

MEMO

To NCTD Board of Directors

From Bridget Hennessey, Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

Date January 11, 2012

CC Matthew O. Tucker, Executive Director

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www.gonctd.com

RE Tri-weekly Update, 12/19/11 – 1/8/12

Executive Update

- Encinitas pedestrian crossing: The groundbreaking for the Encinitas pedestrian crossing is scheduled for January 18 at noon. Individuals interested in attending should RSVP to lwad@sandag.org.
- New COASTER Schedule: A new COASTER schedule, available at GoNCTD.com, went into effect on January 9. Most of the schedule changes are to Saturday, Sunday, and holiday afternoon and evening service.
- UCSD advertisements on the COASTER: On January 2, NCTD launched advertisements for the UCSD Health System on COASTER trains (see *photo below*).



- COASTER Wi-Fi: NCTD is in the process of installing and testing Wi-Fi on COASTER trains. Savvy customers are accessing the testing stream on board now, but they should not expect it to have full functionality or availability until the full system launch in coming months. NCTD is asking staff and contractors to

refrain from announcing the stream availability until the testing period is over and official notice is given.

- SPRINTER Construction: Beginning January 24 and continuing through February, construction on the SPRINTER track will cause 10 to 15 minute delays. An express shuttle between Oceanside and Vista will help customers avoid delays.
- Ticket vending machine relocations: NCTD is no longer selling Compass Cards in Vons grocery stores. NCTD has signed a contract with Albertson's grocery stores for continued Compass Card sales. As a result, January 5 was the last day that NCTD ticket vending machines were located in Vons grocery stores. Beginning January 20, ticket vending machines will be available for use in 42 area Albertson's stores.

Legislative Update (Federal)

- Congress passed tax package without extension of transit benefits or alternative fuel tax credits: In late December, Congress passed a two-month extension of the payroll tax cut. This bill did not include an extension of the Transit Benefits or the Alternative Fuel Tax. What does that mean to NCTD and our customers?
 - Effective January 1, the pre-tax amount that employees can spend on transit fares is cut from \$230 per month to \$125 per month.
 - NCTD currently receives about \$650K in Alternative Fuel Tax Credits per fiscal year. We will no longer be eligible for this credit.
- Congress may consider transit benefits when it reconvenes in mid-January, and may incorporate transit benefits into the long-term extension of the payroll tax cut that Congress will address in February.

Legislative Update (State)

- STA projections: State Transit Assistance (STA) projections put the FY 2012-2013 allocation at \$429 million. (Note: This allocation could be lower. For example, as of the 2011 May Revise, STA funding was projected to be \$416 million for FY 2011-2012. Subsequent revisions based on lower revenue collections put the FY 2011-12 STA at approximately \$399 million, including \$376 million in revenue collections plus \$23 million in a one-time appropriation.) Pursuant to the "Gas Tax Swap" agreement ratified in 2011, STA allocations are based solely on diesel sales tax revenues.
- FY 2012-2013 budget: Governor Brown released the California fiscal year (FY) 2012-2013 budget on January 5. Overall, transit fares well in this proposal. The Governor proposes to combine several transportation agencies into one larger transportation agency; this new agency would include the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Department of Motor Vehicles, the High Speed Rail Authority, the Highway Patrol, the California Transportation Commission, and the Board of Pilot Commissioners.

Media Coverage

- January 9 – 10 News. “Schedule changes begin today for NCTD COASTER.” <http://www.10news.com/news/30165538/detail.html> Tone – informational
- January 9 – North County Times. “Some COASTER cars wrapped up in new advertising program.” http://www.nctimes.com/blogsnew/news/transportation/region-some-coaster-cars-wrapped-up-in-new-advertising-program/article_f5827af3-582c-5346-86d1-9ef3afa9cc69.html Tone – informational (Note: This story was picked up by the AP and re-published by the Sacramento Bee, San Jose Mercury News, and San Francisco Gate Chronicle)
- January 7 – North County Times. “New Coaster schedule to take effect Monday.” http://www.nctimes.com/blogsnew/news/transportation/region-new-coaster-schedule-to-take-effect-monday/article_927b01a5-09b5-5408-88aa-53b1886b229e.html Tone – Informational.
- January 6 – North County Times. “Long-awaited pedestrian rail crossing ready to break ground.” http://www.nctimes.com/blogsnew/news/transportation/encinitas-long-awaited-pedestrian-rail-crossing-ready-to-break-ground/article_b538e351-2fc7-514c-b0cc-1ba688071912.html Tone – positive
- January 4 – San Diego Union Tribune. “Albertsons stores pick up Compass Card services on Jan. 20.” <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/jan/04/albertsons-stores-pick-compass-card-services-jan-2/> Tone – informational
- January 3 – Mass Transit. “Sprinter celebrates 1,000 days without an employee injury.” http://www.masstransitmag.com/press_release/10595454/sprinter-celebrates-1000-days-without-an-employee-injury Tone – positive
- December 27 – RailwayAge.com. “Veolia awarded Sprinter contract extension.” <http://www.railwayage.com/breaking-news/veolia-awarded-sprinter-contract-extension-3829.html> Tone – informational
- December 22 – North County Times. “Transit district offering free late-night rail, bus rides on New Year’s Eve.” http://www.nctimes.com/news/local/vista/region-transit-district-offering-free-late-night-rail-bus-rides/article_2a81e51d-b431-5c09-9cae-498a78c357a8.html Tone – positive