



March 2022

## The Southern California Traction Club's Light Rail Vehicle

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#### CURRENT EVENTS.....

### Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

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**BOSTON, MA** - Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) General Manager Steve Poftak announced in February 2022 that the Green Line Extension's (GLX) Union Square branch will begin revenue service to Somerville on March 21.

The service marks the first new line on the T's rapid transit network since 1987, *WBUR.org* reported yesterday.

Riders will be able to board GLX trains in Somerville for the first time ever, starting at Union Square and continuing through to the new Lechmere Station in Cambridge, a reopened Science Park Station and then onto the rest of the T network.



The opening will bring the smallest of the GLX's two branches on the line and is the first expansion since 1987. The second branch will feature another five stops beyond Lechmere in Somerville and Medford, ending at College Avenue near Tufts University. That branch is not likely to begin revenue service until late summer, *WBUR* reported.

**KANSAS CITY, MO** - The KC Streetcar Authority announced early this year that its Kansas City Streetcar service crossed the annual 1 million ridership milestone before the end of 2021.

The streetcar provided **1,000,375** rides by of December 11, 2021, up from 782,556 rides provided in all of 2020.

KC Streetcar operating hours and service were increased as demand returned following the pandemic's peak in early 2021, authority officials said in a press release. In all, 2021 ridership recovered to nearly 60% of pre-pandemic levels .

The highest ridership day in 2021 was July 3, when 10,890 passenger trips were recorded, with the following Independence Day weekend registering the highest ridership weekend of the year. Summer was KC Streetcar's most popular time to ride, with the highest monthly ridership numbers recorded in July at 149,713.

Starting Monday, February 28, the KC Streetcar will extend hours of operation.

The change in hours of operation for both weekday and weekends is in direct response to an increase in KC Streetcar ridership and downtown activity.

The new hours of operation are:

- Monday through Thursday: 6:00 a.m.. – 11:00 p.m..

- Friday: 6:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m..
- Saturday: 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m..
- Sunday: 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m..

“We anticipate strong and growing ridership demand this spring and summer and the time is now to expand our service hours and capacity to keep Kansas City moving,” said Tom Gerend, Executive Director, KC Streetcar Authority.

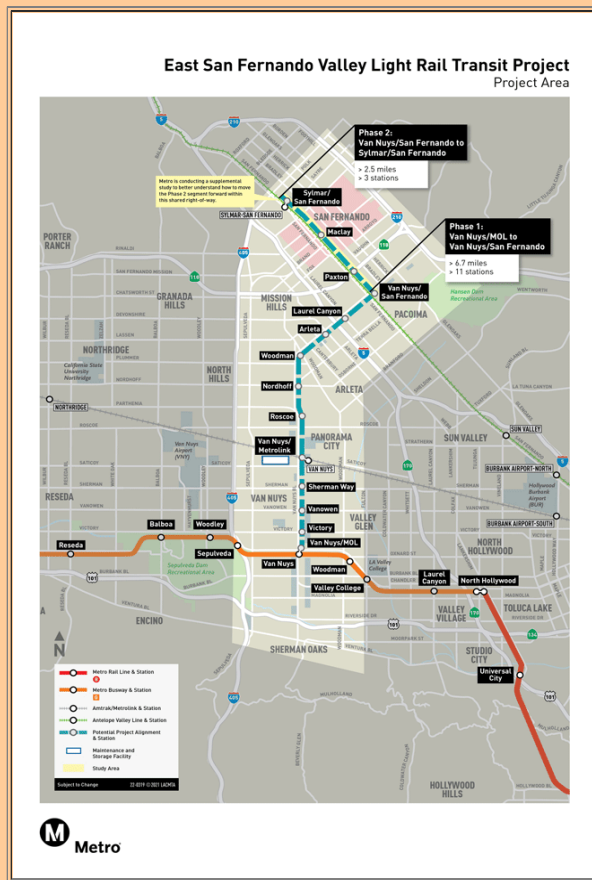
The KC Streetcar has closely monitored ridership recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, KC Streetcar ridership ended at approximately 65% recovery compared to pre-COVID 2019 ridership. In January 2022, weekend ridership recovery was strong, averaging a 85% recovery to pre-COVID 2019 ridership numbers.

Strong demand in the last hours of service supports the extension of streetcar operation hours. Even throughout the winter season, the KC Streetcar averaged more than 100 trips in the last hour of service. Additionally, Fridays averaged approximately 130 trips in the last hour and Saturdays averaged approximately 160 trips in the last hour. Requests from the community and passengers also support the late night demand and decision to extend hours.

**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY, CA** - Big news on Metro’s plans to build a light rail line in the San Fernando Valley: The Metro Board certified the project’s Final Environmental Impact Report, which officially ends the state-required environmental review process.

That’s a big step forward toward construction of the light rail line that will run between the G Line (Orange) Van Nuys Station and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station with 14 stations. The official name of the project is the East San Fernando Light Rail Project

A federal environmental review process was expected to conclude in last month with an anticipated Record of Decision by the Federal Transit Administration. That action is anticipated to confirm the project meets all federal environmental guidelines and makes it eligible for federal funding.



For those of you closely following Metro’s Measure M projects, you know that the agency’s transportation sales tax measures provide local funding needed to attract additional state and federal funds. This shovel-ready project already received state funding from SB 1 and could be well-positioned to compete if any federal funding opportunities become available.

A key item contained in the Board’s EIR approval today is the option for the line to be built in segments, as is typically done for major Metro rail line construction projects. Building the line in “interim operating segments” gives Metro the flexibility to determine the most efficient and cost-effective way to build its projects. Interim operating segments will be included in all future Measure M projects.

For the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Transit Project, that will enable Metro to begin pre-construction work as early as next year on the first 6.7-mile segment between the “G” Line (Orange) in Van Nuys to San Fernando Road in Pacoima. Subject to additional funding, a second, 2.5-mile segment would extend the line along the San Fernando rail right of way north to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station.

Metro will continue to study the second segment after receiving new stakeholder comments during the Final EIS/EIR’s public review period. Staff will coordinate closely with the Southern California Regional Rail Authority — the agency

that operates the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line — and the City of San Fernando to address concerns mainly related to shared track and railroad crossings along San Fernando Road.

The project will officially begin major construction this year and is scheduled to open by 2028. When complete, the new Valley Light Rail line will make it easy to connect between Metro's G Line, Metrolink, Amtrak and numerous east-west Valley bus lines. Another Metro project — the Sepulveda Transit Corridor — proposes to build a high-capacity transit line from Van Nuys across the Sepulveda Pass to the Westside and then beyond to LAX. That project is currently in the planning phase as different routes and financing plans are being studied and developed.

## OTHER TRACTION ITEMS:

### Odd Transit Tokens\*!

by Joseph Boscia, EPTC

If you are going shopping for household items, why not get some transit tokens\* at the same time? That was the thought in 1958 of B. T. Babbitt Company and the Hudson Pulp and Paper Company. So they approached the Philadelphia Transportation Co. (PTC), and the New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA). The idea was the brainchild of Marshall S. Lachner, President of Babbitt.

Each company marketed five products. Their proposal was to put coupons on the products so four coupons could be redeemed at the transit operation for one ride token. On June 24, 1958, the PTC Board of Directors approved the plan in principle, subject to a final agreement between the Executive Committee and the supplier companies. Managers in the Transportation Department were involved in outlining the parameters of the plan. The agreement was signed on August 14, 1958 to be effective September 22, 1958.

The promotion slogan was *"Ride Free with PTC."* The coupons would be on Babbitt products of Cameo Copper cleaner, Bab-O cleanser, Glim detergent, Hep oven cleaner, and Air Gene room deodorizers. The Hudson products were napkins, paper towels, toilet paper and facial tissue. A combination of any four coupons of the products could be used for one token. PTC would be reimbursed at the regular token rate of 18 cents for each four coupons. Passengers using the Benjamin Franklin Bridge Line would pay the usual additional 2½ cent token, or 3 cent cash Bridge Line toll. No combination of coupons and cash would be allowed, except on the Bridge Line.

Products carrying the coupons would be available in Philadelphia, Montgomery, Delaware and Bucks counties in PA, and Camden County, NJ, for three months from the starting date. PTC would accept them until March 15, 1959. Babbitt and Hudson estimated that 10 million product items would be labeled with the coupons. They would also wage a joint, all out advertising campaign, including counter displays in more than 2,000 supermarkets, grocery stores, and retail outlets.

The PTC President, Douglas Pratt, thanked the companies *"for giving PTC the opportunity to demonstrate. ... the convenience, value, and vitality of public transportation."* In September, Depot orders were published to all Surface Division Platform Employees, and Hi Speed Division Cashiers, announcing that the promotion would start Monday, September 22, 1958. They were not to accept more than four coupons from one passenger at one time. Coupons were also not to be exchanged for a token unless used for a ride at the time presented. A free transfer would be issued upon request. The coupons were to be turned in as "tokens returned" with their Waybill and change fund.

There is no record of the number of coupons PTC redeemed, or the Company's judgment of the success of the promotion. NYCTA evidently began its promotion before PTC, but only with Babbitt. No details of its program are known, but one NYCTA coupon is shown below with the PTC ones. Note it took only three coupons to get a token, vs. four on PTC.

The above information and samples below are from a discarded Transportation Department file in my collection.





\* Tokens were transit company created coins used on transit vehicles as fares to avoid the delay of making change on one person operated vehicles. They fell out of favor when they were copied in the counterfeit market and did not enjoy the counterfeit protection of US currency.