

Metro Report Archives

November 2000 Articles

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Security Officers Subdue Erratic Suspect at Division 2 (Nov. 10) It was a bizarre scene that greeted two MTA Security officers when they were summoned to the Division 2 transportation building.

State Controller Connell Announces Audit of MTA (Nov. 14) State Controller Kathleen Connell announced today that she will conduct an audit of the MTA, the first in a series of audits of major transit agencies her department will perform, according to City News Service.

Second Arrest for Alleged Counterfeiter Turns Up \$16,000 in Bogus Bus Passes (Nov. 14) Pedro Sotelo was arraigned in Superior Court, today, on counterfeiting charges. He is being held in lieu of \$100,000 bail. If convicted, he could face a three-year prison sentence, according to LAPD Detective Tim Gipson.

Board Conference Calls during Strike Were Legal, Counsel

Says (Nov. 15) At each step of the protracted labor negotiations this fall, the MTA Board was on solid legal grounds when it conducted a lengthy series of telephone conference calls to discuss strategy and instruct its labor negotiators, according to Assistant County Counsel Steve Carnevale.

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Plan (Nov. 15) MTA planners are developing a draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the 25-year blueprint for transportation planning in Los Angeles County. They updated their progress at a Board workshop held today.

MTA to Refinance \$163 Mill. in Capital Debt with 30-Year Bonds

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Ribbon-Cutting Signifies Opening of Last Two Transitway Bus Stations

(Nov 17) MTA and Caltrans officials marked the expansion of express Metro bus service on the Harbor Transitway during a ribbon-cutting ceremony, today, at the newly opened Pacific Coast Highway bus station.

Tom Mahoney Named Deputy Executive Officer, Procurement

(Nov. 20)

Patrons Now Can Access County Transit Lines via Internet

(Nov. 20) Metro Bus and Metro Rail patrons who have access to the Internet can now get a detailed overview of the county's transit lines on the MTA's Internet web site, www.mta.net.

Library's New On-Line Catalog Gives Instant Access to

Publications (Nov. 20) Need some technical information to finish up a project, but don't really have time to hunt through the library for just the right publication? Just go to the MTA Library's Internet web site, and use the On-Line Library Catalog.

MTA Negotiators Set Meetings with AFSCME, ATU, TCU,

Teamsters (Nov. 21) Representatives of the MTA and AFSCME will open negotiations, Tuesday, Nov. 28, aimed at achieving a successor agreement to the current Memorandum of Understanding. Talks also are scheduled with the ATU, TCU and Teamsters union.

International Investor Services Raise MTA's Credit Rating

(Nov. 21) Two international credit rating agencies have raised the MTA's debt outlook and assigned high ratings to a recent Proposition C sales tax bond issue.

Author Ray Bradbury to Headline MTA Technology Conference

(Nov. 22) Science fiction author Ray Bradbury will headline a slate of transportation experts and futurists, Thursday, Dec. 7, at an MTA-sponsored conference on technology and innovation.

New Procurement Deputy, Bruce Feerer, to Support Transit Ops

(Nov. 27)

Board Will Take No Action on Service Changes at Nov. 30

Meeting (Nov. 27) In order to ensure that it has enough time to consider all of the issues, the MTA Board will not consider any service changes or modifications at its Nov. 30 meeting.

From Chinatown to Hollywood, LAPD Surveillance Nets

Pickpockets (Nov. 27) LAPD officers arrested four pickpocket suspects and recovered a 93-year-old Los Angeles woman's stolen wallet and personal documents, Nov. 16, following a surveillance that took them from Chinatown to Hollywood.

Arthur Leahy Named CEO of OCTA (Nov. 28) Arthur Leahy, the MTA's former executive officer for Transit Operations, has been selected as CEO of the Orange County Transit Authority. He begins his duties in mid-January.

UPDATE, NOV. 30 NoHo Parking, Rail and Bus Project Dominate Committee Meetings (Nov. 13) Four issues could dominate MTA Board committee agendas in November. Committees will discuss expanding parking at the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood station, engineering services for transportation projects in three major corridors and a permanent increase in Metro Rail service hours.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR NON-REPRESENTED STAFF SALARY INCREASE OF 2.7%.

1. All non-represented regular and temporary regular employees who were hired before July 1, 2000 and have successfully completed their initial probation by June 30, 2000.

Examples:

- a. Employee "A" was hired on 8-15-99 and successfully completed probation on 2-15-00. Employee will receive a 2.7% increase retro to 7-1-00.
 - b. Employee "B" was a represented (union) employee since 1996, promoted to a non-represented position on 11-5-99 and successfully completed probation on 5-5-00. Employee will receive a 2.7% increase retro to 7-1-00.
 - c. Employee "C" was hired on 2-1-00 and completed probation on 8-1-00. Employee will not receive any salary increase.
2. Employees who were on an unpaid absence for any portion of the fiscal year from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000, will receive a prorated salary increase for the period of time they actually worked or were on paid absence.
3. Payment of retroactive checks for employees who may have unpaid absences or who were promoted after July 1, 2000, may be delayed until the December 1st payday due to complex processing.
4. The actual salary increases will appear on the November 17 paycheck.

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Retro 2.7% Pay Raise Due, Nov. 17, by Separate Check for Most Non-Rep Employees

UPDATE: (Nov. 2) According to Human Resources, payment of retroactive checks for the 2.7 percent pay raise for employees promoted after July 1, 2000, may be delayed until payday, Dec. 1, due to the complex processing required.

[Click here for details:](#) **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR NON-REPRESENTED STAFF SALARY INCREASE OF 2.7%.**

(Nov. 1) CEO Julian Burke announced Wednesday that the retroactive 2.7 percent pay raise for non-contract employees will be paid by separate check on the Nov. 17 payday.

All non-represented regular and temporary regular employees, who were hired before July 1, 2000, and who successfully completed initial probation by June 30, 2000, will receive the raise.

Employees who were on unpaid leave of absence during the past fiscal year will receive a prorated pay increase for the period of time they actually worked or were on paid leave.

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Thieves smashed a window and damaged the interior of this car while allegedly attempting to steal a radio. The car was parked at the Metro Blue Line's Artesia station.

Sheriff's Deputies Solve String of Thefts

(Nov. 2) An alert Sheriff's deputy cruising the Metro Blue Line's Artesia Station parking lot, Oct. 24, interrupted a vehicle burglary that led to the arrest of three Compton juveniles allegedly involved two car break-ins and the robbery of a pedestrian.

Although detectives investigating the case got conflicting stories from the youths about who was actually to blame for the thefts, all three were charged with burglary.

The case began when Deputy Robert Gillis spotted two boys near a car with a smashed passenger window and damaged radio. Detectives later learned that the Honda belonged to a Compton woman who commutes by train to school.

Gillis arrested the pair, but a third youth fled the parking lot. He was arrested the following day by Sheriff's detectives.

An employment application

While questioning the suspects, detectives Brian Doyle and Glen Looney were told that the three boys first had driven to an area restaurant so one of them could drop off an employment application.

Back in the car, the three drove to an industrial area of Carson where one boy - the three disagreed about which one - allegedly broke into a Lakewood man's car, stealing the radio, a flashlight and some tools.

Next, one of the youths - again there was disagreement about which - allegedly smashed a car window and was attempting, with the help of another boy, to jimmy the radio when Deputy Gillis arrived.

After arresting the youths, Gillis searched their car and found screw drivers, wire cutters and other tools, a radio, stereo amplifier, speakers and other electronic equipment, mobile phone chargers, and a backpack allegedly taken from a pedestrian robbed sometime earlier.

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Bomb Threats Halt Light-Rail Service; Deputies Evacuate Area, Arrest LA Man

(Nov 3) Bomb threats completely closed the Metro Green Line and halted service on the Metro Blue Line from 103rd Street to the Compton Station for almost six hours Thursday night. A portion of the I-105 freeway was closed for three hours.

The phone threats forced the evacuation of some 30 MTA and Sheriff's Department employees at the MTA's Rail Operations Center. Deputies also evacuated the nearby Kenny Hahn Plaza and the Imperial Courts housing project just north of the Rosa Parks Station. No one was injured.

Controllers for the Metro Red and Blue lines were sent to the train yards where they continued to operate the system via radio and manually. Metro Green Line trains east of the Rosa Parks station were held at Norwalk until the situation cleared.

While MTA rail and bus officials scrambled to revise train service and set up bus bridges for stranded passengers, Sheriff's deputies attempted to trace the source of the threats.

Bomb Squad set charges

The county Bomb Squad, meanwhile, isolated a gray Cadillac parked at the Rosa Parks Station and twice set charges to force open its trunk. A robot, sent in about midnight, found no explosives.

Deputies later traced the bomb threat calls to a pay phone and arrested Jessie Vargas, 37, of Los Angeles. Vargas was booked on charges of making terrorist threats, making false reports of a bomb and interference with transit services. He was held at the Century Region detention Facility at Alameda and Imperial.

Thursday evening's bomb threats were the crowing event of what already had been a hectic day for Metro Rail.

During morning rush, a two-vehicle accident blocked the Metro Blue Line tracks for about 40 minutes at 119th Street in Willowbrook. At about 2:30 p.m., a train injured a female pedestrian at the Vernon Avenue intersection, delaying southbound service for about an hour.

"Yesterday was just one of those days," said Jess Diaz, Metro Rail superintendent. "It was an interesting day...."

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Catch o' the Day - OK, you had to be there, but this colorful carp turned out to be the prize for top department honors at last Friday's first-quarter review. Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky presented the funny fish to Labor Relations Director Brenda Diederichs.

Four Departments Recognized for Achievement in First Quarter

(Nov. 6) Four departments earned recognition, Friday, Nov. 3, for their accomplishments during the first three months of FY 2001. Honored at the first-quarter review meeting were Labor Relations, Public Relations, Procurement and Government Relations.

Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky praised Labor Relations for helping bring the UTU bargaining talks to a successful conclusion following almost six months of negotiations and a 32-day strike.

Lipsky singled out Government Relations for its role in obtaining \$60 million in federal transportation appropriations and for its liaison work during the Democratic National Convention.

Public Relations, which includes media relations and employee communications, won praise for communicating with the public and employees during the strike.

The Procurement Department was recognized for the dozens of emergency contracts its employees processed to keep essential services in place during the strike, as well as for contract administration support of important transit corridor studies.

Other first-quarter achievements

Among the first-quarter successes reported by individual departments were:

- ▶ **Management Audit** completed 58 construction audits and an audit of the bus warranty program.
- ▶ **Construction and Engineering** began construction on the Metro Green Line maintenance-of-way facility and reported it is on or ahead of schedule on five other projects, including the Metro Blue Line platform extension project.
- ▶ **Human Resources** hired 184 new bus operators during the

quarter and certified 159 other positions, while completing 43 equal opportunity cases.

- ▶ **Risk Management** saved the MTA some \$3.3 million through favorable court verdicts or savings on insurance claims.
- ▶ **Transit Operations** placed 114 new CNG buses in service and continued to make improvements in bus cleanliness and on-time pullouts, while recording a slight reduction in customer complaints. The department also provided highly praised bus and rail service during the Democratic National Convention in August.
- ▶ **Countywide Planning and Development** awarded \$3.9 million in grants, conducted a groundbreaking for the I-210 gap closure and completed a recommendation for a joint development of the Westlake/MacArthur Park subway station that was approved by the Board in October.
- ▶ **Administration** developed the "It's Getting Better on the Bus" advertising program and, through the Real Estate Department, generated \$3 million in lease revenues, exceeding its goal by six percent.

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Passengers Evacuated When Subway Stalls Under Santa Monica Mountains

(Nov. 7) About 100 Metro Red Line passengers were safely evacuated from a train that stalled, at 7:05 a.m., today, in the northbound tunnel between Hollywood/Highland and Universal City. No one was injured.

Consistent with training procedures and rail operations policy, the operator and a rail supervisor escorted the passengers along the tunnel catwalk to a nearby cross-passage where a special train dispatched on the southbound tracks from the Valley stations took them on board.

The train then backtracked and transported the passengers to their destinations after a 20- to 25-minute delay.

"There was never any danger to the passengers, although it was inconvenient," said Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations. "None of the passengers experienced any problems making the transfer."

Tried to troubleshoot car

Before disembarking the passengers, the operator and rail supervisor attempted to troubleshoot the car but were unable to restart it.

Northbound service out of Hollywood/Highland was restored at 9:05 a.m. In the meantime, Rail Operations Control single-tracked trains through the southbound tunnel. Bus Operations set up a bus bridge between the Hollywood/Vine and Universal City stations.

The tracks at the point where the disabled train came to a halt are some 875 feet beneath the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains. Because there is no ventilation shaft for that 3.5-mile stretch of tracks, fire-life safety regulations for a single-ventilation zone permit only one train on each track at a time.

Officials from Rail Operations, the MTA's Office of Systems Safety and Security and the LA City Fire Department are reviewing the incident.

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New Line 58 Will Serve Major Employers Between Union Station and Metro Blue Line

By ED SCANNELL

(Nov. 8) The MTA will begin bus service, Sunday, Nov. 19, on Alameda Street between Union Station and the Metro Blue Line's Washington station with the start-up of Line 58.

One of two pilot program lines developed to provide improved transportation to jobs, medical facilities and schools, Line 58 will serve three large employment centers including the VA Hospital (at Alameda and Temple), the Wholesale Produce Market and the LA Times Distribution Center near Olympic Boulevard.

Line 58 will operate seven days a week between 5:30 a.m. and 10 p.m. with 10-minute service on weekdays and 30-minute service at night and on weekends. Service will be free through Dec. 30.

Another pilot bus route, Line 214, began service, Oct. 9. Line 214 operates shuttle service linking the Artesia Transit Station on the Harbor Transitway with industrial and light-manufacturing employment areas along Main Street and Broadway.

The line also provides access to Gardena Memorial Hospital through a connection with Gardena Transit Line 3 at Gardena Boulevard and Main Street. Service operates every day between 5 a.m. and 7 p.m. with 15-minute service during peak hours and 30-minute service on nights and weekends. Fare on Line 214 is free through Dec. 16.

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Metro Bus Operator Flags Down Cops Who Arrest 3 in Robbery of Patron

(Nov. 9) Loc Tran of Los Angeles was waiting for a bus on Broadway late Monday night when two men grabbed him from behind, pulled his hood over his eyes and demanded money. They allegedly snatched his wallet and ran off.

Tran recovered his wits and chased the pair, but they rounded a corner, headed east and disappeared in an alley near 4th and Spring streets.

Just as the incident occurred, Metro Bus Operator Jose Hill-Soto, a nine-year veteran assigned to Division 7, was driving his Line 2 route northbound on Broadway.

"I saw a man being attacked by two others," said Hill-Soto, who once worked in private security. "I also saw a police car behind me, so I stopped my bus and flagged them down."

Found van parked in alley

Alerted by Hill-Soto, LAPD officers James Ferrell and Enrique Ceja spotted two men running up Broadway with a third man in hot pursuit. They lost sight of the two, but within moments found a maroon van parked in an alley. Three men were inside.

A search of the vehicle turned up Tran's wallet.

The Transit Bus Patrol officers arrested Michael Alonso and Fabian Fernandez, both 19, and Angel F. Martinez, 18, all of Los Angeles, and charged them with robbery. Alonso was held on \$50,000 bail, while Fernandez and Martinez were held on \$35,000 bail each.

"People are being victimized," said Hill-Soto, who helped identify two of the suspects. "I'd want someone to help me if the shoe were on the other foot."

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Security Officers Subdue Erratic Suspect at Division 2

(Nov. 10) It was a bizarre scene that greeted two MTA Security officers when they were summoned to the Division 2 transportation building.

A 6-foot, 300-pound man wearing carpet padding over his head was beating his head against the wall. The man, who appeared to be a transient, was non-responsive, uncooperative and incoherent. He told the officers he was hiding from people who were out to get him.

Senior Officer Rene Lopez and Officer Ronald Allen eventually walked the man, later identified as Ryon Alan Hill, 21, out of the building and tried to persuade him to leave the property. But, when Hill started to run into the path of a bus, the two officers detained and handcuffed him with the assistance of Senior Officer Miguel de la Cruz.

Turned over to the LAPD, Hill was identified as the leading suspect in a robbery and auto theft. Although documents found on Hill indicated he had once been a responsible person, according to Transit Security, he apparently had been on a rampage since sometime in October.

"Without the prompt actions by our security officers this incident could have become a lot more serious," said Daniel Cowden, director of Security. "With all the movements of our buses and other vehicles within our operating divisions this individual could have been seriously injured. Well done to the three officers."

Cowden encouraged employees to immediately call security at 922-7600 for assistance in such situations. MTA security, the LAPD or Sheriff's deputies will be dispatched to handle the incident.

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MTA to Refinance \$163 Million in Capital Debt with 30-Year Bonds

UPDATE (Nov. 15) The MTA sold \$161.4 million worth of 30-year bonds, Tuesday, in a move to refinance recent short-term loans. Bear Stearns, the lead in a syndicate that included a number of other investment banks, won the bond package with an overall interest rate of 5.28 percent.

The amount of the bonds sold Tuesday varied from the original \$163 million bond offering due to the effect of market discounts on the price, according to MTA Treasury Debt Manager Mike Smith.

(Nov. 10) The MTA plans to sell \$163 million in 30-year bonds, Nov. 14, to refinance a series of short-term loans accumulated last fiscal year to finance the agency's expenditures on bus, highway and rail-related capital projects.

The MTA will accept the competitive bid with the lowest rate of interest that meets the rules of the sale, according to Treasury Debt Manager Mike Smith.

Short-term loans usually have variable interest rates that may rise and fall with the market. By refinancing the debt as long-term bonds, the MTA can negotiate fixed interest rates that remain stable for the life of the bond.

"As a major agency, we want to balance long-term fixed rates with short-term variable rates," says Terry Matsumoto, executive officer, Finance. "After accumulating a certain amount of short-term debt to cover our expenditures, we refinance them on a long-term basis."

The MTA's last major series of bond sales occurred during the first six months of 1999 when the agency sold four bond issues totaling \$605 million. Two of the sales - refinancing bonds amounting to \$275 million - helped lower the MTA's debt service costs by a total of \$35 million over the life of the bonds.

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Update, Nov. 30 NoHo Parking, Rail and Bus Project Dominate Committee Meetings

(Nov. 13) Four issues could dominate MTA Board committee agendas in November. Committees will discuss expanding parking at the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood station, engineering services for transportation projects in three major corridors and a permanent increase in Metro Rail service hours.

The Executive Management committee will consider a motion by Mayor Richard Riordan that calls for the CEO to provide in January a plan to purchase and use articulated buses on high-ridership bus lines.

The Board also has scheduled a workshop at 10 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 15, to discuss the Year 2000 Long-Range Transportation Plan. The staff's presentation will include recommendations and projects proposed for various regions of the county. A draft of the plan will be presented to the Board in January.

North Hollywood Parking, Item 18: Approved by Board. The motion would authorize the CEO to spend up to \$352,000 to increase the amount of patron parking by paving a lot on MTA-owned land across Lankershim Boulevard, west of the North Hollywood station. Paving the lot, formerly a Pacific Red Car station, would add about 210 spaces to those on the station property, which recently was restriped to increase the capacity from 850 to 919 vehicles.

Plans for accommodating patrons at North Hollywood also include adding bike racks and bike lockers, establishing a taxi stand and placing signs directing patrons to a nearby 63-space LADOT parking lot.

Engineering Services, Item 41: Approved by Board subject to resolution of protests by unsuccessful bidders. With this motion, the committee will consider whether to proceed on a light-rail project for the Eastside transportation corridor, a rail project and a Bus Rapid Transit project in the Mid-City/Wilshire corridor, and a Bus Rapid Transit project for the San Fernando Valley. The motion would provide contracts totaling \$36.7 million for three firms to provide preliminary engineering and engineering design for the projects.

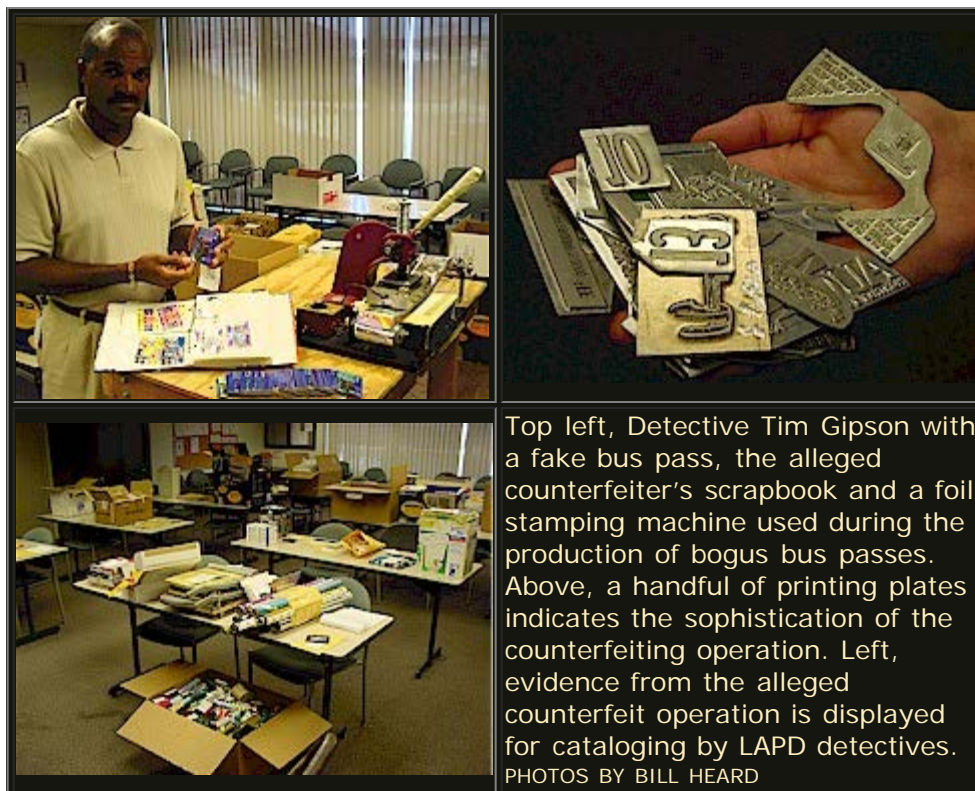
Increasing Metro Rail Hours, Item 33: Approved by Board. For most of 2000, Metro Rail has conducted a Board-authorized pilot program that extended rail operating hours from 11 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. The MTA staff has recommended making the extended hour permanent, citing late-night passenger counts that show the pilot program exceeded a passenger count baseline by 119 percent on weeknights and 197 percent on weekends.

Articulated Buses, Item 42: Approved by Board with amendment requiring compliance with MTA alternative fuels policy and the use of composite materials in manufacture of buses. A July 7, 2000, staff report concluded that replacing standard, 40-foot buses with articulated buses on high-ridership bus lines could reduce operating costs by 15 percent. The report suggested that the 58-seat buses would be best used on Bus Rapid Transit or Metro Rapid lines, or on such high-volume routes as Line 204 serving Vermont Avenue.

According to the staff report, articulated buses currently produced by

U.S. manufacturers are equipped only with diesel engines, not with CNG-powered engines. Purchasing diesel-powered articulated buses would require an exception to the Board's alternative fuel policy, the report said. AQMD rules requiring alternative fuel vehicles also permit exemptions when no low-emission engines are available for a certain type of vehicle.

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Second Arrest for Alleged Counterfeiter Turns Up \$16,000 in Bogus Bus Passes

UPDATE (Nov. 14) Pedro Sotelo was arraigned in Superior Court, today, on counterfeiting charges. He is being held in lieu of \$100,000 bail. If convicted, he could face a three-year prison sentence, according to LAPD Detective Tim Gipson.

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Nov. 13) When LAPD detectives arrested him last Thursday evening, Pedro Sotelo, 30, didn't seem to be worried. Officers only found a couple of bogus bus passes in his possession.

But, according to one detective, a member of the Transit Group's Revenue Protection Unit, Sotelo's mood changed when officers searched his Los Angeles apartment and found some \$16,000 worth of counterfeit passes and the sophisticated equipment used to print them. He was charged with counterfeiting.

It was the second counterfeiting arrest in 11 months for Sotelo, an illegal alien. On Dec. 30, 1999, he and two women were arrested for allegedly manufacturing and distributing fake bus passes. Police also seized more than 5,000 items of evidence.

Sotelo was held briefly on \$100,000 bail and later released on probation. At the time, police estimated the counterfeit ring may have cost the MTA more than \$2 million annually in lost revenues.

10-month investigation

Thursday's arrest came at the conclusion of a 10-month investigation, during which detectives traced Sotelo's whereabouts through the street activities of bogus pass sellers and go-betweens.

They swooped in for the arrest when he was seen allegedly making a sale to a middleman. Detectives also questioned and released a second

suspect.

During a search of Sotelo's apartment, detectives found several hundred counterfeit passes, printing plates, high-speed production equipment and 267 rolls of foil - enough to make tens of thousands of bus passes.

"The quality of his work seems to be the best of any counterfeit passes we've seen," said Agapito Diaz, MTA director of Revenue. "We estimate that between counterfeiting and other kinds of fare evasion, the MTA is losing between \$4 million and \$8 million a year in revenue."

High-volume production

"It appeared Sotelo could supply any demand of from 500 to 10,000 passes or more a month," said Detective Tim Gipson, Revenue Protection Unit supervisor. "Once he obtained a bus pass, we think he was capable of duplicating it and distributing passes on the street within a day and a half."

Gipson estimated that a counterfeiter would have to produce at least 1,500 to 2,000 fake passes each month to have a profitable operation. At a street price of \$20 each, production of that minimal amount would reap \$30,000 to \$40,000 a month.

"Our objective was to take the press out of operation," Gipson said.

"Conducting the investigation and months'-long surveillance of the counterfeiting suspects were detectives Simon garcia, Jose Martinez, Andy Woods, Joseph Hopkins, Gary Dubois, Todd Waymire and Evan Guevarra. They were assisted in the arrests by officers Carlos de la Cruz and Angela Downs of the Transit Bus Division. Detective Douglas Raymond supervised the operation.

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Board Conference Calls during Strike Were Legal, Counsel Says



Steve Carnevale

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Nov. 15) At each step of the protracted labor negotiations this fall, the MTA Board was on solid legal grounds when it conducted a lengthy series of telephone conference calls to discuss strategy and instruct its labor negotiators, according to Assistant County Counsel Steve Carnevale.

Carnevale said the repeated continuations of the Board's labor strategy meetings via telephone were properly noticed to the public as required by the state's open meetings law, the Ralph M. Brown Act.

His comments were made in reaction to an article published in Wednesday's edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, which raised questions about the legality of the conference calls.

Carnevale said the conference call meetings - every one of which he participated in as the Board's legal advisor and all of which concerned labor matters - would not have been open to the public under any circumstances.

Brown Act allows continuances

"Each continuance was posted and announced on the MTA's web page," Carnevale said. They also were posted on bulletin boards in the Headquarters building.

"There are no limits on the Board's ability to do that as long as the agenda isn't changed and the Board never changed the agenda," he said. "The Brown Act clearly allows you to continue a meeting."

Looking back over the negotiating period, Carnevale agreed that the circumstances that required the series of conference calls among Board members were unusual.

"There's no other mechanism for the Board to stay on top of a critical situation other than to have such meetings," he said. "If they had tried to comply with the 24-hour notice for a new meeting, the strike might still be going on."

"You can't manage in such circumstances," he added, "unless you take advantage of what the Brown Act specifically allows...and that's to continue the meetings."

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MTA Planners Developing Draft of Long-Range Transportation Plan

By ED SCANNELL

(Nov. 15) MTA planners are developing a draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the 25-year blueprint for transportation planning in Los Angeles County. They updated their progress at a Board workshop held today.

Due to be presented to the Board in January, 2001, the Long-Range Transportation Plan recommendations will lay out in detail the mobility challenges facing the county in the next quarter century.



Jim de la Loza,
Executive Officer for
Countywide Planning

The plan also will present solutions for developing a transportation system that improves the region's mobility, air quality and access during a time when the county is expected to experience unprecedented growth in population. No easy feat.

"The plan will make it clear that we are not going to be able to build our way out of congestion," said Jim de la Loza, executive officer for Countywide Planning. "In large measure, we need to make better use of what we already have, target our resources and use our infrastructure more efficiently."

Maintaining quality of life

De la Loza says if the MTA just maintains current programs and funding levels, the region's air quality, economy and quality of life will diminish. The good news, however, is that there is a lot the MTA, in partnership with Caltrans, SCAG (Southern California Association of Governments), local governments and the private sector, can do to meet the challenge.

That said, the LRTP will present a series of recommendations and directions including:

- Restructuring of bus and rail service countywide,
- Expansion of the Metro Rapid Bus System,
- Development of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT),
- Completion of three transit corridor projects (Eastside, Mid-Cities and San Fernando Valley East-West) currently under environmental clearance,
- Community based service (shuttles, community circulators),
- Examination of potential light rail extensions,
- Completion of the HOV system,
- Freeway gap closures and interchange improvements,
- Development of intelligent transportation systems,
- Construction of additional soundwalls,
- Maintaining commitments to the Alameda Corridor and Alameda Corridor East projects,
- Consideration of other goods movement projects that address increasing goods movement on highways and arterials and projects that support access to ports and airports, and
- Demand management strategies such as ridesharing and off-peak use of highways and arterials, which make efficient use of the transportation system.

"There's no magic bullet, no single solution to solving the challenges to mobility in the years ahead," said de la Loza. "The good news is

there are a lot of actions which collectively can make the difference between a region stalled in gridlock and one that continues to thrive as it grows."

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MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke, center, leads dedication ceremony joined by Caltrans District 7 Director Robert Sassaman, left, MTA Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner, and MTA Board Vice-Chair James Cragin, at right.

PHOTO BY JOSÉ UBALDO

Ribbon-Cutting Signifies Opening of Last Two Transitway Bus Stations

By JOSÉ UBALDO
(Nov 17) MTA and Caltrans officials marked the expansion of express Metro bus service on the Harbor Transitway during a ribbon-cutting ceremony, today, at the newly opened Pacific Coast Highway bus station.

MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke, MTA and Caltrans officials dedicated the PCH and Carson Street bus stations - the last to be opened on the 19.5-mile Transitway. The high-speed bus and carpool lane, which runs down the middle of the I-110 freeway,

connects San Pedro, downtown Los Angeles and points between.

Bus riders and carpool users can save an estimated one minute travel time per mile by using the Harbor Transitway, compared to solo drivers bucking rush-hour traffic on the Harbor Freeway.

"This is another example of how MTA is steadily improving Metro Bus service," said Board Chair Burke. "There's more service, cheaper fares and newer buses, and bus riders will get to and from downtown Los Angeles more quickly, because they'll be traveling in the carpool lanes."

Six existing stations

The new stations at PCH and Carson Street join six existing express bus stations at the Artesia Transit Center, Rosecrans Avenue, Harbor/I-105, Manchester Avenue, Slauson Avenue and 37th Street. Free park-and-ride lots are located at all but the 37th Street station.

Metro Bus express lines 445, 446, 447 and 550 serve the Transitway stations from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week, with 30-minute headways during peak weekday periods and hourly during off-peak and on weekends. From the Harbor/I-105 station north, however, the convergence of other bus lines provides passenger service about every eight minutes during morning and evening commutes.

Cash fares on all MTA Transitway bus lines through Jan. 31, 2000, have been reduced from \$3.35 to \$1.35 – no freeway zone charges will be in effect.

Joining Supervisor Burke at the opening ceremony were Caltrans District 7 Director Robert Sassaman, MTA Board Vice-Chair James Cragin and MTA Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner. Following the ceremony the group, along with media, experienced the new service by riding special buses from the PCH station to the Harbor/I - 105 station and back.

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Patrons Now Can Access County Transit Lines via Internet

(Nov. 20) Metro Bus and Metro Rail patrons who have access to the Internet can now get a detailed overview of the county's transit lines on the MTA's Internet web site, www.mta.net.

Clicking on the "Metro Bus and Rail System Map" address on the MTA home page reveals a transit map with six sectors. The map shows the routes of all lines operated by the MTA and the county's municipal transit agencies.

"We're excited about this feature because it's the first time a map of LA County's entire bus and rail system has been available on our web site," said Warren Morse, deputy executive officer of Marketing and Customer Relations. "Coupled with the Metro Trip Planner, this map now makes detailed transit information accessible 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world."

The "Sector Descriptions" portion of the screen gives a complete listing of the communities to be found in each map sector. A user also can view all the lines operating in a particular sector by clicking on any one of six sector addresses.

Clicking on "East Los Angeles/San Gabriel Valley," for example, activates the Adobe Acrobat Reader and brings up a small-scale view of the area.

A user can expand the size of the map in several ways: by clicking on the "actual size" icon just above the screen, by using the "zoom-in tool" that resembles a magnifying glass, or by clicking on the percentage indicator in the lower left-hand corner of the screen and selecting a larger size.

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Library's New On-Line Catalog Gives Instant Access to Publications

(Nov. 20) Need some technical information to finish up a project, but don't really have time to hunt through the library for just the right publication? Just go to the MTA Library's Internet web site, and use the On-Line Library Catalog.

No more flipping through hundreds of cards when you can just enter a keyword or browse through the library's holdings by author, title or subject.

Selecting a publication from among a list presented by the on-line catalog will give the user a description of the publication, including the author, title and a summary of the book, periodical or video and call number or "holdings."

By clicking on "Add to Bib," the user can create a personal bibliography which will list all the publications he or she has selected. The Bibliography page can be saved, changed, printed, deleted or sorted. Instructions for using the Bibliography can be found by clicking on "Help."

"Next step," says Librarian Dorothy Gray, "is to visit the library on the 15th floor, go to the stacks, get your book and check it out. The contents or full reports of our publications are not yet available on-line; that takes a few mega bucks, but we're in the flow!"

To reach the Library's web page, click on ["MTA Library"](#) in the Department section of the MTA's Internet home page. Then click on "Search the MTA's Library Catalog" and ["Begin."](#)

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Tom Mahoney Named Deputy Executive Officer, Procurement



Thomas P. Mahoney

(Nov. 20) Tom Mahoney married his kindergarten sweetheart, enlisted in the Air Force at age 18, graduated from college, won an officer's commission, earned two master's degrees and retired as a colonel.

Now, he's found "the best job in the world" in the MTA's Procurement Department as deputy executive officer for construction procurement.

In his new position, Mahoney is responsible for a 45-member department whose members develop, award and administer construction contracts and personal services and other contracts for MTA planning. He reports directly to Lonnie Mitchell, executive officer, Procurement.

"The best job in the world is being a construction contract administrator," says Mahoney, 47. "You get to watch a project from when it was a twinkle in someone's eye to the fully completed facility."

Managerial and executive positions

Prior to joining the MTA, Mahoney served in numerous managerial and executive positions in which he was responsible for buying parts and supplies and for contracts for major new construction and renovation projects at Air Force facilities in the U.S. and overseas.

As general manager of operational purchasing at the Air Force Material Command, he managed \$1.6 billion in purchases and contracts and was responsible for the activities of some 850 personnel at 10 locations.

During the mid-1990s, Mahoney served as a professor and department chairman at the Air Command and Staff College in Montgomery, Ala. In that post, he also taught history and military strategy.

Mahoney earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Upper Iowa University in 1975 and a master's in business administration from Central Michigan University in 1976. In 1994, he earned a second master's degree in history from the University of Alabama. Currently, he is well along in the development of his doctoral thesis in public administration.

Mahoney recently bought a home in Orange with his wife, Ellen, director of nursing at St. Joseph Heritage Medical Clinic. The Mahoneys have two children, Christopher, 27, an Army artillery staff sergeant, and a daughter, Jennifer, 25.

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International Investor Services Raise MTA's Credit Rating

By ED SCANNELL

(Nov. 21) Two international credit rating agencies have raised the MTA's debt outlook and assigned high ratings to a recent Proposition C sales tax bond issue.

Moody's Investors Service and Fitch IBCA, Duff and Phelps have both revised the rating outlook for all MTA debt to "stable" from "negative."

In addition, the MTA's recent sale of \$161.4 million in Proposition C sales tax revenue bonds earned an "A1" rating from Moody's and an "A" rating from Fitch.

Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky said the ratings are a positive development for the MTA.

Financial community confidence

"We are pleased that the financial community recognizes the soundness of our organization," said Lipsky. "These actions show the financial community's confidence that the MTA is well prepared to address the critical transportation needs of our county."

Moody's said it upgraded the MTA's debt rating because of "the progress that management has made in stabilizing the organization's financial, management and operating position."

"In Moody's opinion, management's continued emphasis toward streamlining operations and consolidating accountability and consensus within the organization should help to successfully meet the challenges of defining its future mission and service expansion," the statement said.

A statement released by Fitch said its "A" rating reflected "greater (MTA) management stability, a refocused and more affordable capital program, rail construction completion, better relations with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and favorable resolution of the recent strike."

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MTA Negotiators Set Meetings with AFSCME, ATU, TCU, Teamsters

(Nov. 21) Representatives of the MTA and AFSCME will open negotiations, Tuesday, Nov. 28, aimed at achieving a successor agreement to the current Memorandum of Understanding. Talks also are scheduled with the ATU, TCU and Teamsters union.

Employees represented by AFSCME have been working since May 15 under an MOU covering wages, benefits and working conditions. The MOU expires March 31, 2001.

Although many aspects of a contract were settled during the MOU negotiations, the MTA and AFSCME still need to reach agreement on such items as benefits and pension, according to Brenda Diederichs, director, Labor Relations.

Meeting with TCU

Meanwhile, negotiators for the MTA and TCU negotiated Monday and were meeting again on Tuesday to discuss terms of a new labor contract. Diederichs reported that the two sides are making progress in the negotiations.

MTA negotiators expect to meet later in November with ATU representatives to continue discussions on wages, pension, benefits and other items.

"We'd like to resolve this contract as soon as possible," said Diederichs. "Once we have agreement and sign a contract, our ATU employees can begin receiving the wages and benefits agreed to in the new contract."

The MTA also has scheduled a negotiating session, Nov. 29, with Teamster representatives for the agency's security officers. At issue are wages, pension and other contract items. The Teamster contract expired Sept. 30.

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Author Ray Bradbury to Headline MTA Technology Conference

(Nov. 22) Science fiction author Ray Bradbury will headline a slate of transportation experts and futurists, Thursday, Dec. 7, at an MTA-sponsored conference on technology and innovation.

The day-long conference, scheduled from 8:45 to 3 p.m. in the Board room, will look at the future of transportation in LA County and how the transportation infrastructure may be impacted by technology and innovation.



Ray Bradbury

Participants are expected to include elected officials and staff, citizens, academics, students and transit experts. The conference will be open to the media.

Effect on everyday life

In a symposium on demographics, panelists will discuss trends in population growth and how that will affect transportation in the region. During a panel on the future of technology in transportation, the discussion will focus on how the Internet, e-business and other technology will affect everyday life and travel patterns.

Speakers addressing changes in travel behavior will look at innovative transportation demand management projects from around the world.

Scheduled to speak at the "Technology & Innovation/TDM Forum" in addition to Bradbury are Todd Litman, an expert in demand management; UCLA professors Leo Estrada and Hayes Bautista, experts in demographics; e-business experts Ann Strosaker and Siva Darivemula of IBM; Board Chair Yvonne Burke; and Board Member Jose Legaspi.

Presentations also are scheduled by Ford and General Motors, which now produce electric cars, Th!nk and AT&T. For more information, contact Shelley Azizi at 922-3027 or at

azizis@mta.net.

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From Chinatown to Hollywood, LAPD Surveillance Nets Pickpockets

(Nov. 27) LAPD officers arrested four pickpocket suspects and recovered a 93-year-old Los Angeles woman's stolen wallet and personal documents, Nov. 16, following a surveillance that took them from Chinatown to Hollywood.

The four, whose records included pickpocket arrests in New York, Chicago, Las Vegas and San Francisco, were charged with grand theft, person. Three of the four had outstanding warrants against them for grand theft.

According to police reports, Officers Refugio Garza, Lorena Alcaraz and George Oto of the Transit Group's Pickpocket Detail were working a bus stop at Broadway and Ord in Chinatown when they spotted three men and a woman who appeared to be targeting an elderly bus patron.

Tracked the suspects

The patron boarded a bus and the group then drove off in a Nissan Maxima, followed at a discrete distance by the officers. They tracked the suspects to North Fairfax Avenue, a hangout for professional pickpockets who frequent the area's many thrift shops.

Officers Chang Kim, Maggie Sherman and Sgt. Bruce Vermaat, also of the Pickpocket Detail, observed the suspects enter a thrift shop. Officer Kim followed and watched as they surrounded an elderly woman, then allegedly lifted her wallet.

Officers arrested Jose Moreno, 39; Julio Alarcon, 40; and Manuel Perez, 40, all of Los Angeles; and Nancy Pinargote, 34, of Hollywood. They were booked at the Hollywood Division and charged with grand theft, person.

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Board Will Take No Action on Service Changes at Nov. 30 Meeting

By RICK JAGER

(Nov. 27) In order to ensure that it has enough time to consider all of the issues, the MTA Board will not consider any service changes or modifications at its Nov. 30 meeting.

The service changes, which were presented for public comment twice in October and once in November, will be presented to the Board at a later time, possibly in January.

The delay also will allow the staff to pursue discussions with other transit operators to be certain that adequate alternative transit options are available if MTA-provided service is modified.

Proposed changes

The following changes are proposed to improve bus service and access for passengers using the Harbor Transitway: Metro Bus lines 51, 351, 205, 445, 446, 447 and 550.

In the Wilshire/Whittier corridor, lines 18, 20, 21, 22, 471, and 720 are proposed to be restructured and/or canceled to reduce service duplication and better match service to customer demand.

In the Ventura corridor, the following service is proposed to be restructured to improve services and meet customer demand: lines 150, 240, and 750.

Other miscellaneous service change proposals designed to improve the operation of Metro Bus service are :Lines 40, 42, 102, 107, 114, 220, 250, 253, 340, 402, 436, 442, 466, 484, 490, 491, 497, 620 and 625.

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New Procurement Deputy, Bruce Feerer, to Support Transit Ops



Bruce Feerer

(Nov. 27) When Bruce Feerer was 12 years old and about to start his teen years in Yokohama, Japan, he couldn't buy a hamburger - a fact most American boys in the early 1960s would consider a genuine hardship.

"That was before the Americanization of Japan," recalls Feerer, the son of a National Cash Register executive who, with his family, lived abroad for many years. Things began to change in 1964 when Japan hosted the Olympics.

"We lived in a neighborhood of mostly Japanese families and we assimilated into the local culture very quickly," says the Dayton, Ohio, native. Because of a heightened interest in learning English among many Japanese, he tutored friends in his native language.

These days, Feerer (pronounced "Fear") will be assimilating into another culture as a deputy executive officer in Procurement.

Transit Operations support

In his new position, he is responsible for a 40-member department that provides purchasing, contract and materiel procurement support primarily to Transit Operations. He reports to Lonnie Mitchell, executive officer, Procurement.

Prior to joining the MTA, Feerer, 53, was deputy program manager for the Global Positioning System antenna project at Science Applications International Corp. in Los Angeles. Earlier, he was Southern California procurement quality manager for Lockheed Martin in Harlingen, Tex.

A retired Navy captain, Feerer enlisted in 1971 following graduation from the University of Cincinnati, where he earned a degree in business administration. After training in electronics and nuclear engineering, he was selected for officer candidate school. He was commissioned in 1973 as a Navy Supply Corps officer and was assigned to the fleet ballistic missile submarine USS Ulysses S. Grant.

Assignments in management

Feerer's early Navy career included assignments in inventory and materials management and procurement aboard ship and at naval stations on the east and west coasts. As deputy acquisitions director of the Seawolf submarine procurement project in the late 1980s, he was responsible for a \$2 billion development and production program.

In the mid-1990s, Feerer was involved with contract management for NASA's space shuttle program and the International Space Station. Later, he managed contracts valued at \$25 billion for Army, Navy and Air Force missile development and production programs.

Feerer earned master's degree in business administration in 1981 from the University of Florida. He also completed the program managers course at the Defense Systems Management College in 1987 and the executive management program at the Katz School, University of Pittsburgh, in 1995.

Feerer and his wife, Patty, a manager for DSC, Inc., a high-tech engineering firm, live in Redondo Beach. The Feerers have two

daughters, Lisa, 24, a leasing manager in Washington, D.C., and Dianne, 22, a junior business major at Cal State Long Beach.

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Arthur Leahy Named CEO of OCTA

- **Starts Job in January**

(Nov. 28) Arthur Leahy, the MTA's former executive officer for Transit Operations, has been selected as CEO of the Orange County Transit Authority. He begins his duties in mid-January.



According to a City News Service report, Leahy will replace former OCTA chief Lisa Mills, who resigned in July. Leahy currently is head of Metro Transit in Minneapolis, where he had served as CEO since 1996.

Leahy, who was among five finalists for the post, was chosen on an 11-0 vote of the OCTA Board, which also approved a \$155,000 annual salary.

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