

Honoring  
our **Past** Embracing  
our **Future**



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
**41th Anniversary Commemorative Book**

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Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
4th Anniversary Commemorative Book

*April 1997*

**MTA LIBRARY**





April 18, 1997

Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan  
Transportation  
Authority

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Dear Employee,

As we pause to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, we should take a moment to reflect on the men and women who contributed their time and talents over the past 123 years to establish and improve public transportation in Los Angeles.

The summary of transit history, by MTA Librarian Dorothy Gray, reminds us of the long distinguished history of the MTA's predecessor agencies. Beginning with the first horse-drawn rail cars on Main Street, our region's transportation system has evolved through succeeding eras of interurban railways, Red Cars, Yellow Cars, gasoline and diesel buses, to today's high-tech compressed natural gas coaches and the Metro Blue, Red and Green lines.

These ever-improving modes of transportation were planned, built and operated by people with a vision of the future of Los Angeles. They knew that the growth and prosperity of our region was dependent upon the development of a transportation network that would be easily accessible, efficient and cost-effective.

As employees of the MTA, we must continue to build on that legacy. Our vision is for this region to offer a better quality of life where all people can travel quickly, economically and safely in a clean environment. We'll do this by providing the leadership and resources for a safe, efficient transportation system that keeps Los Angeles County moving.

Now, as we stand at the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we can be inspired by the work of those who came before us. Building on their efforts, we can move into the future that promises even greater progress and innovation in transportation technology.

It is fitting that we take time today to honor our past and embrace our future. We have a history we can be proud of and a future that is bright with promise. Thanks to all MTA employees, past and present, for the contributions you've made to public transportation in Los Angeles County.

Happy Birthday, MTA!

Linda Bohlinger  
Interim CEO

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## A Summary of Transit History in Los Angeles

Los Angeles County has been served by public transit for over 120 years. In this time, at least 220 companies have operated systems that have included horse cars, cable cars, incline railways, steam trains, electric streetcars, interurban cars, trolley buses and gas or diesel-powered buses. The major players in this development are briefly noted in this summary.

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### **1873-1900**

#### Main Street Railroad Company

David V. Waldron was authorized by the Los Angeles City council on July 3, 1873 to “lay down and maintain two iron railroad tracks thereon, propelled by horses or mules, and to carry passengers thereon...” With this charter, he formed the Main Street Railroad Company. However, Waldron was not strongly motivated to pursue this venture. The enterprise therefore never became a reality.

#### Spring & West Sixth Street Railroad

In 1874 the Spring & West Sixth Street franchise was issued to Judge Robert M. Widney (also one of the founding fathers of USC). The company served the downtown Los Angeles area from Main Street to Spring, to First, to Fort (now Broadway), then to Fourth Street, Hill, Sixth and finally to Pearl Street (Figueroa). This single-track horse car driven line began in Los Angeles.

#### Main Street & Agricultural Railroad

The Main Street & Agricultural Railroad was the first suburban line in Los Angeles. This company was chartered in November 1874 and began operation in July 1875 from Old River Southern Pacific on North Spring Street. The line operated through the city on Main Street to Washington Boulevard and extended to Agricultural Park (now Exposition Park), traveling by way of Washington, Figueroa and Wesleyan (University Avenue).

#### East Los Angeles & San Pedro Railway Company

Also founded by Robert Widney, this line was incorporated on May 1, 1875, but did not begin construction until March 1876. It ran North from Fourth Street and had hopes of laying track to the New Southern Pacific depot. It reached only to College Street and North Broadway. After four years, due to low patronage, this railway company folded.

#### Los Angeles & Aliso Street Railroad Company

The Los Angeles & Aliso Street Railroad Company was franchised in June 1875; in February 1877 regular service began. Baseball fever increased patronage and a second line, the East First Street line was built. It became a cable railway in 1889.

#### City Railroad Company

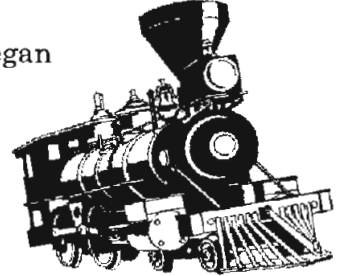
This line was chartered in 1883 and became the first line dedicated “exclusively to public transit.” (Other lines had been developed with land promotion interest as a principal focus.) This horse car driven system ran from the Southern Pacific depot south and west to a terminal at Washington and Figueroa.

*The Central Railroad Company*

Also chartered circa 1883, the Central Railroad Company was developed to consolidate with the Los Angeles & Aliso Railroad and eventually merged with the City Railroad on May 1, 1886.

*Main & Fifth Street Railroad*

As the name suggests, the Main & Fifth Street Railroad (which began service on July 30, 1887) ran from First and Main street to Fifth Street and Central Avenue. It was electrified by the Los Angeles Railway Company in 1897.



*Los Angeles & Vernon Railroad*

This company operated a horse car line on Central Avenue from Fifth Street to Vernon Avenue. It was purchased by the Los Angeles Consolidated Electric Railway in May 1891.

*Second Street Cable Railroad Company*

Founded in March 1885, the Second Street Cable Railroad Company was a single track system opening from Spring Street to Texas (Belmont Avenue).

*Temple Street Cable Railway Company*

This line opened on July 4, 1886. In 1888 it was extended to Dayton Height. It carried more passengers than any of the other lines.

*Los Angeles Cable Railway*

Incorporated in 1887, Los Angeles Cable Railway was the largest transit venture in the city and operated from Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles out to Westlake Park and Grand Avenue. It was the last city line to convert to electrification. It was renamed the Pacific Railway Company in 1889 and was later to be sold to Henry E. Huntington.

*Los Angeles Electric Railway Company*

Charles H. Howland chartered this company on September 11, 1886. It began operations on January 4, 1887 with the line opening from Pico and Main traveling West to Harvard. (In 1896, many of the major horse and cable cars operating in Los Angeles converted to electrical power.)

*Los Angeles Consolidated Electric Railway*

Originally chartered in 1890 in Phoenix, Arizona by Moses Sherman, the Los Angeles Consolidated Electric Railway grew as Sherman negotiated to acquire additional lines. He acquired the Los Angeles Electric Railway Company and was competing with James Crank of Pacific Railway for transit turf. He acquired Pacific Railway in 1893 but lost it to yet another company.

*Los Angeles Railway*

Formed in 1894, this company was to remain in existence for over 50 years. An early competitor, the Los Angeles Traction Company (1894) was eliminated and Los Angeles Railway merged with the Main Street & Agricultural Park Street Railroad retaining the name Los Angeles Railway. Henry E. Huntington became the owner in 1898 and maintained his interest in running the city lines.



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## 1900 - present

### Angels Flight

This little inclined cable railway was built in 1901 by Col. J.W. Eddy to give Bunker Hill residents a public access up the steep hill from Third and Hill to Third and Olive streets. It began operations on December 30, 1901, and was in business for over 60 years. Service was restored in February 1996.

### Pacific Electric Railway Company

Huntington completed his first line in 1902 which ran from Los Angeles to Long Beach (Red Cars). He later sold his shares to Southern Pacific. Various dates are cited but it is generally accepted that on August 24, 1911, (Source: Ride the Big Red Cars), the "great merger" took place and eight separate companies were merged into the Pacific Electric Railway Company. The Pacific Electric conglomerate, developed by Huntington, consisted of a standard (4 feet, 8½ inches) gauge interurban system suitable for competing with steam railroad lines for freight or passengers. Huntington retained the narrow gauge system (3 feet, six inches) consolidating them into the Los Angeles Railway (Yellow Cars).

The Mount Lowe Line was the most famous use of the Pacific Electric tourist lines although beach excursions were also plentiful.

Pacific Electric Subway - The Subway opened on November 30, 1925, and ran from Fourth & Hill Street to Beverly and Glendale Boulevards. The Subway Terminal Building was a notable feature of the subway. It had 250,000 square feet of office space and five wings with natural sunlight projecting through most of its rooms.

By 1933, Pacific Electric and Los Angeles Railway had included bus passenger service, but patronage of rail and bus had been crippled by the advent of the automobile which resulted in even larger decline in the later forties and fifties. (One reason noted for the change to buses was a serious drought in 1924 which caused a power shortage and required Pacific Electric to limit trolley service.)

"Miscellaneous Bus companies" - Various independent bus companies came into being with the intention of competing with the existing system. Most were purchased or subsumed by Pacific Electric or Los Angeles Railway. They include:



Los Angeles Motor Bus company renamed the Los Angeles Motor Coach Company circa 1930

LA CBD & Westside Lines 1923-1949

Motor Transport Company 1920'2-1939

Original Stage Line Los Angeles-San Fernando

Pasadena Ocean Park State Line

Studio Bus line (Hollywood-Culver City)

Asbury Rapid Transit System (San Fernando Valley-Hollywood-Pasadena-Los Angeles Central Business District 1930's-1954)

Los Angeles Transit Lines - (1945)

The controlling interest in the Los Angeles Railway was purchased from the Huntington estate by the National City Lines which was run by the five Fitzgerald brothers. They renamed it the Los Angeles Transit Lines and at the end of World War II, they sought to substitute buses on most of the street car lines.

Metropolitan Coach Lines - (1953-1958)

Pacific Electric sold its passenger rail cars and buses in October 1953 to Jesse Haugh who organized the Metropolitan Coach Lines bus company. Haugh purchased a \$30 million dollar property value for only \$500,000 cash with the promise that he would improve bus service and abandon the rail portions. (Metropolitan Coach Lines bought Asbury Rapid Transit on August 3, 1954.)

Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority - (1951-1964)

This agency was created in 1951 by the California Legislature to develop a monorail system along the Los Angeles River. The Authority later purchased the Metropolitan Coach Lines and the Los Angeles Transit Lines for \$33.3 million in 1958. In 1962, LAMTA proposed a "back-bone route" intended to study the feasibility of a rapid transit system. The Long Beach line was discontinued under this agency on April 8, 1961. The rest of the street cars (five remaining lines) were discontinued by March 31, 1963.

Miscellaneous bus companies acquired by LAMTA and their beginning service dates

Crosstown Suburban Bus Lines (So. Los Angeles County) 1961

Foster Transportation Co (Alhambra) 1962

Riverside City Lines 1963

Glendale City Lines 1962

Southern California Rapid Transit District - (1964-1993)

Legislation enable the creation of the SCRTD on August 22, 1964. This Agency superseded the LAMTA and was mandated to improve bus systems and design and build a transit system for Los Angeles. Bus improvements were recognized in the development of the El Monte Busway in 1974 and its Mini bus service in the CBD. The RTD, like its predecessor also acquired local suburban bus companies including:

Pasadena City Lines (Pasadena local lines - (1940-67)

Inglewood City Lines (Inglewood local lines - (1942-67)

Blue & White Bus Company (So L.A. Local lines - (1967-1971)

Eastern City Transit (East L.A. local lines) - (1949-1971)

San Pedro Motor Bus Assn. - (1961-1973)

Highland Transit (San Pedro) - (1938-1972)

San Pedro Transit Lines (Harbor City-San Pedro) - (1961-1973)

Western Greyhound Lines (Long Beach-Santa Monica Lines) - (1923-1974)

Ontario-Upland Bus Lines - (1928-1973)

Pomona Valley Municipal Transit System - (1966-1972)



Los Angeles County Transportation Commission - (1976-1993)

The Commission was created by the California Legislature in 1976 and was mandated to coordinate and fund the transit systems in Los Angeles County including bus and rail and to fund and set policies for the county's streets and highways, shuttles, dial-a-ride and paratransit. LACTC is credited with the construction of the Metro Blue Line and the first segments of the Metro Green Line and Metro Red Line.

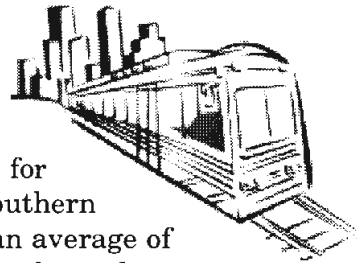
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority - (1993 - present)

The new MTA was created by Legislature in April, 1993 and merged the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission and the Southern California Rapid Transit District. This Agency is responsible for the 2,400 Metro buses, Metro Blue Line, the remaining phases of the Metro Red Line (in progress) and the Metro Green Line systems. It is presently implementing a revised plan to improve and maintain public transit in Los Angeles.

Other transit Systems Operating in Los Angeles - The following systems (and their beginning services dates) operate independently or in their own municipalities but also interface with the MTA.

Metrolink - Metrolink began operations on October 26, 1992, through a boost of funding in part from the LACTC.

The rail right-of-way was purchased from the Southern Pacific Railroad as part of a \$345 million acquisition price for the entire system. It operates under the auspices of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority and presently carries an average of 24,000 daily passengers, on six routes, over 416 miles of track, and serves 45 train stations throughout six counties.



Access Services Inc. - This service is designed exclusively for passengers requiring specialized transportation vehicles and services mandated by the American with Disabilities Act. Originally managed by the LACMTA, the Department was re-structured as a non-profit, independent agency under the name *Access Services in* 1994.

Culver City Municipal Lines- March 4, 1928

Long Beach Transit-1963 (originally owned by National City Lines)

Santa Monica Bus Lines- April 14, 1928

Foothill Transit Zone - December 19, 1988

Commerce- January 21, 1962

LADOT- October 28, 1985

Torrance-1940

La Mirada- 1973

Gardena- January 15, 1940

Montebello- 1931

Norwalk- August 1, 1974

**Prepared by: Dorothy Peyton Gray, MTA Library Services Manager**

**Sources:** Unpublished monograph From Horse Car to Red Car...; chronologies from MTA Library pamphlet and vertical file collection.

## A Bedtime Story for the MTA

This “Bedtime story for the MTA” is about the transit systems established in Los Angeles throughout the years. You may find, as I have, that keeping up with the development of transportation in Los Angeles can be quite a challenge. You may also discover that “the more things change, the more they stay the same.”

Once upon a time, a very wealthy man by the name of Dave Waldron decided he was bored and needed a new hobby. So in 1873, he petitioned the Los Angeles City Council to lay down track at Spring and Fourth Streets to operate a horse car transit system. Approval was granted, but he changed his mind and that was the end of that! Then in 1874, Robert M. Widney, (one of the founding fathers of USC) was granted permission to operate this franchise. (Rumor has it that his wife complained of difficulty in getting around when she went shopping for her hats... and this was his motivation for proposing a transit system!)

Many services followed under various systems, but the *City Railroad Company*, which was also a horse car system, was the first line in 1883 devoted exclusively to “public transit”. (Other lines had been created with land promotion interest as the primary focus.)

In 1887, *the Los Angeles Cable Railway* opened and became the largest transit venture of this era; it operated a distance of 15 to 20 miles from Boyle Heights out to Westlake Park and Grand Avenue. It was also the last city line to convert to electrification. In 1889 it was renamed the *Pacific Railway Company*.

Following this system was the famous *Los Angeles Railway Company*, which was established in 1894 through a merger of the *Los Angeles Traction Company* and the *Main Street & Agricultural Railroad*. LA Railway as it was known, was in business for over 50 years.

In the midst of these transit systems, was a little incline built in 1901 by a Col. J.W. Eddy. It was called *Angel's Flight* and was designed to give Bunker Hill residents public access up a steep hill from Third and Hill to Third and Olive streets. Angel's Flight was in operation until 1969. Service was restored as we all know, in February, 1996 thanks in part to MTA funding.

Enter on the scene, a man by the name of Henry E. Huntington. Mr. Huntington was a land developer. He started a new company in 1902, named the *Pacific Electric Railway Company*. From this transaction, eight companies were merged into the *Pacific Electric Company* which consisted of a conglomerate of standard gauge interurban systems suitable for competing with steam railroad lines. PE, as it was called, operated along a right-of-way extending from Los Angeles to Long Beach on what we know as the legendary Red Cars. (This is essentially the same right-of-way as our present Metro Blue Line system.) Huntington later sold his interest in the Pacific Electric to the Southern Pacific in 1910 but retained the standard gauge systems consolidating them into a local railway popularly called the *Yellow Cars*. It is well known that after making his fortune in the railway business, Mr. Huntington set out and built a rare book and manuscript Library on his estate in San Marino.

Another feature of the Pacific Electric system was its *Mount Lowe* tourist line in Pasadena. (Rumor has it that a lot of wild parties took place at a famous resort located at the top of Mount Lowe; regrettably for many of the tourists, the resort burned to the ground on February 5, 1900.)

In 1925, a very lavish *Subway Terminal Building* which was the terminal for the newly created Pacific Electric Subway was erected at Fourth and Hill. It was described as a luxury building with 250,000 square feet of office space. The Subway Terminal Building consisted of five wings with ample natural sunlight projecting through most of its rooms. Only the most elite companies could afford to rent space in this edifice. Last heard, the building is used as storage and office space by the Veterans Administration.

Then in 1933, Pacific Electric and LARY added a bus passenger service to their systems. One reason given for the change to buses was the existence of a serious drought in 1924 which caused a power shortage and required PE to limit trolley service and add bus routes instead. The bus system was crippled by the advent of the automobile which resulted in even larger bus declines in the forties and fifties.

In 1945, a company, known as the National City Lines took over the Los Angeles Railway Yellow Car system and renamed it the *Los Angeles Transit Lines*.

In 1953, PE sold its passenger rail cars and buses to Jesse Haugh who organized the *Metropolitan Coach Lines*. Jesse purchased this property, which had a \$30 million dollar value for a measly \$500,000 cash with the promise that he would improve bus service and abandon the rail portions. MCL was in service from 1953 to 1958.

In the meantime, in 1951, the California Legislature created an agency to develop a monorail system along the Los Angeles River. The agency was called the *Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority and was also known as the MTA or the Authority*. The Authority purchased the MCL and the LATL for \$33.3 million and also acquire four other smaller transit companies during its existence. The famous Long Beach Line was discontinued on April 8, 1961 and the remaining street cars were discontinued on March 30 1963. And that was the end of the street car era.

In 1968, the Authority prepared a back-bone route plan (something like a 20 year plan) to study the feasibility of a rapid transit system. This plan did not materialize and then on August 22, 1964, legislation created the *Southern California Rapid Transit District or RTD*. The RTD was mandated to improve bus service and to design and build a transit system which it later began in Los Angeles. RTD bus improvements were realized in the development of the El Monte Busway in 1974 and the Mini bus service in the Central Business District. The RTD, like its predecessors bought about ten other local companies.

In 1976, the California Legislature once again created a funding agency known as the *Los Angeles County Transportation Commission*. The Commission was mandated to coordinate and fund the transit systems in Los Angeles County including bus and rail and to fund and set policies for the county's streets and highways, shuttles, dial-a-ride and paratransit. LACTC constructed and opened the Metro Blue Line and the first segments of the Metro Green Line and Metro Red Line.

Finally on February 1, 1993, the California State Legislature created the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority or MTA through a merger of the LACTC and the SCRTPD. The MTA began operations on April 1, 1993 and you know the rest of the story.

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**Quiz:** What was the difference between the Red Cars and the Yellow Cars besides their color?

**Answer:** The Red Cars were interurban electric trains which traveled through various cities (i.e. Long Beach and Los Angeles) and the Yellow Cars were local or an inner-city street car system.

Dorothy Peyton Gray, MTA Library Services Manager  
April 2, 1997



History of Transit Fares in Los Angeles  
1874-1997

<u>Calendar Year</u>	<u>Bus Fare</u>
1874	10 cents
1875	10 cents
1876	10 cents
1877	5 cents
1878	5 cents
1879	5 cents
1880	5 cents
1881	5 cents
1882	5 cents
1883	5 cents
1884	5 cents
1885	5 cents
1886	5 cents
1887	5 cents
1888	5 cents
1889	5 cents
1890	5 cents
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1912	5 cents
1913	5 cents
1914	5 cents
1915	5 cents
1916	5 cents
1917	5 cents
1918	5 cents
1919	5 cents
1920	5 cents
1921	5 cents
1922	5 cents
1923	5 cents





1924	5 cents
1925	5 cents
1926	5 cents
1927	5 cents
1928	7 cents
1929	7 cents
1930	7 cents
1931	7 cents
1932	7 cents
1933	7 cents
1934	7 cents
1935	7 cents
1936	7 cents
1937	7 cents
1938	7 cents
1939	7 cents
1940	7 cents
1941	7 cents
1942	7 cents
1943	7 cents
1944	7 cents
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1946	10 cents
1947	10 cents
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1952	15 cents
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1956	17 cents
1957	17 cents
1958	17 cents
1959	17 cents
1960	20 cents
1961	25 cents
1962	25 cents
1963	25 cents
1964	25 cents
1965	25 cents
1966	25 cents
1967	30 cents
1968	30 cents
1969	30 cents
1970	30 cents
1971	30 cents
1972	30 cents
1973	30 cents
1974	25 cents
1975	25 cents
1976	35 cents
1977	40 cents



1978	45 cents
1979	55 cents
1980	65 cents
1981	85 cents
1982	50 cents (Decrease - Proposition A)
1983	50 cents
1984	50 cents
1985	85 cents (Proposition A subsidies expire)
1986	85 cents
1987	85 cents
1988	\$1.10
1989	1.10
1990	1.10
1991	1.10
1992	1.10
1993	1.10
1994	1.10
1995	1.35
1996	1.35
1997	1.35

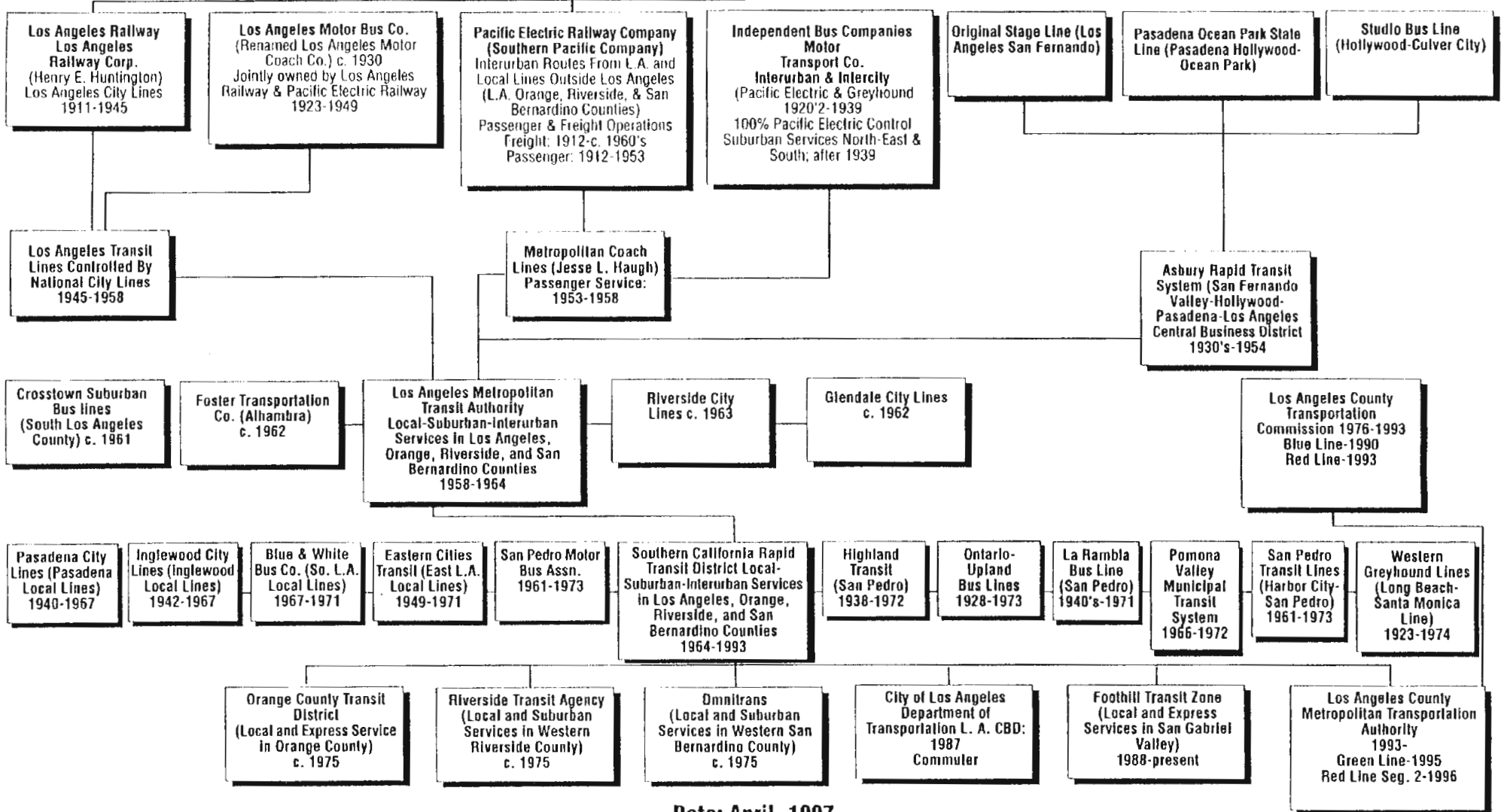
Source: Excerpt from: Effects of RTD Fare Changes since 1981

April, 1997





### The Great Merger 1911



Date: April, 1997

