



Moving Southern California

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May 2007

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Committees in CA Legislature Vote For Green Line Authority

by **Numan Parada**

Efforts to bring the Metro Green Line to LAX got a boost in April when various committees of the state Assembly gave their support for legislation that would create a construction authority for the light rail project.

Assemblymember Ted Lieu and State Senator Jenny Oropeza co-authored Assem-

bly Bill 889, which would establish a construction authority for the Green Line that would follow the steps of the successful Gold Line and Expo Line construction authorities.

The Los Angeles City Council Committee on Intergovernmental Relations voted to support the bill on Fri., March 23.

"Establishing a construction authority would jump-start

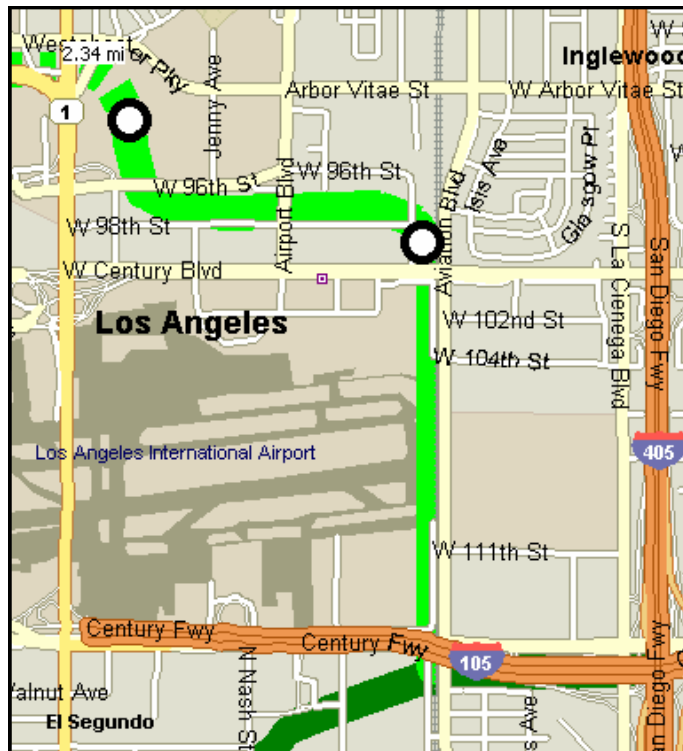
building the Green Line extension," according to L.A. City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl.

The state Assembly Transportation Committee almost unanimously approved AB 889 on Monday, April 16. Transit Coalition Executive Director Bart Reed testified before the committee on how the bill, if enacted, would act to hold construction funds for the Green Line to LAX Lot C.

Also present was Los Angeles City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, an ardent supporter of the Green Line extension who testified his support for the bill. The bill was then heard by the Assembly Committee on Local Government on Wednesday, April 25.

"To date, we have enjoyed an amazingly cooperative coalition at all levels of government towards this project, and it has been a pleasure to work with them," said Transit Coalition President Ken Alpern, who is closely working with Westside and South Bay elected officials to increase interest and garner support for the project.

However, Metro staff recommended that the Board oppose the bill. One point of conten-



The Green Line to the LAX could allow an extension to Santa Monica.

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Want to make a difference in changing the face of transportation in Southern California? Then become a member of The Transit Coalition! Annual membership includes a subscription to our monthly printed newsletter, which features news on current projects and upcoming events.

You also get access to our weekly e-mail newsletter, which focuses on behind-the-scenes action with political, community and industry leaders not reported elsewhere.

Fill out and send our **Membership Form on Page 7** along with your donation to The Transit Coalition and be part of the solution!

(see **GREEN LINE**, Page 5)



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As a grass roots group, we depend upon your contributions to allow us to pursue our important work, so please donate. The publication of this newsletter is made possible through a generous grant from **The David Bohnett Foundation**. Paid annual membership includes a subscription to *Moving Southern California*. Details: Page 7.

Letters and articles are welcome on all issues concerning transportation. All are subject to editing and condensation.

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City Lites 4th Annual Bike Tour

On Saturday, May 19, City Lites, in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Department of Parks, will host the 4th annual Inner City 21 & 5-Mile Bike Tour Festival and Carnival.

The event will be held at Jesse Owens Park at Century Boulevard and Western Avenue in Los Angeles and will run from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Registration for the bike tours begin at 7 a.m. The festival will feature games, food, local vendors and various entertainments. Live music will range from R&B, gospel and blues to Caribbean, jazz and Latin.

Two bike tours are offered: A 21-mile tour around South Los Angeles beginning at Jesse Owens Park, and a 5-mile tour beginning at Magic Johnson Park on 120th St. between Avalon Blvd. and Central Ave. in Willowbrook.

Both tours will end at Jesse Owens Park. Registration is \$20 for adults 18 and over, and \$25 at the day of the event. Children 17 and under ride free with the consent of parent. Helmets are required. For more information, call 323-573-2798 or visit their site, www.citylites2004.com.

Transport Shorts: Bits of News to Bite on

by **Numan Parada**

- The Glendale City Council voted to extend a contract to operate Glendale Beeline buses for another 15 months on Tuesday, April 17. MV Transportation, who has operated Beeline buses for the last five years, will continue to do so until June 2008 at a cost of just under \$11 million. Some believed the contract should have been extended for a shorter period of time, since the operator has not been forthcoming in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Venice and Santa Monica residents held a rally at Santa Monica Airport on Sunday, April 22, to protest an increase in jets using the airport and the ensuing pollution. Members of Concerned Residents Against Airport Pollution expressed worry that the airport does not have a buffer zone that could make adjacent homes less vulnerable to plane crashes and noise.

Assemblymember Ted Lieu recently introduced a bill that would obligate the state to study air pollution from jets using the airport. Councilmember Bill Rosendahl believes the jets should instead use Van Nuys Airport or LAX.

- The Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles released a plan that would introduce cleaner diesel tractors while phasing out the current system of independent truck operators. Specifically, the program would award annual franchise rights to motor carriers who agree to use less-polluting diesel trucks operated only by drivers with employee status. Container trucks not meeting port clean-air standards by

January would be assessed a gate fee between \$34 and \$54 per terminal visit. Eventually, older trucks would be banned under the plan.

- San Francisco Muni launched weekday service on the new T-Third light rail line. Several kinks were still evident at the opening, but officials hope to iron them out in the next few weeks. Some lamented the loss of a connection between several Muni lines under Market Street with the Caltrain Station. Additionally Muni will replace some of their oldest and sootiest diesel buses with diesel-electric hybrids, after five years of pressure by the San Francisco Board of Directors.

- Recent results of an annual study concluded that airline service is decidedly worse than last year. On-time performance worsened last year, and more checked baggage was lost in the same time. Customer complaints "stabilized" at a rate of 0.88 per 100,000 passengers.

- Santa Clarita is spending \$2 million to build and beautify bus stops in their community. The improvement would do away with bench advertising and instead bring public art to bus stops.

- A study conducted by the City of New York revealed that the Big Apple produces nearly 1 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the country. The study also revealed that each New York City resident produces less than a third of the emissions generated by the average American. This was attributed to their dependence on an extensive mass transit system, which cuts down on emissions.

LOSSAN Discusses Causes of Delays

By Numan Parada

Service integration, on-time performance and state legislation that could affect passenger rail operations were the main concerns of the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting held on Tuesday, April 17.

Since October, the major sources of delay for the San Luis Obispo-Los Angeles-San Diego *Pacific Surfliner* have been passenger train interference (28% of the time), commuter train interference (16%), freight train interference (10%), temporary speed restrictions (9%), and signal delays (7%). However, different portions of the rail corridor experience different kinds of delays.

For example, in the UP-owned LOSSAN North corridor, common causes of delay are due to routing (e.g., crossover moves, manual switches, etc) and temporary speed restrictions. Nevertheless, interference with other trains, be it intercity rail, commuter rail or freight, remain the main cause of delay along the entire corridor.

To exemplify the problem, participants were informed of a peculiar situation that occurred on Wednesday, February 7, when equipment problems on one train affected the timeliness of other trains throughout the rest of the day. Northbound *Surfliner* Train 769 was scheduled to arrive in Los Angeles at 12:15 p.m., but instead arrived at 2:07 p.m., a delay of 1 hour and 52 minutes. The train experienced mechanical problems in San Diego and Cardiff. The delay was so long that the next northbound train, 573, was coupled with Train 769 at Cardiff, thereby making said train 30 minutes late into Los Angeles.

Compounding the situation, Train 769 switched crews and departed Los Angeles at 3:14 p.m. and arrived in Santa Barbara at 5:58 p.m., 2 hours and 54 minutes late. Additional delay was caused by the need to uncouple equipment and interference with peak Metrolink service. Upon the end of its run, it became southbound Train 792, scheduled to leave Santa Barbara at 4:29 p.m. but instead left at 6:22 p.m., and arrived in San Diego at 11:40 p.m. instead of 10:45 p.m.

Meanwhile, the crew that alighted from Train 769 was late in boarding for southbound Train 578, which caused the train to leave 50 minutes late, arriving at San Diego at 6:20 p.m. instead of 4:50

p.m., a delay of 1 hour and 30 minutes. In any case, the *Pacific Surfliners* carried 182,964 passengers in February, which was a decline of 3.3% compared to last year; revenue for the month was \$2,868,601, which was 2.3% ahead of February 2006.

February *Coast Starlight* ridership was 19,200, which was a 1.2% decline compared to last year. Passenger revenue was \$1,364,234, which was 1.1% ahead of February 2006. Endpoint on-time performance for the month was 1.8%, with the primary reasons for delays being: speed restrictions (32.5%), freight train interference (22.3%), passenger train interference (10.1%), maintenance of way activities (8.2%), and communication and signal problems (5.4%).

As a means of gauging opinion on the delays, Amtrak released a schedule of focus groups during late April that would help assess customer perception of how well delays are handled by Amtrak, and see what are Amtrak's strengths and weaknesses in conveying information about delays.

The meetings would also explore the use of technologies that may provide information on delays. Focus groups with Amtrak employees will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the cur-

rent information system and strategies that would improve communication with customers.

Abbe McClenahan of the Orange County Transportation Authority provided an update on efforts to integrate Amtrak, Metrolink and Coaster services on the LOSSAN corridor. All three services are funded differently, provide service to a different market, have different fare structures, operating policies, passenger amenities, and management structures.

In spite of the vastly different service levels and only minimal coordination in areas that are visible to the traveling public, the services are quite successful individually and together. The Rail-2-Rail program, which allows regular Metrolink and Coaster riders to board Amtrak trains, has partially helped integrate rail service. Annual corridor ridership has grown from 1.7 million in 1993 to more than 7.5 million today.

However, the OCTA will implement a significant increase in Metrolink service in Orange County in 2010. Metrolink service is planned to grow from 44 weekday trains to 76 weekday trains in Orange County. Amtrak and Caltrans, as well as the North County Transit (see **LOSSAN**, Page 7)

TOP CAUSES OF PACIFIC SURFLINER TRAIN DELAY BY SEGMENT		
Ownership/Segment	Top 5 Causes of Delay	Percent of Total
Union Pacific (San Luis Obispo to Moorpark)	1. Passenger Train Interference	40%
	2. Freight Train Interference	14%
	3. Routing	7%
	4. Temporary Speed Restrictions	7%
	5. Signal Delays	5%
Metrolink (Los Angeles to Moorpark)	1. Passenger Train Interference	29%
	2. Commuter Train Interference	20%
	3. Temporary Speed Restrictions	6%
	4. Passenger-Related	7%
	5. Signal Delays	6%
Burlington Northern Santa Fe (Fullerton to Los Angeles)	1. Freight Train Interference	27%
	2. Signal Delays	21%
	3. Routing	10%
	4. Temporary Speed Restrictions	9%
	5. Maintenance of Way Work	6%
San Diego Northern Railway (OC Line to San Diego)	1. Commuter Train Interference	31%
	2. Passenger Train Interference	23%
	3. Temporary Speed Restrictions	14%
	4. Initial Terminal Delay (Late-Arriving Train)	6%
	5. Passenger-Related	5%
Corridorwide	1. Passenger Train Interference	28%
	2. Commuter Train Interference	16%
	3. Freight Train Interference	10%
	4. Temporary Speed Restrictions	9%
	5. Signal Delays	7%

Dodgers Behind the Times on Transit

By Numan Parada

Even as Dodger Stadium inaugurated a new parking program on Opening Day, calls to increase transit options to the stadium are on the rise.

In the new “controlled zone” parking plan, drivers must enter and exit the same gate, while attendants direct motorists to assigned parking spaces.

The program has received largely negative reviews. To pay for the increase in attendants, parking fees were raised to \$15. Traffic jams were reportedly larger than usual, with people reporting that it would take as much as half an hour to exit the park. Worse yet, some media outlets reported an increase in aggressive driving and obscenities directed at attendants.

Particular scorn went to owner Frank McCourt, who started out as a parking attendant and made a name for himself in Boston as a real estate developer and parking magnate.

Stadium parking is entirely owned and operated by team management. By contrast, parking around Staples Center is largely operated with no connection with the venue or teams.

The resulting traffic reached to such a point that operators opened the fifth parking gate, which leads traffic onto Scott Avenue towards Glendale Boulevard and State Highway Route 2. The gate was closed by then-owner Peter O’Malley in 1996 amid complaints from neighbors. Under the pilot program,

the gate would open as an exit when attendance reaches 40,000 or more.

Dodgers Senior Vice President Howard Sunkin agreed to the concession at an April meeting of the Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council.

Sunkin said it would serve only as an exit gate during the trial period, at which the program would be reevaluated at the All-Star break in July.

Sunkin rejected a proposal to keep the gate closed for day games. Residents attending the meeting expressed skepticism that stadium management would permanently open the gate and worsen traffic on local streets.

Calls to increase transit options to the stadium are on the rise.

The parking problem and the Scott Ave. gate question have led to renewed calls to provide public transportation options for patrons. It was the subject of at least one letter to the *Los Angeles Times* on the matter. In the above meeting, Sunkin agreed to work with the community on establishing carpool discounts and public transit options.

Currently, transit users can get near the ballpark by taking Metro Lines 2 and 4 on Sunset Blvd. in Echo Park and Lines 81, 90/91, and 94 on Hill St. in China-

town. The Chinatown Gold Line station is located two blocks east of Hill St. at College St. Pedestrian access is complicated by the fact that the stadium is located on top of an isolated hill. Both options require a walk along steep inclines to reach the property.

Once inside, pedestrians must cross two ring roads to reach the ticket booths. Before “controlled zone” parking, the circle roads featured little traffic control, apart from often-ignored traffic signals and pedestrian crossings. Today, the two ring roads are blocked at strategic places to keep vehicles from exiting through other gates. As a result, pedestrian safety improved on account of safer opportunities to cross the roads and reach the ticket booths.

According to a Metro staff report, seasonal service to Dodger Stadium with a premium fare was offered since the opening of the stadium in 1962 via Line 635 between Downtown Los Angeles and Dodger Stadium. This service was discontinued in 1994 due to budgetary constraints and low ridership.

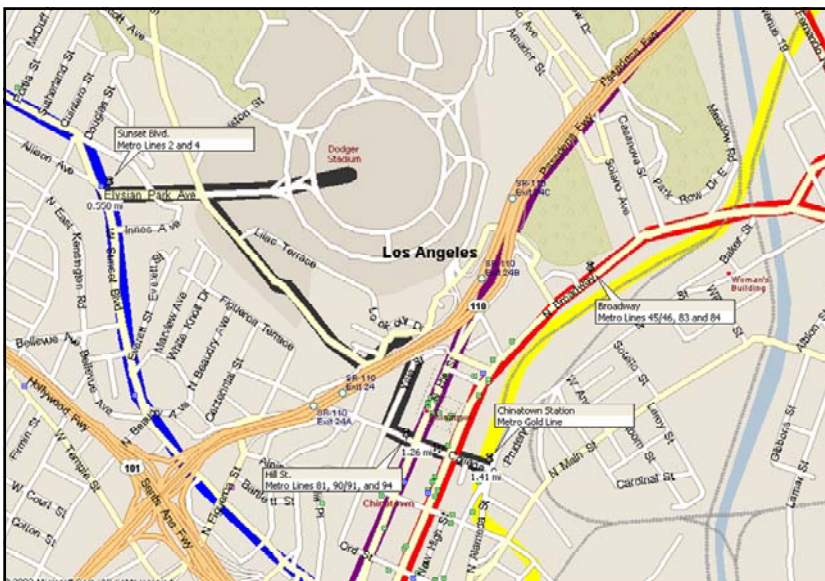
During the 2004 season, the Dodgers provided contract service to Dodger Stadium only for Friday night games. Service operated every 15 minutes from Patsaouras Plaza with a roundtrip fare of \$2.00. The Los Angeles Department of Transportation provided a temporary bus lane in the center of Sunset Blvd. and traffic control officers to expedite bus traffic in and out of the stadium.

“In discussions with Dodger representatives, they indicated that due to low ridership (approximately 400 passengers per game) and high operating costs, they would not continue to sponsor this service,” the report revealed. “The Dodgers have indicated to staff that this remains their position today.”

Throughout 2006, Metro investigated the possibility of restoring shuttle service between several rail stations and the park for the ongoing season, largely at the behest of Metro Board member Mike Antonovich. Metro staff presented their findings at the August 2006 Metro Operations Committee meeting.

Metro staff evaluated three options for the operation of shuttle services operating to Dodger Stadium. Option 1 was a shuttle from Patsaouras Plaza. Option 2 was for two services, one from

(see *STADIUM*, Page 5)



Walking from the nearest ticket gates to various transit stops includes hilly terrain.

Stadium Parking Mess Revives Transit Talk



Yankee Stadium in The Bronx has its own subway station. Source: Flickr

(from **STADIUM**, Page 4)
 Patsaouras Plaza, and another from the Chinatown Metro Gold Line Station. Option 3 was for three services, one from Patsaouras Plaza, a second from the Chinatown Metro Gold Line Station, and a third service starting at 7th and Flower Metro Blue Line Station.

Metro follows a Transit Service Policy that defines its role when it comes to providing special event service. According to the report, "The policy is designed to prevent violations of the Federal charter bus regulations and states that such services should be provided only when the following conditions are met: It will not interfere with our regular operation; the operation fits within the scope of regular Metro Bus operations; the service is provided on a full cost recovery basis, and there are no available or interested private operators."

Based on several service assumptions, the report revealed that estimated annual cost for a contractor-operated shuttle for a full season range from a low of \$251,100 under Option 1 to a high of \$494,000 under Option 3. "If passenger fares were established at a rate to ensure full cost recovery for the shuttle service, it would require a fare of between \$6.78 and \$10.33 per roundtrip, depending on the option," the report concluded.

Current Dodger practice contrasts with other baseball parks, in particular newer ones, where public transportation plays an important role. Today, owners prefer building new downtown stadiums near mass transit. Sometimes, they opt to build mass transit near existing stadiums. Thus, fans in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago (Cubs and White Sox), Cleveland, Denver,

Houston, New York (Mets and Yankees), Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Toronto and Washington can take a subway or light rail to the game.

In San Francisco, MUNI light rail serves AT&T Park, home of the Giants, with ferries serving an opposing entrance.

Caltrain service is only a block away. Petco Park in San Diego has a Trolley station two blocks away, while their old home of Qualcomm Park has a station within the parking lot. Chase Field in Phoenix, home to the Arizona Diamondbacks, will feature a light rail stop.

New ballparks are keeping transit options in mind. In Minneapolis, the Twins Ballpark will feature an extension of the Hiawatha light rail line. It would also be in close proximity to a prominent bike route and the future Northstar commuter rail service. In Fremont, there is concern that Cisco Field, the future home of the Oakland Athletics, will feature fewer transit options than current home McAfee Field, which has access to both Amtrak Capitol Corridor and BART. However, shuttle service between Cisco Field and the future Warm Springs BART station may be provided.

In the past, owner Frank McCourt made it clear that the stadium will house the Dodgers for the foreseeable future, thus dismissing the possibility that a new stadium will be built elsewhere in the long term, much less near existing public transit. In contrast, several sports venues in Los Angeles have easy access to transit. Staples Center is a block away from the Pico St. Blue Line

Stadium	Distance From		Public Transportation Options				Available Parking Spaces
	City Center	Transit Hub	Light Rail	Rapid Rail	Commuter Rail	Bus	
Cisco Field	none	1.2	N	F,I	F,I	Y	9000
McAfee Coliseum	5	0	N	Y	Y	Y	10000
Ameritrust Field	none	n/a	N	N	N	N	15000
Angel Stadium	none	n/a	N	N	Y	Y	12500
AT&T Park	1	0	Y	I	Y	Y	6500
Busch Stadium	0	0	Y	N	N	Y	9300
Camden Yards	0	0	Y	Y	Y	Y	12000
Chase Field	0.5	n/a	F	N	N	Y	1500+20000
Citizens Bank Park	2.7	0	N	Y	N	Y	20000
Comerica Park	0	n/a	N	N	N	Y	4500
Coors Field	0	0	Y	N	N	Y	3800+16000
Dodger Stadium	1.5	1.5	N	N	N	Y	16000
Dolphins Stadium	12	3	N	N	I	Y	15000
Fenway Park	2	0	N	Y	Y	Y	1200
Great American BP	0	n/a	N	N	N	Y	850+27500
HH Metrodome	0	0	Y	N	N	Y	16000
Jacobs Field	0	0	Y	Y	N	Y	30000
Kauffman Stadium	7	n/a	N	N	N	Y	11500
Miller Park	5	n/a	N	N	N	Y	12600
Minute Maid Park	3.5	0.3	Y	N	N	Y	25000
Petco Park	0.7	1	Y	N	Y	Y	11000+20000
PNC Park	0	0	Y	N	N	Y	6000+10000
RFK Stadium	2.5	0	N	Y	N	Y	10000
Rogers Centre	0	0	Y	Y	Y	Y	17500
Safeco Field	1.2	0	F	N	Y	Y	6300
Shea Stadium	7	0	N	Y	Y	Y	8000
Tropicana Field	1	n/a	N	N	N	Y	7000
Turner Field	1.2	0.5	N	I	N	Y	2000
US Cellular Field	2.5	0	N	Y	N	Y	7000
Wrigley Field	0	0	N	Y	N	Y	400
Yankee Stadium	7	0	N	Y	F	Y	10000

Source: newballpark.blogspot.com

Many baseball stadiums have meaningful transit access.
 Y=Yes N=No F=Future Plans I=Indirect

station. (The station was renamed Chick Hearn station after the late Lakers play-by-play announcer.) The future Expo Line will stop next to the new Galen Center and the Coliseum. Both venues host USC games and events.

OCTA buses come close to the Honda Center, home of the Anaheim Ducks, and Angels Stadium. The latter has a Metro-link/Amtrak station, though service is sparse when it comes to night games.

AB 889 Gets Green Light

(from **GREEN LINE**, Page 1)

tion, according to staff, is that AB 889 does not identify a specific board composition and, in particular, the role and powers that the Metro CEO would take in a Green Line authority board. Staff also believed that a new authority would create another bureaucracy that would potentially compete for a small pool of funds. Staff noted that the Green Line extension is not funded, whereas the Gold and Expo lines had funds in place before their authorities were established.

Metrolink to Raise Fares, Upgrade Software

by Numan Parada

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink) Board voted to upgrade dated train scheduling software during their regular meeting on Fri., April 27. However, they postponed a fare hearing until May 11 to allow for further public comment.

The Board will then consider approval of a three-year program to increase fares on Metrolink trains. Since the new fares would be distance-based, individual fares were recalculated for each week-day and weekend category of riders (senior, adult, youth) for each station pair, yielding over 50,000 distinct fares.

Due to the complexity of the fare tables, the public notice referred those wishing to make a comment on the fare increases to the Metrolink website where a proposed fare calculator and the actual fare matrix with the over 50,000 individual fares were available.

Public outreach was conducted using Metrolink's onboard newsletter, seat bulletins and the website. Passengers, however, mainly took advantage of e-mail as their method of choice to communicate with Metrolink.

While the majority of the comments were in opposition to the proposed increase in fares, many also mentioned other Metrolink related issues. A significant number expressed concerns about overcrowding on certain trains and insufficient fare enforcement. Over 50 of those commenting said they did not

want an increase at all. 11 of those commenting were concerned that a fare increase will mean a decrease in passengers. Many also mentioned that if fares increase, they will no longer be able to afford Metrolink service and will be forced to look for less expensive alternatives. Eight passengers asked why a fare increase is necessary despite ridership increases over the past few years. They felt that the increased revenue from additional passengers would eliminate the need to increase fares.

The Board will then consider approval of a three-year program to increase fares on Metrolink Trains.

Two commented that lowering fares might actually increase ridership, offsetting the need for fare increases.

The Board also voted to transmit the proposed FY 08 budget to member agencies. The total FY08 preliminary budget is currently estimated at \$582.6 million, and consists of an operating budget of \$145.1 million, an increase of 7.5% from the FY 07 budget, and a capital program of \$437.5 million.

The Board awarded a \$222,400 contract to Mercer Management Consulting, Inc. for their MultiRail Passenger Edition (PE), which is an upgrade for

TSA software, which Metrolink currently employs for train scheduling. Metrolink purchased the TSA software from Passenger Transportation Specialists, Inc. (PTSI) in 1995. Since then, PTSI has discontinued selling or supporting the TSA software. The last upgrade to the TSA was in the year 2000.

Staff noted that the software uses an obsolete operating system and cannot be integrated with other programs, especially those related to future electronic signage at stations.

In addition, the Board held a special meeting on Friday, April 13. Staff reported that Metrolink ran 3,499 trains during the month of March, transporting 988,512 passengers. Systemwide on-time-performance averaged at 94.2% and 84.26% for the Antelope Valley Line due to the mini-bltz track work. The Union Pacific on-time-performance in March averaged at 98.1%. OTP was averaged at 97.2% during April. Ridership remains steady in the 43,000 range, indicating an increase from last year's 40,000.

Director Proo asked what the highest recorded ridership was, to which CEO David Solow noted there was one day with a ridership of 45,000 passengers, though it may have been due to a school group trip. Solow added that although ridership has increased, it is difficult to determine whether this is related to the continuing increases in gas price.

Advocacy In Action: Metrolink Improvements

by Numan Parada

Members of The Transit Coalition took part in several events to advocate transit improvements. March and April proved to be particularly bountiful months for awareness of public transit.

- Transit Coalition Executive Director Bart Reed was instrumental in encouraging the United Chambers of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley to approve a resolution calling for increased Metrolink service along the Ventura County and Antelope Valley lines on Monday, March 26. The resolution calls Metrolink to provide reverse commute service for jobs starting with early morning shifts, additional mid-day, evening and late night service to allow return from events and jobs, additional tracks and sidings, all-day weekend ser-

vice, completion of LA Union Station Run Through tracks, and an extension of San Fernando Valley Lines from LA Union Station to LAX via the Harbor Subdivision tracks.

- Reed was a guest speaker at the Alhambra Democratic Club meeting on Wednesday, April 18. Reed gave the group an overview on transit and advised some student guests on how to get transit improvements at their school.

- Reed spoke to the Transportation Committee of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Councils Congress on Saturday, April 14. Reed provided an overview of the past, present and potential future of rail transit in LA County, including subways, light rail, Metrolink and Amtrak. He explained why some projects have not fulfilled

their promise, what is being done today to fix those challenges and what still needs to be done.

- Reed met with Dan Leavitt of the California High Speed Rail Authority on Monday, April 16, and briefed him on local transportation developments.

- The Transit Coalition launched a new discussion board, located at transittalk.proboards37.com. Registered users can now post hyperlinks and pictures in addition to text. Links to the older discussion board are provided, though posts will no longer be made there.

- Reed took part in the Los Angeles Council District 11 Neighborhood Empowerment Congress to discuss transit options on Monday, April 9.



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You Can Make a Difference in Transit Advocacy

The Transit Coalition engages in many activities for the improvement of transit and the betterment of Southern California in its role as a policy framing and advocacy group. Each month, the print newsletter you are reading is published and a weekly eNewsletter is distributed.

Additionally, Coalition members attend various transit related meetings where they engage in public comment and speak to board members to make our views known. But in running the Coalition comes the financial challenge to pay our costs. A volunteer may go to

Washington or Sacramento, whose expenses need to be covered. Publishing a newsletter incurs printing and postage costs. That's where we need your help. Whether it's a small donation or a large gift, it all helps us grow. Can we count on your contribution?

Opinion: "Lifeline Rates" for Metro Riders

(from **LOSSAN**, Page 3)

District, have adopted plans for increased corridor service. As a result, OCTA staff believes that further integration and perhaps even consolidation of the passenger rail services should be studied for the LOSSAN corridor. Full integration or consolidation of the three services is likely to be a complicated, multi-year effort between various agencies, according to staff.

To that extent, OCTA staff proposes formal discussions with Caltrans, Metrolink, Los Angeles County Metro, Amtrak, the North County Transit District (Coaster), and the San Diego Association of Governments to define what opportunities, challenges, and constraints there are for immediate and near term service improvements in the LOSSAN corridor. The discussions would include how full integration of all passenger services in the LOSSAN corridor might occur.

Also, the *Coast Starlight* will be upgraded with rebuilt rolling stock and enhanced amenities in late 2007. The upgrade will be similar to the one performed on the *Empire Builder* in August 2005.

By **Rick Rofman**

The phone company, the gas company and L.A. Dept. of Water & Power all offer their low-income customers a lifeline rate, with financial eligibility subject to recertification.

Currently, Metro offers discount fares to seniors, the disabled, and high school and college students.

However, in many (not all) cases, these people have higher incomes than minimum and lower wage workers, who either work in sweatshops or travel inordinate distances to menial jobs,

sometimes paying a zone surcharge or a two-system combined fare.

The Bus Riders Union might reduce its opposition to fare increases in general if they could benefit from lifeline fares.

Certification for low income fares could be done by accessing the databases of AT&T, The Gas Company, LADWP or other agencies. The low income threshold could be set in conjunction with these agencies.

With the fare increases planned by Metro, a lifeline fare is essential so that poverty-level workers can get to work.

Metro Board to Hear Fare Comments

A public hearing on the first major restructuring of Metro fares in 12 years will be held on Thursday, May 24, at 9 a.m. at Metro Gateway Headquarters in downtown Los Angeles.

The Metro Board of Directors will hear public testimony at the hearing and will consider adopting changes in Metro fares. If adopted, the new fares will be phased in July 1, 2007 with a possible second adjustment on January 1, 2009.

Interested members of the public may comment in person at the public hearing, or in writing at any time prior to

the end of meeting. Correspondence may be mailed to: **Board Secretary, Attention: Fare Adjustments, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles CA 90012-2952**, or sent via email to fares@metro.net or faxed to **(213) 922-4594**.

Of particular note, discount fares for seniors, students and the disabled have not been changed since 1995.

In 2004, Metro cut the regular cash fare a dime to \$1.25, eliminated transfers, instituted the popular day pass and changed the monthly pass to \$52.



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**Moving
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www.transitcoalition.org

Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs
 11948 W. Washington Blvd. #201
 Los Angeles, CA 90066-4688

Join us Tuesday, May 22
 for our monthly meeting
 featuring Expo Line Const.
 Authority CEO Rick Thorpe
 at Philippe the Original
 (details at bottom of page)

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Attend these Upcoming Events

- **May 2 and June 6—Metro San Fernando Valley Gov. Council** 6:30 p.m., Marvin Braude Constituent Center, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys.
- **May 3 and June 7—Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority** 2:30 p.m. Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 W. Temple, 3rd Floor –Hearing Room 381B
- **May 3 and June 7—Trans Cmte Sierra Club** 7 p.m. 3435 Wilshire Boulevard, 3rd floor, Suite 320, Los Angeles.
- **May 9—LOSSAN Board** 11:30 a.m., Metro Gateway Headquarters, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles.
- **May 9—Metro Westside/Central Governance Council** 5 p.m., La Cienega Tennis Center, Sunset Room, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills.
- **May 10—SCAG MagLev Task Force** 10 a.m., SCAG Offices, 818 West 7th St., #1200, Los Angeles.
- **May 10—Metro Gateway Cities Governance Council** 2 p.m., Gas Company ERC, 9240 Firestone Blvd., Downey.
- **May 11—Metro South Bay Gov. Council** 9:30 a.m., Carson Community Center. 801 E. Carson St., Carson.
- **May 11—SCRRA Metrolink Fare Increase Public Hearing**
- **May 12—Southern California Transit Advocates (SO.CA.TA)** 1 p.m., Angelus Plaza, Room 422, 255 S. Hill St., Los Angeles.
- **May 14—Metro San Gabriel Valley Governance Council** 5 p.m., 3369 Santa Anita Avenue, El Monte (near El Monte Bus Station).
- **May 16 and 17—Metro Committee Meetings** Metro Gateway Headquarters.
- **May 22—Transit Coalition Monthly Meeting** 6:45 p.m. Philippe The Original, 1001 N. Alameda Street at Ord Street, Los Angeles.
- **May 24—Los Angeles County Metro Board Fare Increase Hearing** 9:30 a.m., Boardroom, Metro Gateway Headquarters, Los Angeles.
- **May 25—Foothill Transit Board Meeting** 8 a.m., Board Room, 100 N. Barranca Ave., 1st floor, West Covina.
- **May 25—SCRRA Metrolink Board Meeting** 10 a.m. SCAG Conference Room, 818 West 7th St., #1200, L.A.

An Invitation From The Transit Coalition Executive Director

A major victory was scored when two state Assembly committees voted for a bill to create a construction authority that would be responsible for extending the

Green Line to LAX. This promises to fix one of the most embarrassing omissions in L.A. rail transit. Still, could the objections of Metro bring the momentum to a halt? What can construction authorities teach us now?



Join us for our Tuesday, May 22, 2007 monthly membership meeting where we will discuss the current MTA & Metrolink Board developments, the latest transit actions, our advocacy plans and action steps. Expo Line Metro Construction Authority CEO Rick Thorpe will be our featured speaker. Our two-hour meeting at Philippe the Original starts at 6:45 p.m. We meet at the second floor meeting rooms. Purchase your food first and bring it upstairs. Pass the word. If you or anyone is interested, get them there Tuesday, the 22nd.

-Bart Reed
 Executive Director