Instead anti-tax advocate Tom Hudson comments quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* ("Gov. Tries to Calm GOP Anger," Aug. 20) proved his ignorance by stating: "We are giving [Democratic legislators] a giant blank check, and I guarantee you that's not going to work out well if you live in a Republican's district." My letter to the editor refuting his comments appeared in the Times Aug. 23 pointing out the Legislature will not decide how the money is spent — that will be done by the California Transportation Commission (whose members are appointed by the governor) and local transportation commissions (such as the MTA). Also that the one project that is earmarked in the bond ironically is \$1 billion for the 99 Freeway, which mostly runs through Republican districts. And I concluded with the hope that the voters will take more care than Hudson and actually read the measure before deciding how to vote. The lesson is have your facts straight before speaking.

Meanwhile the bond campaigns are just starting to get organized. Given the OK but not great poll numbers thus far it is clear some selling will be necessary (and hopefully starting soon!).

Can you believe it? The westside is currently embroiled in controversy over various proposals by the federal government for new buildings at the VA complex and the federal building adjacent to the 405. So

guess where the Southern California Association of Governments is contemplating as the location for the West L.A. station of its MAGLEV? On the VA property or nearby. This would entail a huge parking structure and minor maintenance facility. Won't the locals love that idea!

Speaking of SCAGLEV, the analysis by the city of Los Angeles for the proposed Maglev Interim Joint Powers Authority (council file 03-1066) states, "... SCAG has shifted focus from a JPA to deploy a Maglev system to developing a JPA to facilitate regional planning for high-speed transit." I have heard whispers this reflects SCAG headhonocho Mark Pisano losing interest in the stalled maglev and is instead now shopping among stakeholders far and wide his concept of an uber-SCAG-like goods movement oriented entity that would encompass the whole west coast (and it is clear who Pisano hopes will head this monster agency). Maybe the inevitable is about to happen as SCAGLEV begins its death-spiral?

Talk about unanticipated consequences! With her impolitic comments against extending the Green Line to LAX Los Angeles World Airports General Manager Lydia Kennard did more to bestir support for the extension than any advocates had been able to. The City Council is now even on the record as favoring it. And it is being whispered than quietly Ms. Kennard was told by our friends in City Hall that in the future her public utterances should reflect the policies and stances of the Mayor not the

clueless LAX technocrats.

Ever wonder why the bus shelters that were supposed to be part of the Metro Rapid program are AWOL? Turns out it is due to an obscure county tax per this Metro staff report presented last month to the Metro San Fernando Valley Service Sector Governance Council (a tip of the hat to Council Chair Kymberleigh Richards for bringing this to my attention):

[http://www.metro.net/board/Items/2006/08\\_August/20060816OtherSectorSFV\\_Item8.pdf](http://www.metro.net/board/Items/2006/08_August/20060816OtherSectorSFV_Item8.pdf)

Without fanfare MTA Board members Zev Yaroslavsky and Yvonne Burke asked Metro staff to prepare a report on implementation of a Wilshire "Super Rapid" as a pilot program (agenda item #38, Aug. 24 Metro Board meeting). They propose it operate

westbound in morning peak and perhaps eastward in the evening and have only 4 stops (Miracle Mile, Beverly Hills, Westwood and Santa Monica). My suggestion is call it the 720X. Or would that confuse patrons?

I'll conclude by musing are we witnessing the Götterdämmerung of Eric Mann? His organization is wholly tied to the consent decree. If it is allowed to expire where does that leave him? Despite reams of pricey glossy color brochures and posters and a whirl of protest marches and continued strident rhetoric is anyone paying attention any more? Is he quickly becoming an anachronism leftover from the 60s? And where does that leave the yellow shirted members who all these years dutifully placed their faith in Mr. Mann and provided the fodder for his fundraising and p.r.? What a shame. 🚗



Since 1997 we have engaged in several explorations of late night (also known as owl service) transit. These are held in summer to avoid chilled conditions in the wee hours. We didn't do an owl trip last year because there was no proposal put forward of service that needed exploring. Charles Hobbs when this was lamented suggested on the member board that we ride the first trip of the Orange Line leaving Warner Center at 3:40 a.m. At one of our meetings a similar desire was expressed to explore the MTA line 622, which emulates the Green Line and provides a few runs along the alignment in the early morning as replacement for the cutback of the Green Line operating hours done a year or so ago. Eventually it was proposed we combine these two disparate interests into one owl trip.

The initial concept was we would go to Aviation station and catch the first 622 trip departing eastbound at 12:23 a.m. After riding a round trip we would arrive back at Aviation Station at 2:12 a.m. From there we would make our way to LAX, ride the Fly-away bus to Union Station and then catch a bus to Hill Street where we would take the late night MTA line 156 which via a timed transfer with the line 150 would get us to Warner Center and our rendezvous with the Orange Line.

Doubts began to be expressed about the practicality of this itinerary. Kymberleigh Richards used her contacts at Los Angeles World Airports (who operate LAX) who stated the hours of operation for the "G" Shuttle that links the Airport and Aviation Green Line station are the Green Line's span of service. It appeared we would be

stranded if we rode the 622 back to Aviation. Kymberleigh also commented that the early morning Orange Line trips are equipment moves designed to limit the amount of street running for the articulated buses (the Warner Center end of the right-of-way is obviously much closer to the Chatsworth bus yard where MTA stores the equipment when the Orange Line isn't running). MTA has no expectation these early runs have much ridership. This eliminated the pressure to get to Warner Center by 3 a.m. or so--although we still wished to ride an early Orange Line trip to assuage our curiosity about its ridership at that hour.

The 622 connects with a few MTA lines that operate all night. Given this, the obvious strategy would be to ride the 622 to Norwalk and then hop off during the westbound return trip and continue via one of these connecting routes. Of the possibilities available it was noted the Vermont line (line 204) at its northern end crosses the route of line 156. Plus Vermont Green Line station seemed a more appealing location to catch a bus in the early morning versus the alternatives. The pieces fell into place and an itinerary was prepared and posted on the member board. Friday July 14 and Saturday July 15 were the days selected for the trip. The initial rendezvous was set for the Subway Sandwich shop on Westwood Blvd. one block north of Wilshire at 10 p.m. By 10:30 p.m. Dana Gabbard, Woody Rosner, Armando Avalos, Robert Meinert and Kent Landfield were gathered. Amidst snacking on subs discussions were held about the experiences several had had that evening while riding transit to Westwood. About 10:50 p.m. we made our way out to the

adjacent bus stop along Westwood Blvd. in anticipation of catching the first bus of the trip.

It arrived on schedule at 10:56 p.m.--Culver CityBus route 6, southbound, a New Flyer #7070 with 10 passengers (all ride counts exclude trip participants). In a moment we turned west onto Wilshire, catching sight of one of the numerous articulated buses now being used for Metro Rapid 720. Dana marveled that after some 20 years that Wilshire again features accordion buses and he reminisced about the "slow boat to china" trip he took from Westwood to downtown long ago on Wilshire aboard one of the MAN artic RTD ran in the 80s. Gabbard had an especially strong memory of how every little bump in the road set off a cacophony of rattling that seemed to emulate from every nook and cranny of the artic. No wonder it was over 20 years before they returned to the streets of Los Angeles. After passing under the 405 we turned south onto Sepulveda.

Route 6 is a workhorse of the Culver CityBus system, operating from morning until past Midnight. Our experience as we went along Sepulveda confirmed it carries a load, even after 11 p.m. South of Wilshire we made our way thru an area of commercial high rises. At Santa Monica Blvd. 2 got off, 4 boarded; at Pico Blvd. 2 got off and 7 got on. We then entered a residential area, and passed a Best Western hotel. After passing under the 10 freeway we connected with Blue Bus route 12 at National, with 7 boarding. By now we had a seated load. Further along we passed clusters of Apartment buildings. At Palms Russ Jones joined our trip. At Venice 7 deboarded while 3 got on. Now we passed thru an area of Hotels and Motels. At Culver

Blvd. someone with a bike boarded. The passing scenery again reverted to residential. Further we passed through another commercial district, including a fast food place with a 24 hour drive thru window. At Fox Hills Mall Transit Center Mark Strickert joined us. Also 1 deboarded while 6 boarded. At the upscale mall The Bridge 1 got off while 4 got on. From there we continued thru Westchester to the LAX City Bus Center where 7 got off. Soon after, the person with the bike got off. At 11:57 p.m. (13 minutes late) we arrived at the end of the line, Aviation Green Line station.

Several of the passengers who got off with us sprinted to the Green Line platform to connect with the last eastbound train of the night that came by a few minutes later. If the bus had been a few minutes later we wondered if their fallback would be to use the 622. We made our way to the 622 stop, where several others already were also waiting. While waiting at least one "G" shuttle served the station, evidently for those going to and from the final westbound Green Line trips.

At 12:23 a.m. we boarded line 622, an Orion 6 #11064 with 7 passengers (one with a bike) and the infamous dark blue lighting. A rather confused gentleman asked us if this was the last bus leaving the station. We confirmed this and he boarded with us. He told us he was bound for Hollywood. We suggested he get off at Vermont and catch the 204, which would carry him to the edge of Hollywood. As we discussed his predicament we passed a flower shop whose marquee asked "How Mad is She?" We moved along at a nice clip on surface streets parallel to

*Cont'd on Pg. 8* ↗

**OWL-LEVEL TEST cont'd from Pg. 7**

I-105. At Vermont the gentleman going to Hollywood got off while 1 person got on. Continuing eastward we followed a weaving route as we served the various Green Line stations. At Harbor/I-105 2 got off and we almost made a connection with a northbound 45. At the Gardena Transit stop we spotted a few waiting to catch the last rt.1 bus from downtown L.A.--like the riders on our bus they were mostly LAX employees. At Central the passenger with the bike got off. Continuing we passed a corner with a food stand engaged in open air cooking after 1 a.m. (and with some paying customers present!). At one Green Line station an agitated young lady sprinted up some stairs and boarded while holding an animated conversation with her beau who evidently had misinformed her how late the train runs. After she got off soon thereafter we all wondered what reckoning her young man would face for the screw-up.

At Rosa Parks station 2 got off and 1 boarded. We now passed a Charbroiled Burger shop with customers despite the late hour. At Long Beach station 2 got off. Now we did our first freeway running, eastward on the 1-105 to Lakewood station. There we encountered a young man wanting to go to downtown Los Angeles. He was counseled by the driver to cross the street and catch the westbound 622 coming from Norwalk that was due shortly (the 1st trip of the night) and take it to Long Beach Bl. where he could catch MTA route 60 to his destination. Also at Lakewood we spotted a supervisor from the contractor checking up on how the 622 was doing. After a further sprint along the I-105 we arrived at the

end of the line, Norwalk, where two got off along with our little group. We soon learned one of the passengers had fallen asleep and had meant to get off mid-route; now he had to ride back with us to his stop. At this point we gave Mark a hearty goodbye and he wished us good luck for the rest of the trip before making his way to the Park-n-Ride lot where he had left his car earlier for the trip home and sleep.

After a brief layover we started on the return trip at 1:28 a.m. (4 minutes late). At Long Beach Bl. we encountered the young man who had earlier been at Lakewood. Evidently he had followed the driver's advice yet despite being at the right place to catch the bus to where he wanted to go he became argumentative, standing just outside the door on the sidewalk pressing the driver for details about the route she drove, what stops she made, etc. The driver replied she didn't have time to answer all his questions and in any case it was unnecessary as he just needed to wait and soon the bus would come to take him downtown. When he persisted, the driver finally shut the door and the bus began to pull away, at which point the belligerent gentleman spat at the vehicle. We were all left to shake our head, bewildered at this behavior. Soon after, we again passed the open air cooking stand which was still serving customers despite the early hour. At 2:02 a.m. (8 minutes late) we arrived at Vermont station and deboarded.

As we waited Kent to one side engaged in animated conversation with a gentleman hanging around the station. The rest of us casually chatted while waiting for the bus. At 2:23 a.m. we boarded route 204, a Neo-

plan #6450. Two people boarded with us. As we made our way north the bus had a fair share of boardings and deboardings, although at any one time the bus never had a seated load. At 3 a.m. we arrived at Vermont and Santa Monica Blvd. Making our way to the bus stop at the northwest corner we awaited the 156. Kent briefly went across the street to the Mexican restaurant adjacent to the Red Line station, for a soft drink and bathroom break. Even at that early hour of the morning the place had a line queuing up for burritos and other items. At 3:05 a.m. a westbound line 4 bus came to our stop and was observed to have almost a seated load. Shortly thereafter a taxicab slowly rolled by the stop in an obvious attempt at trolling for passengers.

Finally at 3:30 a.m. (10 minutes late) we caught route 156, #4603. There were initially 5 passengers. As we made our way along Santa Monica Bl. it looked like many of the clubs in that corridor were emptying out as they closed down for the night. This may be why 7 were waiting to board at Santa Monica and Highland. After turning north onto Highland we made our way to Hollywood Blvd. where 4 got off and 5 got on. After an uneventful trip through the Ca-huenga Pass at 3:50 a.m. we arrived at Ventura & Vineland, and sprinted to make our connection with a waiting route 150 bus, a Neoplan #4681 with 1 passenger. This bus had very modest ridership as we made our way west. We had to ride to Sherman Way and catch a eastbound route 150 (#4556) to get to the Warner Center Transit Hub due to owl routing. Once there after a short wait at 4:50 a.m. we boarded route 901, the Orange Line--NABI artic #9204. Initially there were 4 passengers.

While not heavy the bus did pick up passengers as it made its way toward North Hollywood. By this point most of the participants were exhausted, dozing while staring out at the darkness. At 5:35 a.m. we reached North Hollywood and the end of our journey. We congratulated ourselves on our endurance before dispersing.

It is clear for our survey that the 622 exists principally to transport LAX employees who used to ride the cancelled Green Line trips, which makes sense since one has to imagine it would take a stakeholder with political clout like the Airport to be able to persuade MTA to provide replacement bus service to compensate for the Green Line service cuts.

Kymerleigh Richards subsequent to our trip received a clarification from LAX that in fact the "G" shuttle service hours include when the 622 operates. The confusion was caused when the Airport in its initial response stated that they believed the "G" shuttle matched the Green Line span of service. There was ambiguity whether that meant the "old" span of service (which includes 622 now) or the "new" span of service (which would have excluded 622). We have suggested LAX update its website to make clear it does provide connecting service with the 622.

Mark Strickert also after reviewing a draft of this writeup noted regarding the MAN buses that formerly ran on Wilshire that these were born of some sort of relationship between a German bus manufacturer and American Motors, back when AMCGeneral still existed. He also dug up this little tidbit from the King County Metro website:

*Cont'd on Pg. 10* ☞

## MEMBERS IN ACTION

Hank Fung, Lionel Jones, and Mark Strickert spoke at the MTA San Gabriel Valley Sector's service change hearing on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Jones and Strickert also spoke at the Gateway Cities hearing two days later.

Roger Christensen, Bart Reed, Kymberleigh Richards, and Ken Ruben attended the August 24 Metro Board meeting. Kymberleigh in public comment stated our position of supporting the staff recommendation in re: the Aqua line (agenda item #37).

Kymberleigh Richards had a letter published ("No Reason to gripe") Aug. 24 in the *Daily News*, responding to an editorial

lamenting alleged inadequate transit service in the San Fernando Valley. Kymberleigh noted service is scheduled according to demand and there is much lower ridership in the Valley versus the central core.

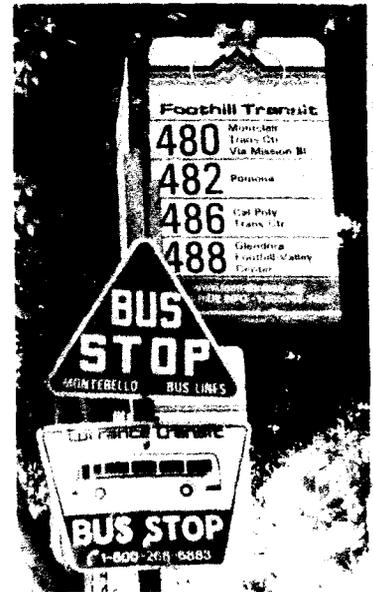
Patrick Hardie supplied a photo of the Orange Line at North Hollywood station for the article "Bus Rapid Transit: Does it Have a Place in the Delaware Valley" in the July-August issue of *The Delaware Valley Rail Passenger*, published by the Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers.

Andrew Novak's article "RTD's 2500 GMC 'Old Looks'" appeared in the June-July issue of *The Paddle*, published by the Pacific Bus Museum. 🚌 🚌



**Sign, Sign,  
Everywhere a Sign**  
Multi-Agency stops on Peck Rd. in El Monte (note new solar night-light), and up on Grand Ave. in Los Angeles

— Mark Strickert photos



**OWL HABITAT STUDY cont'd from Pg. 9**  
"M.A.N. by the way is an acronym for Maschinenfabrik-Augsburg-Nuernburg, in reference to their German heritage, and

enough of a mouthful to make it easy to understand why we've always referred to them simply as 'M.A.N.s.' 🚌