

Transit NewsWatch

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Protesters mourn 'death' of public transit

... bus drivers, union leaders and students marched Monday to protest cuts in mass transit. The protesters staged a mock funeral procession in front of Orange County Transportation Authority headquarters, displaying their opposition to the recent elimination of 400 jobs. Members of Teamsters 952 have asked the board of directors to look at other problems within bus operations that could help OCTA deal with its budget deficit brought on by a drop in sales tax revenue and state funding.

<http://www.ocregister.com/articles/bus-orange-pay-2362647-octa-line>

California Cities Need A Predictable Fund For Transit Operations

When the State Transit Assistance (STA) fund was zeroed out to pass the budget a couple of months ago, the already dire situation for transit operators in California became much worse. In the Bay Area, AC Transit raised fares, the MTA has been considering budget cuts and fare hikes, and BART will likely do the same...While it should make sense to legislators that they won't meet the obligations set out in the AB 32 global warming and SB 375 anti-sprawl legislation recently passed if they continue to incentivize driving, none has come out in public linking transit funding to the state's purported environmental objectives.

<http://sf.streetsblog.org/2009/04/13/california-cities-need-a-predictable-fund-for-transit-operations/>

California Eliminates Transit, Expands Freeways

Here in San Diego, public transportation is on life support. Despite record ridership, trolley and bus service has been reduced, with some bus routes cancelled altogether. Fares are up across the board...In February 2009, California abolished the State Transit Assistance (STA) program, a \$536 million fund that covers 70% of the operating costs for transit agencies across the state. According to the California Transit Association, it is "the only source of state funding for day-to-day transit operations"... But the state still manages to find the money to widen freeways...during the budget negotiations, Governor Schwarzenegger continued "to call for deeper cuts in spending and waivers of environmental regulations to allow at least 10 highway projects to go forward this year".

<http://www.planetizen.com/node/38317>

MUNI prices set to go up, may raise again

The price of MUNI transfers and monthly passes may increase later this year in an effort by the SFMTA Board of Directors to bridge the transit system's \$80 million budget gap. The bill to pass this increase will be decided later this month. At the end of this past fiscal year, SFMTA found itself with an \$80 million deficit, according to [SFMTA spokesman Judson True]...the agency will be increasing the cost of MUNI fares and passes, as well as fee increases for traffic permits. The next fiscal year, which begins on July 1, is projected to have a deficit of nearly \$129 million.

<http://xpress.sfsu.edu/archives/news/013060.html>

BART proposes 10 percent fare hike

BART proposed Thursday to raise train fares 10 percent, charge parking fees at more stations, and reduce night and Sunday service to cope with financial problems besieging public transit systems throughout California. Transit finances are so grim that the president of the union for BART train operations and station agents said his group has proposed a one-year wage freeze in contract negotiations. Labor costs account for about three-fourths of BART's operating budget.

http://www.mercurynews.com/breakingnews/ci_12111377



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