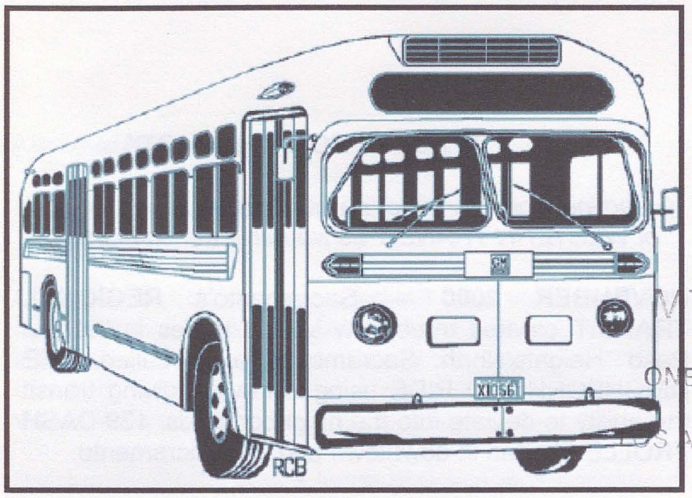


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VOL. 43, NO. 11 **November 2005**

LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MTA)

LOS ANGELES: Following many years of planning and discussion, and two years of actual construction, the *METRO ORANGE LINE,* an exclusive Transitway running east and west through the San Fernando Valley along a former *SOUTHERN PACIFIC* railroad right-of-way, opened for business the weekend of October 28/29 with appropriate ceremonies and a weekend of free rides.

Advertised as "the Valley's new shortcut", **MTA** 901-WARNER CENTER-NORTH HOLLYWOOD METRO LINER, operates from Division 8 using a fleet of thirty NABI 60-foot articulated buses (9200-9229), specially painted silver over gray with orange lettering.

The 64-seat buses are the first of an order of 200 NABI model 60-BRT buses for **MTA** *(Ed. Note – the next group will be red and silver and are to be assigned to 754-VERMONT RAPID and new 757-WESTERN RAPID beginning next month).*



The 14-mile line travels on the exclusive right of way between North Hollywood Station and the end of the ROW near Victory and Variel, then crosses Victory and loops via Variel, Oxnard, Owensmouth, Erwin and Variel to Oxnard. There are a total of 13 stations.

The *ORANGE LINE* operates as a cross between a bus and a train. The vehicle is a bus which may be boarded thru any of three doors. Fares are paid off the bus (the buses have no fareboxes), either using a *METRO* Pass or by purchasing a ticket from a Ticket Vending Machine, located at each station. Fare Inspectors will be riding the buses.

The stations all include canopies, benches, TVMs, bike racks, lighting and security cameras. The transitway also includes a bikeway and pedestrian walkway areas.

Service operates daily eastbound from Warner Center beginning at 339AM with the last bus at 1203AM. Buses leave North Hollywood starting at 437AM until 1252AM. On weekdays, buses operate every 5 minutes in peaks and every 10 minutes midday with 30 minute headways after 700PM. On weekends, the peak and midday headways are every 12 minutes.

Most bus route changes related to the *ORANGE LINE* occurred in June 2005, but there were changes in October on Lines 156-VAN NUYS-CHANDLER and 233-VAN NUYS BOULEVARD.

Except for late night and Owl buses that still run between Van Nuys/Roscoe and 7th/Hill downtown, Line 156 was shortened to operate between *ORANGE LINE* Van Nuys Station and Santa Monica/Highland.

Headways on Line 233 were improved every day with three service patterns – all trips begin at Ventura Blvd and turn back at Roscoe or Glenoaks with thru-trips going to Lakeview Terrace (Eldridge/Terra Bella).

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (PUC)

SAN FRANCISCO: Below are applications before and decisions of the California Public Utilities Commission:

APPLICATIONS

THUNDERBIRD TOURS, INC. for TCP-19286-A, Charter Party authority with a home terminal of Chino Hills.

Norman Feazell dba BLUE RIBBON BUS LINES for TCP-19287-B, Charter Party authority with a home terminal in Compton.

Wei Liu dba JINSHENG EXPRESS for TCP-19296-B, Charter Party authority with a home terminal on West 130th Street in Los Angeles.

RSD LEASING LLC dba PHAT CAT LIMOUSINES for TCP-19311-B, Charter Party authority with a home terminal of Lakeside.

NAPA VALLEY TOUR COMPANY, LLC for TCP-19317-B, Charter Party authority with a home terminal of Napa.

Department of Corrections

The fleet numbers of the four Transmark TRE-32s that **BURBANK BUS** recently placed into service *(WT 10/05)* are 806-809.

How To Contact Us

Edmund Buckley	ebuckley@western-transit.com
Craig Barnes	cabarnes@western-transit.com

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"PAGES FROM THE PAST"

(Headline stories or other news items from past issues of WESTERN TRANSIT as we relive transit history)

NOVEMBER 2000 – Sacramento's **REGIONAL TRANSIT** created three new shuttle routes in the Del Paso Heights/North Sacramento area called THE NEIGHBORHOOD RIDE using cutaways giving transit the ability to deviate into the neighborhoods. 139-DASH TROLLEY began in downtown and Old Sacramento.

NOVEMBER 1995 – The five local line, six bus **COMPTON RENAISSANCE TRANSIT** system began operating Monday thru Saturday. *ATE MANAGEMENT,* now *FIRST TRANSIT,* was the contract operator.

NOVEMBER 1990 – AIRPORT COACH substantially modified most of its routes creating a SHUTTLE in the Disneyland area serving hotels to the north as the AIRPORT buses concentrated in the south, a new ORANGE COUNTY AIRPORT-IRVINE-LAGUNA HILLS route added and a ZORF first used to change fares.

NOVEMBER 1985 – SCRTD 602-DOWNTOWN MINI RIDE and 605-WESTWOOD MINIBUS LOOP were replaced by the City of Los Angeles sponsored and *DIVERSIFIED PARATRANSIT* operated DOWNTOWN AREA SHORT HOP or DASH downtown shuttle bus.

NOVEMBER 1980 – Transit in Stanislus County was beginning to grow – Modesto's **INTRACITY TRANSIT** expanded, *STORER TRANSPORTATION SERVICE* started a CALTRANS funded MODESTO-HICKMAN route while the County was funding one *GREYHOUND LINES* daily round trip between communities on the west side and Modesto with plans for more services.

WT Staff For This Month

EDITOR:	Edmund Buckley
ASSOCIATE EDITOR:	Craig Barnes
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT:	Jim Moore
SENIOR STAFF:	Alan Fong Marvin Martin Andrew Novak
REPORTERS & SOURCES:	Armando Avalos Patrick Hardie Russ Jones Scott Page Gerald L. Squier Ed Von Nordeck

(Continued from page 1)

LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (LADOT)

LOS ANGELES: In conjunction with the opening of the **MTA** *ORANGE LINE,* **LADOT** modified its operations in the Warner Center area to enlarge the DASH/WARNER CENTER and to reroute and reschedule 575-SIMI VALLEY-WARNER CENTER, starting October 28th.

Previously, DASH was a lunch time two-directional loop (two buses traveling each way on 10 minute headways between 1100AM and 200PM) using the El Dorado MST 2800 buses (98037-98041) from Line 575.

DASH was divided into NORTH and SOUTH, each a one-way loop with a common routing on Erwin between Owensmouth and Canoga, but otherwise separate.

NORTH travels along Erwin, Canoga, Victory, De Soto, Vanowen and Owensmouth to Erwin. Weekday service begins at 645AM on a ten-minute headway (2 cutaways) until 900AM, then every 20 minutes (1 cutaway) until 300PM and then every 10 minutes until the last trip at 650PM. Saturday service is NEW with a 20-minute headway between 900AM and 600PM.

SOUTH operates on Erwin, De Soto, Burbank, Canoga, Oxnard and Owensmouth to Erwin. Weekday service span is the same as NORTH with 8-minute peak headways (2 cutaways) and 15-minute midday headways (1 cutaway). Saturday service runs every 15 minutes between 900AM and 600PM.

DASH/WARNER CENTER continues to be operated by *FIRST TRANSIT, INC.* but now as part of the DASH Package 3 contract. Operation of 575 was transferred to *CONNEX WEST* as part of COMMUTER EXPRESS including upgrading three city owned buses (expected to be former **FOOTHILL TRANSIT** 200 series Gilligs) for use on Line 575.

Line 575 service levels and alignment were changed. Simi Valley Park & Ride stops at Simi Bowl, Mervyn's and Brunswick Bowl were discontinued due to weight restrictions and ingress/egress issues related to the 40-foot buses now assigned. There are now three morning and afternoon trips on hourly headways. The bus begins at Simi Valley *METROLINK* traveling Los Angeles, Stearns, Highway 118, Topanga Canyon, Devonshire, Chatsworth *METROLINK*, Lassen, De Soto, Vanowen, Owensmouth, Victory, Canoga, Erwin, Owensmouth, Oxnard, Canoga and Burbank to De Soto.

The DASH Package Five contract *(WT 9/05)* has yet to be awarded and so the *FIRST TRANSIT, INC.* contract for DASH/WILMINGTON and the *CONNEX TCT* pact for CHESTERFIELD SQUARE and VERMONT/MAIN have both been extended for three more months.

Perhaps the biggest **LADOT** news is the introduction of the HOLLYWOOD NIGHTLIFE TROLLEY, scheduled for December 22nd.

HNT will operate on Thursday thru Saturday between 800PM and 400AM charging $1. The route is currently being developed and the line will be operated by *FIRST TRANSIT, INC* using the Specialty Vehicle replica trolleys (01001-01003), previously used on the now discontinued BUNKER HILL TROLLEY.

HNT will operate as a one-year pilot program to link the area **MTA** RED LINE Stations and various city owned parking lots with the numerous Hollywood Entertainment Zone restaurants and nightclubs.

LADOT recently launched a year-long study of the DASH/DOWNTOWN seven route system to include current riders, business owners and developers and area residents. The purpose of the study is to determine how to modify the system, last changed in 1996, to meet the demands of today.

The City Council approved another extension, to June 2006, of all CITYRIDE service contracts with *CONNEX WEST* for Areas 1 and 2 and *WLCAC* for Area 3.

SAN BERNARDINO ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS (SANBAG)

SAN BERNARDINO: SANBAG requires each transit system that it funds needs to prepare a multi-year operating and capital plan every other year. Plans list a description and evaluation of existing services, identification of needs and a forecast of service and capital improvements over the next few years.

Recently, SANBAG approved plans for the cities of Barstow and Needles (**BARSTOW AREA TRANSIT** and **NEEDLES AREA TRANSIT), MORONGO BASIN TRANSIT AUTHORITY, MOUNTAIN AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY, VICTOR VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY** and **OMNITRANS.**

BAT service consists of three fixed routes in Barstow, a demand response service in the city during the day for the elderly and disabled and for the general public during early and late weekday hours and on weekends. There is also a general public demand response service for Daggett, Hinkley, Lenwood, Newberry Springs and Yermo. The city also administers two County contract demand response programs in Trona and Big River.

(Continued on page 4)

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BAT has plans to expand next fiscal year as the existing system will be enlarged to five routes. The plan also includes purchase of three replacement and two expansion 30-35 foot 12-year CNG buses. Over the next four years, 11 more replacement and 2 expansion units will be acquired. Some will be impacted by the fact that transit agencies can no longer acquire Original Equipment Manufactured CNG fueled paratransit buses

NEEDLES AREA TRANSIT offers one deviated fixed route (hourly 700AM-700PM weekdays and 1000AM-200PM on Saturday) and weekday only demand response service for elderly and disabled. *LAIDLAW EDUCATIONAL SERVICES* operates fixed route and *NEEDLES SENIORS* operates the demand response.

Service plans call for status quo **NAT** operations, although both fixed route vehicles and one demand response bus will be replaced.

MBTA operates six deviated fixed routes on one and two hour headways on weekdays and Saturdays in the Landers/Yucca Valley/Twentynine Palms area and three weekday (one weekend) round trips (Lines 12 and 15) between the Morongo Basin and Palm Springs.

Plans call for increasing Saturday service levels on the HIGHWAY 62 ROUTE and installation of solar lights at numerous bus stops in the next fiscal year. Over the next four years, 14 revenue vehicles will be replaced.

MARTA offers fixed route and general public demand response services within the Big Bear Valley, a fixed route and demand response between Running Springs and the Valley of Enchantment, a CMAQ demonstration project, BIG BEAR VISITORS TROLLEY, and two "Off The Mountain" routes to/from San Bernardino. This year an additional bus will be in Bear Valley and a fare restructuring study will be conducted. 15 replacement vehicles will be purchased over the next four years.

OMNITRANS is expected to operate under the "Financially Constrained Scenario" which has a 7.4% increase in hours this year, which hours will then remain constant. These include increase frequency on Lines 61 and 66 and new 14L-FOOTHILL LIMITED *(WT 9/05).*

The significant issue for **OT** is that by FY 09, they will not meet the state mandated farebox recovery ratio of 20% fixed route, 10% paratransit, even with a planned fare increase in FY 08. The "new services" can be excluded from calculations for their first two years.

VICTOR VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY operates ten fixed routes in Apple Valley, Adelanto, Victorville and Hesperia, three deviated fixed routes in unincorporated county areas and ADA demand response services for persons with disabilities.

Until the on-going VVTA Operations and Growth Study is completed, a status quo operation is planned. A major objective of the study is how to provide hourly headways on the regional fixed route system.

VICTOR VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (VVTA)

VICTORVILLE: The **VVTA** FY 04-05 budget includes purchase of five replacement buses and the agency will soon order five Bluebird CNG powered, low floor units.

VVTA and *ATC/VANCOM* staff compared five different brands for cost of maintenance, performance, rider comfort and appropriateness for the terrain prior to recommending the purchase of Bluebirds.

The buses are an assignment from a procurement of the **SUNSET EMPIRE TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT** of Astoria, Oregon.

On September 19th, Line 41-VICTORVILLE-ST. MARY'S was rerouted in the Stoddard Wells Road area – from Stoddard Wells and Dante, buses return on Stoddard Wells, Highway 18, 4th (Transit Center), across D Street on 4th to B and regular route.

Since the discontinuation of the VICTOR VALLEY COMMUTER *(WT 7/05),* the 5 Neoplan AN345A buses, 1001-1005, have been resting as **VVTA** and SANBAG have searched for opportunities to use the buses. They may have found two locations – **MOUNTAIN AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY** Off The Mountain" services and/or the **MORONGO BASIN TRANSIT AUTHORITY**'s PALM SPRINGS routes.

A six month lease with **MARTA** for use of two buses has been signed and negotiations with **MBTA** continue.

RIVERSIDE TRANSIT AGENCY (RTA)

RIVERSIDE: **RTA** recently said they will not exercise the option years in the *M. V. TRANSPORTATION, INC.* contract to operate both the Dial-A-Ride service and Reservation Call Center from their Perris site.

An RFP (April 2006 start up) has just been issued.

The decision to change was based on contractor data errors in required on-time performance reports, uncovered during an **RTA** audit. **MV** cooperated with the transit agency and undertook an internal investigation which resulted in correction of the errors.

The contract firm will also pay **RTA** $1 million to cover expenses and increased costs related to the new RFP.

(Continued on page 5)

RTA staff is presently working with the Corona/Norco Transportation NOW Chapter to design the CORONA/ NORCO HOLIDAY TROLLEY which will operate on two weekends in December connecting the shopping areas.

CUSA/PACIFIC COAST SIGHTSEEING TOURS (PC)

ANAHEIM: Since assuming airport bus operations with the recent purchase of **AIRPORT BUS, PC** has added service, replaced the bus fleet and increased fares.

As of September 15th, the DISNEYLAND-LAX route offered hourly departures from Anaheim 500AM-900PM with return buses leaving LAX hourly 600AM-1000AM, half hourly 1000AM-700PM and hourly until midnight. DISNEYLAND-ORANGE COUNTY AIRPORT offers hourly departures to OCA 500AM-800PM with buses returning from OCA hourly 745AM-945AM, half hourly until 745PM and hourly until the last bus at 1045PM.

The one way LAX fare is $19 with round trips $28. The one way OCA fare is $14 with round trips at $24.

The bus fleet now includes 10 Van Hool C2045 buses, all with Anaheim Resort Area wraps and usually assigned to the LAX route. OCA buses usually include MCI 102D3s 63106, 63110 and 63111 as these buses have the Disneyland's 50th Anniversary wraps on them.

The former *ROESCH LINES/GRAY LINE* casino, excursions and day trips program has been renamed *COACH USA FUNLINES,* but continues to offer the same variety of trips from six boarding locations – *CUSA* yard in San Bernardino, Riverside – Denny's on Madison, Colton – Denny's on Washington, Apple Valley – Lowe's on Bear Valley, Victorville – Ramada Inn and Barstow – Tom's Mega Burgers on East Main.

Parent *CUSA LLC* recently announced the purchase of *CREW SHUTTLE SERVICES, INC.* of Pocatello, Idaho. *CSS* operates a fleet of 100 vehicles and provides contract crew transportation in Oregon, Washington and Idaho for major rail customers.

VENTURA INTERCITY TRANSIT SERVICE AUTHORITY (VISTA)

VENTURA: The EAST COUNTY route was realigned in September and now operates from Thousand Oaks Transit Center thru Westlake and along Hwy 23, then to Moorpark Station and Moorpark College and along Highway 118 to Simi Valley at the new Simi Valley Town Center near Erringer and Cochran.



KINGS AREA RURAL TRANSIT (KART)

HANFORD: On October 1st **KART** eliminated its previous system of all day fares, that allowed passengers unlimited rides in one day after purchasing a distance based all-day pass.

Seniors also no longer ride for free and monthly pass prices were increased.

The changes came because of federal funding requirements and fraudulent use of Day Passes by some riders (they would buy one and then give it to someone else).

Riders now pay a fare for each one way ride which may include a transfer (*Ed. Note – transfers are issued at the Hanford Transfer Center to those requesting them).*

Hanford local rides cost $1.00 while rides to Lemoore, Avenal, Corcoran, Visalia and Fresno are $1.50.

Federal regulations require transit systems to offer half fares to seniors, Medicare cardholders and persons with an Americans With Disabilities Act card. **KART** became eligible to receive about $800,000 annually in federal funds after the Hanford-Lemoore area was designated as an urban area (population over 50,000) in 2000.

It would have been difficult to continue offering free tokens to seniors without doing the same for the others and federal revenues would have then been reduced.

GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT (GGT)

SAN RAFAEL: **GGT** will discontinue shuttle bus routes 32-PEACOCK GAP-SAN RAFAEL and 34-SANTA VENETIA-SAN RAFAEL *(WT 7/05)* as of December 11.

On December 11th, the present **GGT** and **GOLDEN GATE FERRY** fare structures will be simplified. Major changes will include — consolidate Zones 7 (Stinson Beach) and 9 (Tiburon) with Zone 2 (Sausalito); merge Zone 8 (Woodacre, Lagunitas) with Zone 3 (San Rafael/ Larkspur/Corte Madera/San Anselmo) and eliminate Zone 10 (East Bay); separate local Marin County fares into its own fare table; separate Eastbay fares into its own table and set the inter-county fare at the current price of a Zone 10 to Zone 3 ride or $3.25; redefine the youth fare category to cover those between ages 6 and 18; increase the youth fare discount to 50 percent of the adult fare and drop the weekend ferry family fare plan.

The current fare structure is quite complex with nearly 300 different fares. The complexity is caused as fares apply to four inter-related but yet distinct services, **GGT** Regional Bus, **GGF, MARIN COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT** local bus and **GGT** bus service across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

(Continued from page 5)

Zones 1 through 6 are the historical **GGT** bus fare zones established in 1972 along the 60-mile Highway 101 corridor that support the distance based fare policy. Zones 7, 8 and 9 were created in the 1980's to further define areas east and west of Highway 101 served by **GGT** regional buses. Zone 10 was created in the 1990's with the introduction of the service to the East Bay.

Marin County local trips (which account for half of all **GGT** riders) will cost $2 for adults and $1 for all others.

Also in December, weekend only Line 63-MARIN CITY-STINSON BEACH will be seasonally discontinued until March. Late night stops will be added on 70-NOVATO-SAN FRANCISCO and 80-SANTA ROSA-SAN FRANCISCO on Redwood frontage road in Strawberry Village area and at Tiburon Wye & Highway 101.

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT (ACT)

OAKLAND: The "Owl Service on **BART** Corridor" plans *(WT 1/05, 4/05, 7/05)* are set to begin December *5.*

The system will include 19 bus routes operated by five transit agencies connecting at three transit centers. It includes new service in the East Bay with buses to the Tri Valley and central Contra Costa.

AC will operate six lines including 800-SAN FRANCISCO-RICHMOND. From Market & Van Ness, buses will travel Market, Transbay Terminal, Bay Bridge to West Oakland Post Office, BART/West Oakland and downtown Oakland (14th & Broadway) continuing along the **BART** alignment on Broadway, Telegraph, Ashby, Adeline, Shattuck, University, San Pablo and MacDonald.

804-MAC ARTHUR OWL will run between downtown and Oakland Airport via MacArthur, 73rd Avenue, BART/Coliseum and Hegenberger Road and replaces the East Bay portion of the current Line N Owl.

Lines 40, 51, 72, 82 and 99 continue to operate Owls.

CCCTA will operate one line (820-ALL NIGHTER) between downtown Oakland and Concord on Highway 24 serving Orinda, Lafayette, Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill (**ACT** will serve Rockridge).

LAVTA will operate one line, connecting BART/Bayfair with BART/Dublin/Pleasanton bypassing Castro Valley.

Additional Transbay bus service also begins, including added trips on many current lines and two NEW lines.

Line J-NORTH BERKELEY-SACTO ST-SF replaces a portion of Line H. From Sacramento & University, buses will run via Sacramento, Alcatraz, San Pablo, 65th, Christie, Powell and I-80 (Bay Bridge) to SF. Line H will operate as now between Barrett and Monterey, then via Hopkins and Gilman to I-80 and to SF.

MA-BART/UNION CITY-REDWOOD CITY (weekday peak hours) will operate across the San Mateo Bridge and serve Union Landing, Chabot College, Hillsdale **CALTRAIN,** Hillsdale Mall and Oracle in Redwood City.

A transit study has been ongoing for the past two years to examine how available transit funding could best be used to serve the needs of Fremont and Newark.

The study identified a flexible routing concept that could be phased, perhaps beginning next spring — 1) evening and late night flexible bus service between BART/ Fremont and Ohlone College. Buses would depart the terminals at set times but passengers, by pre-arrangement, could be dropped off on an established route deviation segment. The use of 30-foot buses is envisioned and some current paratransit riders may choose this option. 2) introduce a series of Community Service Routes linking key destinations with each other. 30-foot buses and midday hours are forecast. 3) Provide peak hour, fixed route shuttles from local transportation hubs (such as BART/Fremont and Union City and ACE/ AMTRAK/ Centerville) to local employment areas.

AMTRAK CALIFORNIA (AC)

SACRAMENTO: October 31st brought Standard Time, minor **AMTRAK** train adjustments, but several bus route changes.

PREFERRED CHARTER of Santa Rosa is the new operator of Route 7-NORTH BAY-REDWOOD EMPIRE while *SILVERADO STAGES* is temporarily operating Rte 6-STOCKTON-SAN JOSE and *AMERICANSTAR* is handling Rte 21C-CENTRAL COAST-SAN JOSE.

M. V. TRANSPORTATION is the operator for the NEW Route 37-PACHECO PASS and the replacement for *PRO TRANSPORTATION* on 68-MONTEREY PENINSULA. International/Aerotech cutaways in the 1100 series are used on both routes. Route 37 offers two daily round trips linking Monterey, Salinas, San Juan Bautista, Hollister, Los Banos and Merced.

Route 6-STOCKTON-SAN JOSE was extended north from San Jose and now serves Santa Clara, Mountain View and Palo Alto, all at **CALTRAIN** stations.

Route 19-INLAND EMPIRE-COACHELLA VALLEY had some significant changes. Hemet service was increased to two daily trips with buses provided by extended Route

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1 buses from Los Angeles. These buses also serve Ontario and Riverside. Coachella Valley to Indio service was also doubled with these trips bypassing Ontario and Riverside.

Current plans call for a major extension, next spring, of Route 3-SACRAMENTO VALLEY north from Redding to Medford, OR serving Dunsmuir, Mt. Shasta, Weed, Yreka and Ashland providing daytime connections.

AMTRAK will increase fares an average 5 per cent on December 6. Included are SAN JOAQUIN and SURFLINER train and bus fares and COAST STARLIGHT fares within California.

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE TRANSIT DEPARTMENT (ABQ RIDE)

ALBUQUERQUE, NM: The Bus Rapid Transit concept began in New Mexico's largest city last December with one route, 766-CENTRAL AVENUE RAPID RIDE and a fleet of twelve New Flyer 60-foot, hybrid, articulated buses *(WT 2/05)* as an overlay onto the system's heaviest route, 66-CENTRAL AVENUE LINE.

RAPID RIDE is priced the same as other **ABQ RIDE** buses — $1.00 adults and 35 cents reduced. Stops, or stations, are spaced about every mile and a signal priority system has been installed to help speed buses.



Line 766 operates Monday thru Saturday on an all day 11-minute headway between 500AM and 800PM. June through September, the line also operates on a 22-minute headway between 800PM and 200AM.

SEATTLE MONORAIL PROJECT

SEATTLE, WA: In the November 2005 election, city voters killed a monorail plan, approved three years ago, rather than accept a shorter version of the route.

The final vote was 43,609 votes against and 23,916 for a plan to save the 10.6 mile long GREEN LINE which was designed to link West Seattle, downtown and Interbay, south of the original destination in Ballard.

The SMP had taken much criticism following its June proposal for 50-year, $11.4 billion financing plan that included $9 billion in interest on low-grade bonds, even though it then adopted the shorter, less costly plan.

Interestingly, SMP has collected $180 million over the past three years and it will remain in business collecting motor vehicle taxes until it pays off its debt.

VALLEY METRO/ REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY (VM/RPTA)

PHOENIX, AZ: Over the next few months, residents will be able to view a mock-up of the proposed VALLEY METRO RAIL light rail car at a series of public events in Phoenix, Mesa and Tempe. The first event took place the weekend of November 11/12 at Park Central.

Construction of the line has started – along east Washington Street and on Central in downtown Phoenix. Crews also began laying track at the 48th and Washington Streets maintenance facility.

VMR is scheduled to open in December 2008 connecting Mesa, Tempe and Phoenix.

VM/RPTA/COPTS ridership has increased 4.34 percent over the last year, continuing an upward trend that began following the passage of Proposition 400 in 2000 and the increases in local and express bus service, the purchase of new buses and improvements in bus stops and amenities.

New buses are on their way – **VM** will exercise options in the **LACMTA** contracts with NABI and purchase 28 forty-foot and 10 sixty-foot articulated buses, all of which will be CNG powered. In another procurement, **VM** joined with the REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF SOUTHERN NEVADA to buy 25 forty-foot LNG powered buses.

Meanwhile, **CITY OF PHOENIX PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM** has a five-year contract to purchase up to 50 forty-foot and 45 sixty-foot buses, to be fueled by ultra-low sulfur diesel.

Plans are underway to change the 13-year old white, green and maroon **VM/RPTA/COPTS** color scheme. A presentation is to be made soon to the **VM** Board by the firm, Thinking Caps, the same one who designed the current colors and graphics.

Beginning July 1st, the **SCOTTSDALE TROLLEY** circulator began operating year-round. The Trolleys operate Monday thru Saturday between 1100AM and 600PM every 10 minutes. On Thursday, trolleys run until 900PM for downtown Artwalks.

ST serves the Main Street Arts District, Marshall Way Arts District, Fifth Avenue Shops, the Galleria and Scottsdale Fashion Square.

EQUIPMENT REPORT

(All properties are located in California unless otherwise noted)

PROPERTY	FLEET #'S	BUILDER	MODEL/VIN #'S	DATE	NOTES
-NEW-					
Pacific Coast Sightseeing	17716-17717	ABC	M1035L/5CV17716-717	12/04-5/05	
Thousand Oaks Transit	554-035	Dennis Thomas	SLF232G/3JA43886	08/03	
LACMTA	9230-9299	NABI	60B.01/5——	2005	
VISTA (AVBI)	63212	Van Hool	C2045L/32045949	04/03	
-USED-					
Pacific Coast Sightseeing	65782-65783	Van Hool	C2045/22045768, 779	09/01	
	66184-66185	Van Hool	C2045/Y2045520, 518	2000	
	66186-66187	Van Hool	C2045/Y2045522, 519	2000	1
	66189-66190	Van Hool	C2045/Y2045533, 521	2000	1
	66191	Van Hool	C2045/12045501	2001	2
	66192	Van Hool	C2045/12045618	09/00	
	6985	MCI	102EL3/WP060315	1998	3
-DISPOSITIONS-					
Santa Rosa City Bus	871-874	Gillig	3596TB6V92T/H1081761-764	1987	4
Foothill Transit	F1011-F1012	Gillig	S50T4096/R1085393-394	1994	5
Chula Vista Transit	021-022	Orion	01.507/L6002525-526	1990	6
	024	Orion	01.507/M6002810	1991	6
	027-029	Orion	01.507/M6002813-815	1991	6

NOTES:

1. 66186 and 66187 were originally 65786 and 65787, 66189 is C2045L. 66188 is not a PC bus but rather is a 1995 model MCI 102DL3, originally Gulf Coast Transportation (TX) 188 and now at California Charters as 66188.
2. Ex Go Gordo (FL).
3. Ex Valen Transportation, Inc. 985.
4. Sold by Nationwide Auction Systems – Benicia on October 7, 2005.
5. To Krapf's Bus Lines (PA).
6. Sold by Nationwide Auction Systems – Otay Mesa on September 3, 2005.

Albuquerque Buses



Albuquerque, NM, New Flyer 60-foot hybrid in service on the RAPID RIDE. Patrick Hardie photo.



An Albuquerque, NM, Thomas SLF200 in the older red and blue paint scheme. Busexplorer.com photo.