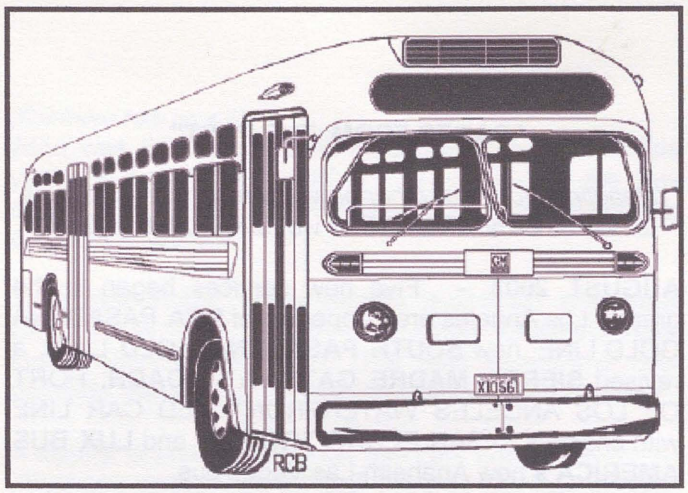


Western Transit

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UTAH TRANSIT AUTHORITY (UTA)

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH: **UTA** joined the list of transit properties with a Bus Rapid Transit component on July 14th as their *MAX* system commenced operations.

Using a fleet of ten Van Hool three-door model A330 40-foot buses (an option on the **ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT** order), Line 35M-*MAX*-MAGNA-MILLCREEK TRAX began. The BRT operates from Magna (3500 South and 8400 West) looping via 8400 West, 2700 South, 9150 West and then via 3500 South through West Valley City to the *TRAX* Millcreek light rail Station near 3300 South and State Street.



The buses, which are equipped with traffic signal synchronization devices, make only 23 stops along the line (9 local stops in Magna and then 14 along the route) operating every 15 minutes Monday through Saturday during the same hours as *TRAX* light rail.

MAX fare collection includes ticket vending machines at each bus stop and a group of fare inspectors to spot check the passengers.

Next year, when the State of Utah finishes construction and utility work along 3500 South, the **UTA** buses will have their own dedicated lanes down the middle of the street. The bus stops will then move to the street's center.

Bus rapid transit is envisioned for routes that have heavier ridership than traditional bus lines, but are not heavy enough to justify light rail construction costs. The $17 million cost for *MAX* including buses, stations and dedicated lanes compares with $100 million for rail.

UTA plans to evaluate the 3500 South route and a similar line planned to connect Provo riders between Brigham Young University and the *FRONT RUNNER* commuter train system when it reaches Utah County and then make a decision whether and where to build more dedicated bus lanes.

Current plans call for the next BRT bus line to travel along 5600 West, as part of the Mountain View Freeway construction, connecting the Salt Lake International Airport with 12600 South and Bangerter Highway.

Six other BRT corridors are also planned including 1300 East, Redwood, South Davis, Tooele, Washington Blvd and Eastern Transportation Corridor.

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (PUC)

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

DECISIONS

Kedir Beriso Tusse dba CALIFORNIA AIRPORT SHUTTLE granted PSC to operate between points in Contra Costa, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties and Bay Area airports with ZORF.

LA CLASS TRANSPORTATION, LLC granted On Call PSC between San Diego Airport and points in City of San Diego, San Diego, Riverside, Orange and Los Angeles Counties and to establish a ZORF.

CALIFORNIA EXPRESS SHUTTLE granted a PSC between points in Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties and Bay Area airports.



MTA New York is testing a Van Hool Double Deck bus on routes M5 - 5th Avenue, M15 - First & Second Avenues, X17 - Staten Island-Manhattan Express, and the BxM3 - Bronx-Manhattan Express.

"PAGES FROM THE PAST"

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

AUGUST 2003 – Five new services began in the greater Los Angeles area - opening of **MTA** PASADENA GOLD LINE, new **SOUTH PASADENA GOLD LINK,** a revised **SIERRA MADRE GATEWAY COACH,** PORT OF LOS ANGELES WATERFRONT RED CAR LINE with changes to SAN PEDRO TROLLEY and **LUX BUS AMERICA's** new Anaheim-Las Vegas bus.

AUGUST 1998 – CALTRANS transferred management and administration responsibility for the CAPITOL CORRIDOR trains and selected connecting buses (AMBUS Routes 20, 21, 22, 23 and 28) to the **CAPITOL CORRIDOR JOINT POWERS BOARD.**

AUGUST 1993 – CITY OF ANAHEIM COMMUTER SERVICE began operation of an express bus commuter bus pool service between Chino, Chino Hills, Placentia and Anaheim operated by HUNT TRANSPORTATION using HT 530, an MCI MC-8.

AUGUST 1988 – SIERRA NEVADA STAGE LINES began service (one round trip) between Ely, NV and Las Vegas with buses on Tuesday and Thursday, the fourth carrier to operate the route since 1946.

AUGUST 1983 – SAN DIEGO TROLLEY extended rail service to all hours of operation, discontinuing the bus service, originally operated as **SDTC** Line 51-TROLLEY SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICE and then operated by **NATIONL CITY TRANSIT,** that had been offered during late evening hours since 1981.

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MAX was the second new mode **UTA** introduced this year. On April 26, Line 750-FRONT RUNNER, the new commuter rail system connecting Ogden with Salt Lake City began operation.

The eight station stops include downtown Salt Lake City, Woods Cross, Farmington, Layton, Clearfield, Roy, Ogden and Pleasant View. **UTA** built 38 miles of new trackage running just east of UNION PACIFIC trackage.

A fleet of bi-level Bombardier cab cars operate every 30 minutes between 500AM and 1100PM Monday through Friday and hourly between 730AM and 1100PM on weekends.

In mid-month, **UTA** broke ground on *FRONT RUNNER* SOUTH commuter rail line which will extend the existing Ogden to Salt Lake City route 44 miles south to Provo. Currently scheduled for completion in 2012, the eight station will run along existing UNION PACIFIC tracks.

Construction was also recently launched on two other Front Lines projects, the West Valley and Mid Jordan *TRAX* light rail lines.

Effective July 1st, **UTA** increased fares by the addition of a fuel surcharge on both Local Services (local bus and *TRAX* light rail) and Premium Services (express bus and *FRONT RUNNER* commuter rail).

The charges have been applied to cash fares, monthly passes, Day Passes, round trip tickets and tokens for regular, senior, disabled and reduced fare categories.

Currently, the adult cash fare on local buses is $2.00.

CITIZENS AREA TRANSIT (CAT)/ REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF SOUTHERN NEVADA (RTC)

LAS VEGAS, NV: In response to continuing demand for faster service area roads, **RTC** is developing its premier rapid transit system, *ACE*, to operate on major corridors.

Currently under construction is the *ACE* bus rapid transit system, which will have the look and feel of a light rail system, but at considerably less cost. The system will include attractive vehicles with hybrid technology, transit signal priority and dedicated lanes.

Off board amenities will include comfortable stations (bus stops) with elevated platforms for level boarding, ticket vending machines, security cameras, bus arrival information and artwork, designed by local artists.

The *ACE* Downtown Connector, the first phase of the network is under construction and, when completed next year, will feature center-running dedicated lanes along Grand Central Parkway, Casino Center and 3rd Street, linking downtown and the southern resort (Strip) corridor. *ACE* will eventually also operate on Boulder Highway, Sahara Avenue and Maryland Parkway.

The Connector will be complemented by a new downtown transit terminal, opening in 2010.

June 1st saw a number of frequency improvements on 104-VALLEY VIEW, 109-MARYLAND PKWY, 113-LAS VEGAS BLVD NORTH, 202-FLAMINGO, 207-ALTA/ STEWART and 218-CHEYENNE. Former 403-NORTH LAS VEGAS CONNECTOR was renumbered 119 while the southern portion of 105-M.L. KING is now 116-KOVAL/INDUSTRIAL.

RIVERSIDE TRANSIT AGENCY (RTA)

RIVERSIDE: The **RTA** Board awarded Creative Bus Sales contracts for purchase of 59 Caltrans Type II, 12-passenger paratransit cutaways and 16 Caltrans Type VII 26-passenger medium duty cutaways.

The Type II vehicles include 49 replacement and ten expansion units to respond to dramatic increases in paratransit ridership.

The Type VII vehicles will be used in fixed route service. Eight will replace current Type II vehicles while the other 8 have been designated for NEW Lines 212-SAN JACINTO-HEMET-RIVERSIDE and 214-SAN JACINTO -HEMET-ESCONDIDO *(WT 7/08)*.

The larger buses would be purchased using the State of California's contract with Creative while the Type II units would be purchased by exercising an option on a **SAMTRANS** contract awarded to Creative for Econoline/Aerotech buses.

Public hearings have been scheduled later this month on January 2009 plans to modify service on ten low productivity lines - 36-BANNING-CALIMESA-YUCAIPA and 39-JURUPA-RUBIDOUX CIRCULATOR and Saturday service on 17-CANYON SPRINGS-MORENO BEACH, 33-HEMET LOCAL and 206-TEMECULA-LAKE ELSINORE-TYLER MALL are proposed for discontinuation although **RTA** staff is meeting with **PASS TRANSIT SYSTEM** staff to discuss a possible transfer of operations for Line 36.

Weekend headways on 3-CORONA-NORCO would be changed from 30 to 60 minutely while the Sunday span of service would be shortened on 18-MORENO VALLEY MALL-RCC/MORENO VALLEY, 20-MAGNOLIA

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

CENTER-RCC/MORENO VALLEY, 29-DOWNTOWN-MARKET-RUBIDOUX and 32-SAN JACINTO-HEMET.

RTA is presently advertising for an initial order of ten 40 -foot, intercity style, CNG powered buses for its *COMMUTER LINK* program with an option for up to nine more buses over a four year period. The current *CL* fleet includes 13 Dennis Thomas SLF 232s (3001-3013) and several Econoline/Aerotechs.

NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT (NCTD)

OCEANSIDE: Related to budget reductions, August 10 brought numerous service reductions, primarily loss of weekend hours and discontinuation of *FAST* operations.

Discontinued were lines 403-EL CAMINO HIGH-MESA MARGARITA, 415-OCEANSIDE INDUSTRIAL CENTER & AIRPORT, 447-PALOMAR COLLEGE-REX INDUSTRIES, ENCINITAS COASTER CONNECTION and FAST in Encinitas, Fallbrook, Ramona and Vista.

FAST (Fast And Simple Transportation) was designed to provide one way shared ride curb-to-curb transportation within certain areas to the nearest fixed route transfer point.



NCTD 2004943 at Vista Transit Center. Craig Barnes photo.

Saturday and Sunday service was dropped on 304-SAN MARCOS-ENCINITAS, 311/312-WEST OCEANSIDE CIRCULATOR, 313-OCEANSIDE-TOWNE CENTER N, VIA MESA DR, 321-CARLSBAD-PALOMAR COLLEGE, 324-CARLSBAD-COSTA SERENA, 325-CARLSBAD-TOWNE CENTER NORTH, 334/335-VISTA-BRENGLE TERRACE-MELROSE STA, 338/339-VISTA-TRI CITY-QUARRY CREEK, 341-PALOMAR COLLEGE-CAL STATE SAN MARCOS, 347-ESCONDIDO-PALOMAR, 348-SOUTHWEST ESCONDIDO, 349-SOUTHEAST ESCONDIDO, 358/359-ESCONDIDO-COUNTRY CLUB -NORTH BROADWAY, 365-ENCINITAS-THE FORUM and 386-ESCONDIDO-RAMONA.

On weekdays, Line 386 now operates hourly between Escondido and the Wild Animal Park all day long with only two morning and two afternoon peak hour trips to and from Ramona.

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM (MTS)

SAN DIEGO: **MTS** recently extended the *FIRST TRANSIT (formerly LAIDLAW)* operations contract for **POWAY TRANSIT** until August 31, 2008 at which time it would be reassigned to *SOUTHLAND TRANSIT, INC.*, operator of other **MTS** minibus and medium size bus transit services. *(Ed. Note - this **COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM** contract was originally awarded to Laidlaw and is now considered too small to bid out by itself).*

The current **POWAY** bus fleet is owned by *FIRST* and is considered near the end of its useful life. **MTS** will purchase eight new Type VII medium duty Econoline/ Aerotech buses from Creative Bus Sales under CBS' public agency/state contract. The buses are expected to go into service this fall.

ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (OCTA)

ORANGE: **OCTA** exercised options on its purchase of 58 El Dorado National Ford Econoline/Aerotech gasoline powered cutaways (6501-6558) for ACCESS service to buy an additional 140 similar units. The total purchase will replace 20 of the 8401-8458 series, 8940-8978, 43 of the 6101-6168 series and 6201-6296.

The Fall Shake Up will take effect on September 14 and will include several minor alignment changes. Line 21-VALLEY VIEW will be rerouted from Commonwealth via Dale to the Buena Park METROLINK Station and return while Buena Park short turn Line 29-BEACH BLVD trips will be rerouted away from Artesia and along Malvern between Beach Blvd and Dale Street enroute to the Buena Park Station. Line 473-TUSTIN STATION-UC IRVINE will be extended at UCI traveling along Harvard, California and Campus to and from University Center.

On August 4th, 25 new CNG New Flyer C40LFRs (5580 -5599) joined 5621-5625 at Anaheim D6 replacing an equal number of 5301-5397 series New Flyers.

These are the first CNG buses not assigned to Santa Ana D1, now totally CNG save the four hybrid New Flyers (5419-5422) and 35 of 50 diesel, articulated New Flyers (7304, 7307-7320 and 7401-7420).

Except for five Gilligs at D4 for Line 211-SEAL BEACH-IRVINE (4201, 4203, 4217, 4218, and 4256) and the 14 suburban style New Flyer D40s (5101-5114), the **OCTA** large bus active fleet is now all low-floor.

(Continued on page 5)

MUNICIPAL AREA EXPRESS (MAX)

TORRANCE: **MAX** fares were all increased on July 1st. The cash fare on Routes 2-PALOS VERDES and 3-SAN PEDRO is now $1.50 while the 3X-FREEWAY EXPRESS is $2.00.

Ten-ride ticket books are $15.00 or $20.00 and Monthly Passes are $55.00 or $65.00. The senior and disabled fare is $1.00 and Interagency transfers cost 25 cents.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)

ALHAMBRA: The now traditional Summer Beach Buses program (Antelope Valley, Altadena, Charter Oak, East Los Angeles, La Crescenta/La Canada, Santa Clarita, South Whittier and Topanga Canyon) was reinstated again for this summer.

The fare-free PLAYA VISTA BEACH SHUTTLE *(WT 8/07)* also returned beginning June 27 through Labor Day to provide Friday, Saturday and Sunday service in Playa Vista, Marina Del Rey and Venice Pier.

The newest **DPW** service, the ROSEWOOD SMART SHUTTLE, began June 6 serving a one-way loop every 30 minutes between 600AM and 700PM on weekdays in the area encompassing West Ranch Dominguez, Compton, Athens Village, Watts and Willowbrook.

RSS is considered a Flex Route and will provide curb to curb pick ups and drop offs (on a space available basis). These need to be requested one day in advance.

Beginning at Campanella Park (Stanford & Compton Bl), the line travels via Stanford, Rosecrans, Central, 135th, Avalon, Imperial, Broadway, El Segundo, Main and Compton to Stanford.

RSS is operated by *WATTS LABOR COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE* using a fleet of two cutaways.

LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (LADOT)

LOS ANGELES: Beginning June 2, the route of Line 409-SYLMAR-SUNLAND-GLENDALE-LOS ANGELES was extended downtown along Hill from 7th to12th and discontinuing the two-block segment on 7th to Spring.

DASH A-LITTLE TOKYO-CITY WEST will be rerouted away from Flower/Hope along 1st and Figueroa (looping 1st, Fremont, Diamond and Figueroa) on September 2nd, replacing the CITY HALL SHUTTLE *(WT 3/08).*

CENTRAL CITY EAST *(WT 3/08)* will begin operating a one-way loop every 20 minutes thru Little Tokyo, Toy District and Flower District 630AM-630PM on weekdays.

Co-sponsored by the city and **LADOT,** the DODGERS TROLLEY commenced operations on July 25th and will operate for remaining 2008 home games. *TRANSIT SYSTEMS, INC.* is the contract operator.

Service starts 90 minutes before game time and concludes one hour about the game ends. The route begins on Alameda in front of Union Station and travels Alameda, Chavez/Sunset, Elysian Park Ave and internal roadways within Dodger Stadium. There are two stops on Sunset enroute - Figueroa and Marion.

Last December, the City Council authorized an interim extension, for a minimum six-month period, not to exceed one year, of the COMMUTER EXPRESS contract held by *VEOLIA TRANSPORTATION* (formerly *CONNEX TRANSIT)* while the city decided whether to award a new contract based on the original RFP *(WT 5/08)* or reissue a revised RFP.

The analysis performed by a consultant, which included a peer review and an evaluation of the proposals submitted to **LADOT,** concluded the proposed $160 per hour costs were consistent with industry standards for operation of a standalone, peak period commute service. The analysis also concluded the new provisions (increased staffing requirements, separation of the CE program into two contracts and increased maintenance standards) were consistent with industry practices.

The most significant cost driver is the age of the CE bus fleet and the need for replacement. **LADOT** is now working to replace the fleet sooner than their most recent plan. The plan includes buying 102 buses from two vendors, simultaneously over three years.

Last February, **LADOT** recommended award of a contract to Design Line, Inc. for 17 new CNG, standard floor buses with suburban interiors.

Riverside based Complete Coach Works, the largest CNG integrator of transit buses in this country, recently purchased the over-the-road coach portion of Blue Bird Bus Industries. This has presented the city with an opportunity to buy intercity style CNG buses. Following consultation with the Federal Transit Administration and City Attorney's Office, **LADOT** circulated an LOI (Letter Of Interest) to buy up to 85 buses, an initial order of 31 plus options. Optimistically, the first buses could arrive within four months of placement of the order.

To further reduce costs, **LADOT** has begun a line-by-line analysis of fixed route services, both COMUTER EXPRESS and DASH, to determine areas for possible reduction or reallocation and is exploring development of a new city-owned bus maintenance yard and CNG fueling station in downtown Los Angeles.

(Continued from page 5)

OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (OAK)/ AIR-BART

OAKLAND: The Port of Oakland Commissioners recently approved purchase of 26 new CNG powered **AIR-BART** and rental car shuttle buses for use at the Oakland International Airport.

Six of the buses will be used on the **AIR-BART** service, which operates between the BART/Coliseum Station and OAK's terminals. The remaining 20 will operate on the airport's Rental Car Center Shuttle.

Funding to buy the El Dorado National EZ Rider IIs came from three sources - a $1 increase in **AIR-BART** fares in March 2007, a $10 Customer Facility Charge collected on each car rental agreement and a $250,000 grant from Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

BAY AREA WATER EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (BAWETA)

SAN FRANCISCO: In early April, the new **BAWETA** became operational with plans to launch a fleet of new boats and develop ways to move commuters across San Francisco Bay if or when a major earthquake disabled **BART** or bridges.

Initially, the agency was to replace predecessor **BAY AREA WATER TRANSIT AUTHORITY** and organize area ferries after emergencies. Later, the legislation was amended to allow **BAWETA** to take control of the ferry services operated by Vallejo (**BAYLINK)** and Alameda **(OAKLAND-ALAMEDA FERRY).**

The new agency will also set up new services with the first new route, connecting South San Francisco and Oakland, slated for a 2010 start up.

They also have plans to link San Francisco with Albany or Berkeley (an environmental review is underway), Redwood City, Richmond, Hercules, Antioch/Martinez and Treasure Island.

Over the next year, **BAWETA** will also develop its emergency response plan.

YOLO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT (YOLOBUS)

WOODLAND: West Sacramento now has a Transit Center at West Capitol & Merkley and area services (Lines 35-SOUTHPORT LOCAL, 40/41-WEST SACRAMENTO LOCAL and 240-WEST SACRAMENTO-SACRAMENTO SHUTTLE) were all modified to serve it including a four way schedule line up every hour. Lines 42A and 42B-SACRAMENTO-WEST SACRAMENTO-WOODLAND-SACTO AIRPORT also serve the center, but pass by off line-up.

Line 35 received earlier (645AM and 745AM) trips and later evening trips (740PM, 840PM and 940PM) on weekdays along with two new midday trips and now offers hourly service all day long.

VALLEY INTRACITY NEIGHBORHOOD EXPRESS (VINE)

NAPA: Citing a technical error, the Napa County Transportation and Planning Agency rescinded a contract awarded to *M. V. TRANSPORTATION* during the spring *(WT 4/08)* to operate fixed route **VINE** and paratransit **VINE GO** beginning on July 1st.

M.V. would have replaced *VEOLIA TRANSPORTATION* (originally *ATC/VANCOM),* contractor for the past 17 years. *VEOLIA* continues to operate **VINE, VINE GO** and the operations in American Canyon, Calistoga, St. Helena and Yountville as the contract is rebid.

The issue occurred last February when NCTPA staff asked consumer groups to evaluate the proposals before doing its own scoring, which was in violation of RFP's procedures and federal bid guidelines.

PLACER COUNTY TRANSIT (PCT)/ PLACER COMMUTER EXPRESS (PCE)

ROSEVILLE: On May 27th **PCT** added a fourth **PCE** trip and modified one morning and afternoon trip. The third morning and first afternoon trips were changed and now only stop at Colfax Depot, Clipper Gap Park-N-Ride, Penryn Park-N-Ride and Roseville Taylor Road.

The new trips only serve Auburn Station, Loomis Station and Rocklin Station.

PCE is normally operated by *AMADOR STAGE LINES* while the additional trips are operated by **PCT** using Orion V 0629, painted all white with the **PLACER COMMUTER EXPRESS** name in red.

EASTERN SIERRA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (ESTA)

BISHOP: Related to continuing increases in operating costs caused by higher fuel prices and declining state revenues for transit (*Ed. Note - the current issues facing all transit agencies),* **ESTA** discontinued three of its routes July 1st and will implement fare increases throughout its system on September 1st.

Discontinued were the Monday-only WALKER-BISHOP FIXED ROUTE, Tuesday and Thursday LONE PINE-KEELER FIXED ROUTE and MOUNTAIN EXPRESS

(Continued on page 7)

(MAMMOTH LAKES-JUNE LAKE-LEE VINING).

Passengers on all three discontinued routes do have replacement service available. CREST NORTH (Bishop -Reno) operates between Lee Vining and Mammoth Lakes and between Walker and Bishop while CREST SOUTH operates between Lone Pine and Olancha.

Fare changes will affect all passengers and services. Local fares in the Bishop area will increase - adult $1.00 to $1.25 and discounted 75 cents to $1.00. A new Day Pass will be introduced with adult pass costing $3.50 and discounted pass at $3.00. The prices of 30-Day passes and 10-ride punch cards for will also increase.

Distance based Town-To-Town route fares will increase an average of 25 percent and CREST intercity fares will also rise. The Bishop-Reno $40 fare will go to $48 while Bishop-Ridgecrest will increase from $20 to $24.

HONOLULU PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY (THE BUS)

HONOLULU, HI: Last December, **THE BUS** inaugurated four new bus routes (1L-DOWNTOWN-HAWAII KAI LIMITED, 24-, E-EWA BEACH-WAIKIKI, F) and another (23-HAWAII KAI-SEA LIFE PARK to replace the former 58 line).

Line E operates daily every 30 minutes between 400AM and 900PM makes limited stops along the line.

From Honolulu Zoo, the line travels via Kuhio, Olohana, Kalakahua, Saratoga, Kaila, Ala Moana, Bishop, H-1 Freeway, Paiwa, Mokuola, Hikimoe, Waipahu Depot Rd, Farrington Way, Fort Weaver Road and looping in Ewa Beach via Kuhina, Hanakahi, North Road and Fort Weaver Road.

Line 1L is also a limited stop operation. From the Kalihi area, buses travel along Middle, North King, Hotel, South King, Waialae, Kalanianaole Hwy, Kawaihae, Hawaii Kai, Keahole, Kaumakani and Lunalilo Home Rd to Kolokolo.

WESTERN TRANSIT 45TH ANNIVERSARY TRIP TO SAN DIEGO

To commemorate the 45th Anniversary of the Western Transit Society, we arranged to go on an excursion to San Diego. We chose San Diego because we have not visited the San Diego area for many years, and also because of the opening of the North County Transportation District's (NCTD) Sprinter service between Escondido and Oceanside. The Sprinter is the first diesel multiple units (DMU) service to be started in the state of California. Several months before the trip, we contacted the various transit agencies in the San Diego area. Once we had permission to visit their yards, we put together a final itinerary of places to visit. After careful planning and two dry runs to San Diego, our trip was set for August 16, 2008.

Shortly after 7:00 AM on Saturday, August 16, 2008, Western Transit members and transit fans from across the state arrived at the Gateway Transit Plaza in Los Angeles, ready for a day of adventure. At 7:15 our bus for the day, Fast Deer #40, a 2000 MCI F3500, arrived at Dock 2 and we began checking names off the list and handing out tickets and name tags. We departed promptly at 7:30 and began our trip south on Interstate 5 toward San Diego. We made a brief stop at the Fullerton Park-n-Ride to pick up additional passengers, and another passenger stop at the Oceanside Transportation Center (OTC) to pick up the last few passengers on the trip, two of which traveled from Arizona.

After leaving OTC, our first stop of the day was at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) Transportation Department. The transportation department is located next to facilities maintenance, and when we arrived we were greeted by Jeff Chang and Raymond Wampler of the Transportation Department. In the transportation office Mr. Chang gave our group a brief presentation on the Transportation Department, and told us that most of the bus drivers are students attending classes on campus. After the presentation and a tour of their dispatch center, UCSD provided an assortment of beverages for us to enjoy. We then had a few minutes to look at the variety of Blue Birds in the UCSD fleet and take pictures of the buses they had arranged for us. It was a great first stop, and after 30 minutes we were on our way.



From UCSD we continued south toward downtown San Diego to our second stop of the day, the MTS Imperial Division, which was originally a San Diego Transit yard.



Dan Trent from MTS greeted our group, and for our visit the agency brought out their historic 638, a 1967 GMC TDH-4519. 301, a New Flyer C40LF that had recently been delivered was also on display for us to photograph. Aside from the buses, MTS also had a nice selection of give-away items for us, including hats, pins and patches. A couple of us in the group even managed to find two of the suburban-style Gilligs that the agency has been slowly phasing out. We were hoping that the new MTS NABI articulated buses would be on property during our visit, but they had not been delivered yet.





From the MTS yard we continued south, about five minutes by freeway, to Sundance Stage Lines, the only charter bus yard we would be visiting on the trip. Here we were greeted by Greg Hansen, Sundance's safety manager. The Sundance yard is not very big, so a 30-minute stop was plenty of time to get pictures of all the buses that were in the yard. The Sundance fleet is all MCI/TMC with everything from a new D4005 to a classic MC-9. Sundance was also nice enough to have a couple ice chests full of sodas and bottled water for our group. Despite the small size of the yard, this stop was well worth it.



We thanked our host at Sundance and continued south into the City of Chula Vista where we would be making the next three stops on our trip. The first stop was the MTS South Bay yard which is a contract yard operated by Veolia Transportation. Operations Manager Jose Garcia met our bus and gave us a tour of the facility before allowing us to go out into the yard to get photos of the buses. In this yard we found the former Inland Breeze REs that were operated on the Interstate 15 express routes, and the former National City New Flyer low floor buses.



From MTS South Bay we traveled east to the Chula Vista Transit (CVT) yard which is also the city yard. One of the Chula supervisors met us and she showed us around the shop and their driver room at the yard. The Chula Vista fleet consists mainly of El Dorado EZ-Riders and New Flyer low floors. The most noteworthy buses in the yard were former San Diego Transit Gillig 1208, which is now painted in Chula Vista colors, Chula Vista 026, the last Orion 01 on the property, and a brand new hydrogen-powered Ford cutaway. The cutaway is used on Chula Vista Line 708 that runs from the Bayfront Trolley Station to the Chula Vista Nature Center.





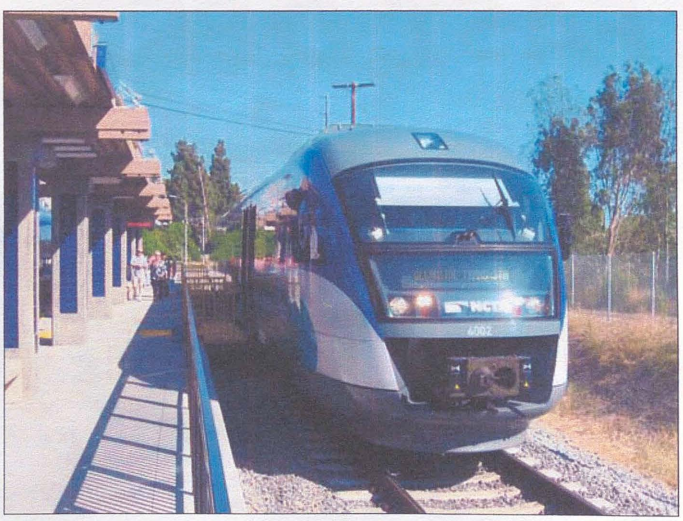
The last stop in Chula Vista was about 5 minutes away from the CVT yard at Palm Avenue and Interstate 805. The shopping center at this location would be our lunch stop for the day, and we had a variety of fast food places to choose from at this location. Up to this point in our trip, we were able to stay on schedule. This was extremely important because we still had many stops planned for the day. Everyone made it back to the bus on time after our lunch break. This stop was the farthest south we would travel on the trip, and from here we would begin heading back north.

The next stop on our San Diego trip would be the MTS yard in El Cajon. Like MTS South Bay, this yard is also operated by Veolia Transportation. At MTS El Cajon we were met by Operations Manager Shirell Osborn. She gave our group a tour of the training department, the shop, and the operations center. The most noteworthy buses in this yard were the Blue Bird Express 4500 buses used on the MTS Commuter routes. These buses were the main reason we wanted to stop at this facility. The buses that operate on the former County Transit System routes in the El Cajon area of San Diego were also in the yard.



From El Cajon we traveled north to Escondido along Interstate 15. For part of the way we traveled on the bi-directional carpool lane. This lane is open southbound in the morning and northbound in the afternoon. On Saturday the lanes are open northbound. During the trip from El Cajon to Escondido we held our raffle, and Terry Thatcher won the grand prize, a custom painted MTS articulated NABI model painted by Craig Barnes.

When we arrived at the Sprinter rail yard in Escondido, we were met by Manager of Sprinter Operations Walt Stringer from NCTD. Since we were delayed on the freeway due to an accident, Mr. Stringer suggested that he give us a driving tour through the Sprinter yard. Mr.



Stringer then escorted our bus over to the Escondido Sprinter station where we were all given NCTD day passes that would be good for our ride on Sprinter. Two members of our group decided not to ride the train and headed with the bus back to OTC. The rest of our group rode in car 4002 back to OTC.



At OTC, Fast Deer 40 was waiting for us and so was Bryan Killian of NCTD. He escorted us to our last stop of the day, the main NCTD bus yard in Oceanside.

This is the larger of the two NCTD yards. The smaller yard is in Escondido near the transit center and Sprinter Station. Most of the buses in this yard were New Flyers, including several low floors that now make up their reserve fleet. We took our official group photo with Fast Deer 40 at this yard before returning to OTC where we dropped off the Oceanside passengers.



Shortly after leaving Oceanside we heard a loud noise that could only be one thing, a flat tire. The driver pulled the bus to the side of Interstate 5 just north of Las Pulgas Road, in the middle of nowhere. One of the left rear tires was flat, and after the driver called his dispatcher we had plenty of time to wait. When the driver shut the bus off, most of us headed outside to





BOISE-WINNEMUCCA STAGES
NORTHWESTERN STAGE LINES

Boise, Idaho
Motor Coach Fleet - 2003 Information

FLEET #'S	BUILDER	MODEL	SERIAL #'S	YEAR	NOTES
171	MCI	MC-9	BP036372	1981	BW
174	TMC	MC-9	ER004404	1984	BW
179	MCI	MC-9	EP039139	1984	BW
183	MCI	102C3	JP042108	1988	NW
187	TMC	MC-9	ER004235	1984	BW
190	MCI	96A3	FP040237	1985	BW
191	MCI	102C3	MP043806	1991	BW
192	MCI	102C3	MP043804	1991	NW
194	MCI	102C3	MP043805	1991	NW
196	MCI	102C3	NP044380	1992	NW
197	MCI	102C3	PP045163	1993	BW
198	TMC	MC-9	ER004382	1984	NW
199	TMC	MC-9	ER004531	1984	BW
200	MCI	102D3	RP046235	1994	NW
201	MCI	102D3	TP048501	1996	BW
202	MCI	102D3	RP046237	1994	NW
203	MCI	MC-9	BP035955	1981	BW
204	MCI	102D3	SP047331	1995	NW
205	MCI	102EL3	XP060726	1999	BW
206	MCI	102D3	VP049718	1997	NW
207	MCI	E4500	1P061640	2001	BW
208	MCI	102D3	VP049807	1997	NW
210	MCI	102D3	WP050778	1998	NW
212	MCI	102EL3	XP060725	1999	NW
214	Van Hool	T2145	X2043741	1999	NW
216	TMC	96A3	FR005152	1985	NW
218	MCI	102EL3	YP061402	2000	NW
220	MCI	102EL3	YP061113	2000	NW
222	MCI	102EL3	YP061391	2000	NW

BW-lettered for Boise-Winnemucca Stages
NW-lettered for Northwestern Stage Lines
216, 218 and 222 are wheelchair lift equipped

wait in the fresh air. Although it was stuffy inside, some members of our group chose to wait inside. A service truck arrived after the sun had set, and in about 20 minutes the mechanic had changed the tire. About 2 hours after the tire went flat, we were underway again and heading back toward Los Angeles. After dropping off the Fullerton passengers, we arrived at Gateway Plaza 2 hours late.

Despite the flat tire, the trip was a success and a lot of fun. We saw many of the buses that we wanted to see in San Diego, and we got to ride on the new Sprinter service.

Article and photos by Andrew Novak.



EQUIPMENT REPORT

(All properties are located in California unless otherwise noted)

PROPERTY	FLEET #'S	BUILDER	MODEL/SERIAL #'S	DATE	NOTES
-NEW-					
Victor Valley Transit Auth	603-609	NABI	040.29/8A140320-326	2008	1
Honolulu Public Transit HI)	142-150	New Flyer	D60LF/7C032586-594	2007	
Santa Barbara MTD	711-713	Gillig	G19E102R2/—	2006	
	900-907	Gillig	G19D102N4/—	2007	2
Discovery Tours LLC (WA)	unknown	MCI	102EL3/XP060832	1999	
Storer Coachways	2015	MCI	E4500/7W064195	2007	
-USED-					
LADOT	024501-024505	Neoplan	AN345A/2L013208-212	04/02	3
Five Star Bus Lines, Ltd	5	MCI	102D3/SP047750	08/95	4
(MAN)	6	MCI	102D3/SP047080	01/95	5
-DISPOSITIONS-					
Victor Valley Transit Auth	115	Ford/El Do	Econ/Aerotech/2HA07916	2001	6
Springs Transit (CO)	9703, 9708	New Flyer	D30LF/VU017851, 856	1997	6
Suntran (Albq, NM)	104-105	TMC	T80206/KR826582-583	1989	6
	202, 206, 210	TMC	T80206/KR826513, 517, 521	1989	6
	211, 213, 215	TMC	T80206/KR826541, 543, 545	1989	6
	219, 222-224, 229	TMC	T80206/KR826549, 552-554, 559	1989	6
Unknown	2465-2468	ElDo National	RE-32/SC084127, 128, 130, 129	1995	7
	6001	ElDo National	RE-29/KW021457	1989	7

- NOTES -

1. New design front end.
2. Hybrid, 906 is VIN 71077744, built 03/07.
3. Ex VVTA 1001-1005.
4. Ex CUSA/California Charter 63122.
5. Ex CUSA/California Charter 292.
6. For sale by Public Surplus Sales, May 2008.
7. For sale by Ken Porter Auctions, June 2008.

Following the recent close of the **SAMTRANS** REX Express Bus program, their eleven Gillig suburban style buses have been reallocated within the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Express Bus Program. 800-801 to **VINE,** 802-804 to **WEST CAT,** 805-808 to **AC TRANSIT** and 809-810 to **FAIRFIELD/SUISUN TRANSIT SYSTEM.**

August Photos





LEFT: *August 2003 - VVTA 1002 at Ontario Mills in the afternoon waiting for the return trip back to Victorville via Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink station. (Andrew Novak photo)* ***RIGHT:*** *August 2008 - VVTA 1002, now LADOT 024502 in the afternoon at Imperial & Aviation on the 438 on its way to Redondo Beach. (Craig Barnes photo)*