



HEADWAY



Southern California Rapid Transit District

Annual Conference of the Institute for Rapid Transit

June 18-21, 1974

'Bienvenidos' IRT, Welcome to L.A.

RTD's bus-side greeting says it all — "Bienvenidos, Welcome Aboard!" — as Los Angeles and the Southern California Rapid Transit District host leaders of North America's urban mass transportation industry during the annual conference of the Institute for Rapid Transit June 18-21.

In accepting an invitation extended 12 months ago by then Mayor-elect Tom Bradley, the Institute will be convening its first conference ever held in a city which has no existing mass rapid transit system.

"By asking the IRT to meet as one of his first official actions, Mayor Bradley demonstrated the kind of leadership which can make rapid transit a reality in this region," said Thomas G. Neusom, RTD president. "Los Angeles is standing on the threshold of building its own system, and RTD's board of directors is scheduled to finalize its plans for rapid transit at the very moment the IRT meets for its final working session June 21." Neusom added that Los Angeles County residents will



Mayor Tom Bradley, Jack Gilstrap and Thomas Neusom welcome IRT.

vote on the approved plan on the November 5 ballot.

A major portion of the June 19 session of the conference will be devoted solely to the discussion of rapid transit in Los Angeles and Southern California. "The combined expertise of industry leaders from the United States, Canada and Mexico will pro-

vide Los Angeles with valuable insight into the design, construction and operation of its mass rapid transit system," said Jack R. Gilstrap, RTD general manager. "As spokesman for the entire rapid transit industry, the IRT has dedicated its activities toward attaining balanced transportation systems in the increasingly con-

gested areas of North America."

Gilstrap, who also serves as a director of the IRT, noted that other topics scheduled for discussion include the establishment of a national transportation policy which would set up transit goals for the entire country. Several workshop and panel discussions are scheduled covering a variety of transit issues from federal grant programs to the prevention of vandalism and graffiti. According to Gilstrap, 675 persons will attend the four-day conference at the Century Plaza Hotel.

The IRT's membership is comprised of representatives from all rapid transit systems in operation or under construction in North America, as well as public agencies, such as RTD, which are planning for rapid transit.

Perhaps in the relatively near future, RTD's "Bienvenidos, Welcome Aboard" will greet passengers as they board rapid transit cars in Los Angeles.

Transit Progress Month

30 days of decisions and milestones

The meeting of the Institute for Rapid Transit in Los Angeles June 18-21 constitutes a major element in what may be the most important month in the history of Los Angeles public transportation.

"A series of events will take place in June which will shape the future of mass transit in the Southland," said Thomas G. Neusom, president of the host transit agency, the Southern California Rapid Transit District. "Because of the nature of the crucial decisions involved, we have invited the City, County and State to join the RTD board of directors in calling attention to June as 'Transit Progress Month.'"

Neusom pointed out that the foremost event in the month would be the adoption of a rapid transit plan by the RTD board, which is scheduled for June 21. The plan would be voted on by the community in November. Community input is being gathered in two formal public hearings June 6 and June 20. The June 20 hearing will be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Another transit development of prime importance to the area was the June 4 election, which included a positive vote on Propositions 5 and A. "Passage of both measures provides a local voice in determining the spending of gasoline tax revenues," Neusom said, "including the possible utilization of some funds for constructing a rapid transit system."

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors is currently deciding whether or not to continue the highly successful 25-cent flat fare program. Under terms of the present subsidy, the experimental three-



Beach-goers are flocking to RTD's summer "Street Fleet" service.

month program will end June 30.

"We hope the supervisors will continue the subsidy," said Jack R. Gilstrap, RTD general manager. "The program has been an outstanding success and indications are that bus ridership is continuing to build. Overall, since the April 1 start up date, more than 40 million passengers have boarded RTD buses, which accounts for 5 million extra riders." Gilstrap added that by riding the bus, these five million passengers saved the Southland a minimum of 1.5 million gallons of gasoline.

"Ridership over the duration of the program to date is up almost 19 per cent," he said. "RTD has predicted at the beginning of the experiment

that we would attain a 12 to 20 per cent increase before its completion — it now looks as if we'll hit at a minimum of 20 per cent."

In addition to the important decisions to be reached, a number of other activities will mark Transit Progress Month, including the gathering of key figures in the transit industry for the IRT conference at the Century Plaza Hotel. "Our area is regarded by these experts as a pivotal one in coming up with answers to transportation problems that have to be solved in the last quarter of the 20th Century and beyond," Gilstrap said.

IRT members will get a first-hand view of the best example of rapid

transit in the Los Angeles area, the unique El Monte-Los Angeles Express Busway, which is also making news this month. RTD began operating over the entire length of the Busway June 10, when the last 3.5 miles of the 11-mile system were completed.

"San Gabriel Valley bus riders were already saving 18 to 20 minutes on the commute downtown," Gilstrap said. "The completion of the last portion of roadway has sped up the trip even more."

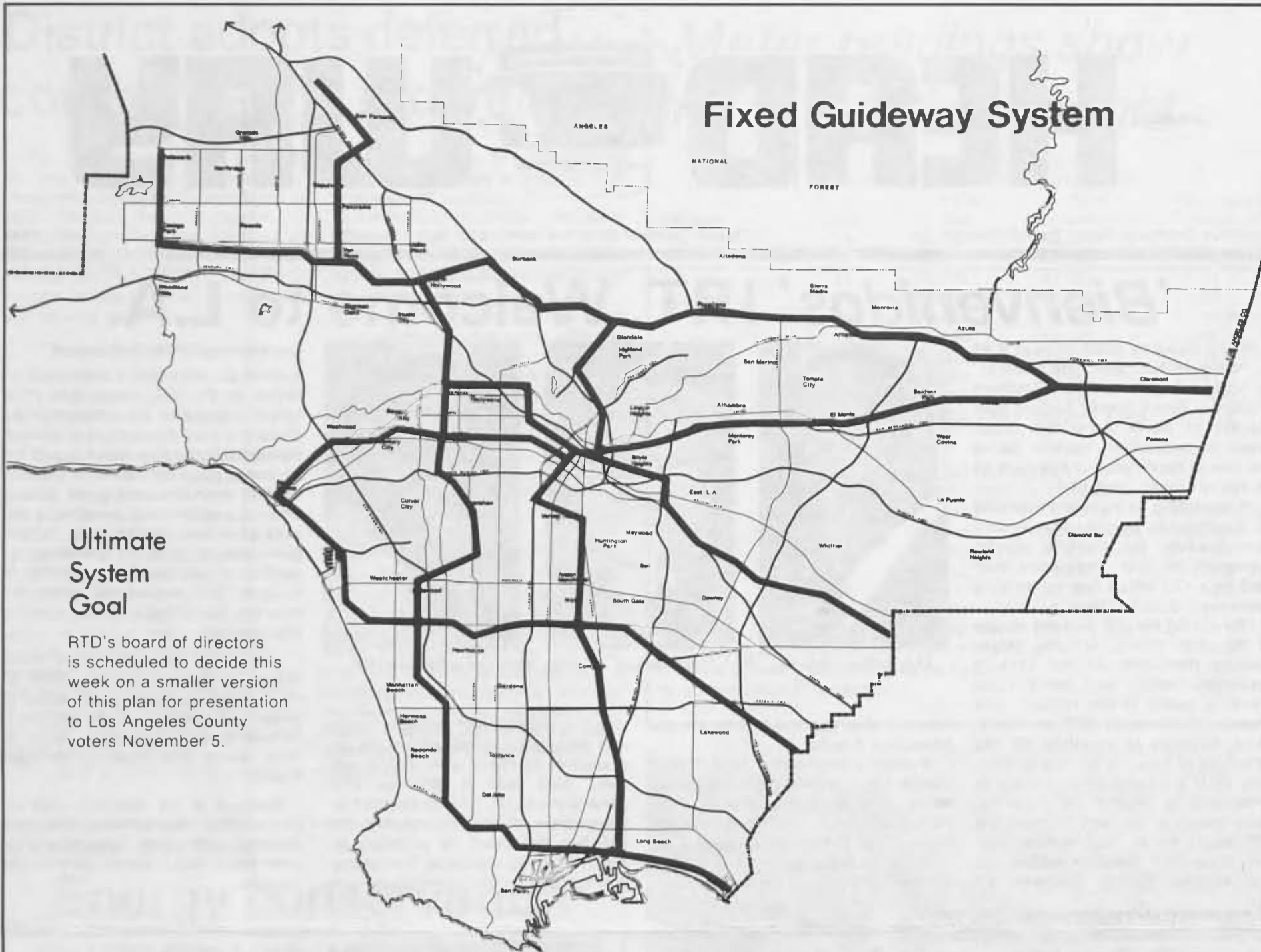
Other new RTD services have also been implemented in June including special beach services, route modifications, and an additional line.

RTD has thrown four summer "life preservers" to kids who live in the inland areas of Los Angeles County by establishing Lines 605, 606, 607 and 608 — the District's "Street Fleet."

Specially decorated coaches resembling battleship-grey submarines churning through the waves — complete with conning tower, no less — will make their way into the interior of the County, and transport their young cargo to the beachfront in Santa Monica.

In a cooperative effort with the City of Los Angeles, RTD has also opened its seventh Park and Ride facility near the corner of Manchester and Broadway in South-Central Los Angeles. RTD buses now provide direct point-to-point service from Watts to the central business district via the Harbor Freeway.

"RTD is indeed making progress in transit this month," Gilstrap said. "And the beneficiary of all these efforts are the people of Los Angeles."



Ultimate System Goal

RTD's board of directors is scheduled to decide this week on a smaller version of this plan for presentation to Los Angeles County voters November 5.

7 million good reasons for rapid transit in L.A.

Historically, two phrases have typified the public transportation challenge that is Los Angeles:

"Seventy suburbs in search of a city," and "You can't get there from here."

The Southern California Rapid Transit District serves 2280 square miles of the Los Angeles Basin. Besides the City of Los Angeles, which occupies over 450 square miles of real estate, RTD serves 76 other incorporated cities in Los Angeles County, large unincorporated areas, and portions of Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The 7 million residents of Los Angeles County constitute a population greater than 42 of the 50 states of the union.

Moving people within the District has been a job left to a notoriously over-burdened system of freeways and surface streets, and a large, yet hardly-ubiquitous, bus system. Los Angeles County voters will be able to change all that November 5 when RTD presents twin 1/2-cent sales tax measures on the ballot to first, provide a local base for matching federal funds for the construction of a mass rapid transit system and a dramatic build-up of the existing bus fleet, and second, to provide funds to operate and maintain the expanded bus system.

RTD's consultant team has delineated a mass rapid transit sys-

tem of 240 miles as the ultimate transportation goal for the region, and recommends adoption of a minimum 140-mile system by RTD's board of directors. This week, the District's board is scheduled to officially adopt a plan which its members feel would best serve the area, considering the economic, social and environmental benefits to its residents, and the attainability of local and federal funding.

The long-term level of federal funding cannot be predicted. However, because of the massive contribution Los Angeles County and its 7 million residents make to the federal tax base, citizens have a right to expect that substantial aid will be provided to the proposed mass rapid transit system. Such support, supplemented by the on-going local funding from the 1/2-cent sales tax, would be adequate to begin building a rapid public transit system for Los Angeles.

Included in the plan which RTD's board will adopt is an "Instant Transit" goal designed to quickly improve bus service during the period of fixed guideway system construction. The near-term program will be implemented in a series of improvement projects, some of which are currently planned or are already partially operational. Included are:

- The addition of up to 1000 buses from 1975-1977, which

would bring RTD's fleet of buses up to 2700 units.

- The development of new park and ride facilities and extended bus-on-freeway commuter lines to serve them.
- Additional preferential bus lanes on streets and freeways enabling commuters to get into town and out again at peak traffic hours quickly.
- Experimentation with exclusive contraflow lanes for buses on freeways as another way to provide expanded fast commuter service.
- Proposed joint development of dial-a-bus service with interested communities desiring short trip convenience.
- The implementation of new regional grid networks to saturate areas of Los Angeles County with public transportation.

The first comprehensive proposal for rapid transit in Los Angeles was introduced in 1925. It called for approximately 300 miles of fixed rail at an estimated cost of \$323 million. Between 1925 and 1968, when the estimated cost had escalated to \$2.4 billion, 19 separate proposals were presented to the community. If construction on a mass rapid transit system is postponed again this fall, any future proposed fixed guideway system may literally price itself out of existence.

An important step forward was taken June 4 in California and Los Angeles toward making rapid transit a reality in the region. Ballot propositions 5 and A both passed by overwhelming margins, diverting a portion of the state's gasoline tax funds previously earmarked solely for highway construction to the funding of capital costs for rapid transit. This decision of the electorate provides strong backing to a recent survey conducted by RTD which indicates that nearly two-thirds of the registered voters in the county are in favor of improving public transportation, and more importantly, are willing to contribute an additional penny sales tax on the dollar to pay for it.

The combination of the June ballot results, the public opinion poll, and the effects of a continuing energy crisis has given Los Angeles transit planners new hope for this fall's vote. RTD's polling organization detected a strong feeling of "Let's get on with it — further studies and proposals won't accomplish anything useful."

Thus, almost half a century after the first Los Angeles rapid transit proposal, there appears to be a good chance that those "70 suburbs in search of a city" may get together in 1974 and decide rapid transit "can get you there from here."

One big fish story, but each and every word is true

There's something fishy over at Division 7 . . .

Actually, "Something Fishy" is the name of a tropical fish business run by Division 7 shop clerk Jim Thomason and his wife Jean.

Thomason has parlayed his keen interest in raising cichlid fish — a hobby both he and his wife have

pursued for three or four years — into a healthy part-time business.

The Thomasons live in North Hollywood with 1500-2000 cichlids, a female oscar fish (who flaps her tail gleefully to welcome her owners home in the evenings), two cats, two dogs, four ducks, one goose, various frogs, red-eared turtles, toads, lizards and assorted house plants and cacti.

Although the Thomasons earn a nice supplemental income from their part time tropical fish business, "we couldn't make a living at it," Thoma-

son claims. Thomason has worked for RTD since 1964.

He notes, however, that tropical fish is big business in this country — to the tune of \$40 billion annually. "People spend more on their fish than they do on their dogs and cats," he said. "Man's best friend is really his fish, not his dog."



Jean and Jim Thomason and a few of their many pets.

Eleven miles of busway open for business



TO DRAW ATTENTION to the inaugural run over the completed El Monte-Los Angeles Express Busway, RTD erected a giant sign proclaiming its latest achievement. However, before the waiting bus could be loaded with the local dignitaries and break through the banner, the wind burst through it instead, and proclaimed the Busway open before the District could. Visitors (below) boarded the bus anyway for a trip on the busway to El Monte station and back to the Mission Street terminus.



The last 3½ miles of the 11-mile El Monte — Los Angeles Busway was officially dedicated Sunday, June 9, by officials and guests of the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) and the Southern California Rapid Transit District. Passengers will begin riding on the exclusive bus lanes on Monday, June 10.

"Completion of the roadway portions of the Busway project makes traveling from El Monte an even more attractive commuter option," said Thomas Neusom, RTD president. "Riders were making significant time savings on the trip when only 7½ miles were completed, and even greater savings are anticipated now."

The new stretch of the Busway is between the Long Beach Freeway and Mission Road north of the San Bernardino Freeway. Dedication ceremonies took place at the Mission Road terminus.

"This Busway is the first and only in the nation with express lanes built to serve buses exclusively," said Haig Ayanian, CALTRANS District 7 Director of Transportation, the master of ceremonies at the event. "It was designed to provide high-speed express bus service between the San Gabriel Valley and down-

town Los Angeles and the high-rise commercial area on Wilshire Boulevard."

The Busway has been a cooperative undertaking among the RTD, CALTRANS, the Federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration, and the Cities of El Monte and Los Angeles.

"The Busway has been extremely well accepted," said Jack Gilstrap, RTD general manager. "Since we dedicated the El Monte Station last summer, ridership has more than tripled — our Busway Flyer buses now carry more than 10,000 passengers daily." Still to be completed are two stations, one at California State University and the other at County-USC Medical Center. Work on the two stations will be completed this fall.

According to Ayanian, completion of the last 3½ miles of Busway by the contractor, Guy F. Atkinson Co. of Long Beach, was six months ahead of schedule. The total Busway cost was approximately \$56 million for right of way, construction, and equipment, including the purchase of 100 Busway Flyers.



AS MISS TRANSIT PROGRESS, Muriel Small will be smiling and looking pretty all month long as she represents the District at the many events scheduled in June. Secretary to Byron Lewis, personnel director, Muriel has worked for RTD since January of 1972.

RTD launches summer 'Street Fleet'

RTD has thrown four summer "life preservers" to kids who live in the inland areas of Los Angeles County by establishing Lines 605, 606, 607 and 608 — the District's "Street Fleet."

Specially decorated coaches resembling battleship-grey submarines churning through the waves — complete with conning tower, no less — will make their way into the interior of the County, and transport their young cargo to the beachfront in Santa Monica.

Line 605 will pick up its crew members throughout the San Fernando Valley and deposit them in Santa Monica; Line 606 will serve young patrons in Pasadena and Altadena; Line 607 will pick up passengers in East Los Angeles; and Line 608 will serve Compton and Watts. Each line will run seven days a week for the entire 93-day summer beach season.

All four lines will operate on roughly an eight-hour day, and all normal RTD fares will apply. The summer beach riders will be able to bring their surfboards onto the Street Fleet.



Making headway . . .

□ District operators are again squinting at their paddles and studying new routes as a result of the summer division shake-ups. With school letting out this month, new demands are placed on the system and service changes drastically. Good luck to everyone, and may all your problems be little ones.

□ Division 2 is sporting another newly-wed driver — Richard Gut-

shall is marrying Diane Robinson this month at Valley Presbyterian Church. Gutshall, who operates on Line 12, will reside in Granada Hills.

□ That big smile on Frank El Fattal's face is caused by the May 4 birth of Linda Najiha, the Division 9 operator's 9 lb. baby girl. Sharing Mr. & Mrs. El Fattal's joy is brother Reyad, who also drives out of El Monte. Congratulations to all!



GLORIA KRAMER eagerly rips into one of the many gifts she received at her May 24 baby shower in the

Transit Building. Gloria, secretary to Frank Barnes, is being helped by fellow secretary Sara Romero.



LIVELY EXCHANGES and timely suggestions were voiced by Division 8 employees (left) and Division 4 & 5 (right) employees during the latest rap sessions.

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