

Foothill Transit customers react to changes, including new bus lines to Mt. SAC, Santa Anita Park

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
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By [Steve Scauzillo](#), San Gabriel Valley Tribune

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POMONA >> Foothill Bus rider Ron Miller was well aware of the huge gap in the schedule.

The bus he frequently rides, Line 292 from the Pomona Transit Center to Claremont, stops operating at 8:07 a.m. then picks up again later in the afternoon, leaving a midday gap. Also, there's no night service.

"I would like to take it up to the Stater Bros. on Foothill and Towne," said Miller, 53, a regular Foothill Transit bus rider and Pomona resident. "I like the changes they are proposing to the 292, to have an all-day route."

That's just [one of the many schedule changes](#) — some extensions, some cancellations — Foothill Transit wants to make by October that would affect its 14 million annual riders on 39 lines in the Pomona and San Gabriel valleys.

The effort is an attempt to stave off a drop in bus ridership resulting from a healthier economy, lower gas prices and customers switching to the popular [L.A. Metro Pasadena-to-Azusa Gold Line train](#).

By scratching barely used routes and condensing others to serve fewer cities, the independent West Covina-based bus agency can save about \$550,000, which can pay for increases in labor costs and route extensions.

On Tuesday, Miller was one of about a dozen people who filled a small conference room at the Pomona Library to learn about the substantial changes and the first fare hike from the bus agency in seven years.

Tuesday's meeting was the fifth of seven public meetings hosted by Foothill Transit this month on proposed fare and schedule changes. The agency will hold its next meeting 1 p.m. Thursday at El Monte City Hall East, 11333 Valley Blvd. with the final meeting scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday, at Foothill Transit's offices, 100 S. Vincent Ave., West Covina.

Under the plan, the cost of a single bus ride would climb from \$1.25 to \$1.50 for cash users. Those using a preloaded TAP card would not experience a fare increase; fares on some commuter routes would rise only 5 cents for the first year of a two-year rate change.

Monthly passes for seniors and disabled riders would jump from \$22 to \$25 and from \$33 to \$40 for students. On the other hand, adult monthly passes would drop from \$70 to \$50.

For the first time, Foothill Transit would offer riders a day pass for \$5, \$2.50 for seniors and disabled.

Miller and friend Trevor Collins, 58, both said they didn't mind the fare hike, although Miller is thinking of changing to a TAP card instead of paying cash, to avoid the increase.

Collins applauded a proposal to send Line 480 from Pomona directly to Mount San Antonio College in Walnut. He said it would be the first time he can ride from Pomona to Walnut directly, on one bus. "There is a demand for a bus to Mt. SAC," he said.

Foothill Transit already has five bus lines feeding into Mt. SAC, which enrolls as many as 60,000 students a semester and where parking is in short supply.

Collins attends Devry Institute but is thinking about taking classes at the popular community college.

Foothill Transit has heard from the college administration and students about a need for more mass transit. "That will add more connections and feed into students with the Class Pass," said Felicia Friesema, spokeswoman for Foothill Transit.

In Azusa, Foothill Transit wants to move its Line 690 from terminating at the Downtown Azusa Gold Line to the APU/Citrus College Gold Line station. "We're trying to give people more choices," Friesema said.

Ruth Trigo, 63, of Pomona, objected to shortening Line 480. The proposal calls for stopping at Eastland Shopping Center in West Covina but not farther west. "I want it to continue to West Covina Parkway and California Avenue," she said in Spanish, through an interpreter.

Michael Bourne of Glendora has been riding mass transit for 36 years. He didn't have many objections to the schedule and fare changes but wanted Foothill to be more aware of operational issues, such as drivers routinely showing up 15 to 20 minutes late at stops on Line 187.

Foothill wants to split that line that runs from Montclair to Pasadena into two. Line 187 would run from Pasadena to Azusa. Line 188 would run from Azusa to Montclair, with an added stop at the Westfield Santa Anita mall.

Friesema said the agency is considering stops at the mall as well as Santa Anita Park and the 626 Night Market that takes place in the parking area in the summer.

The earliest the new routes and fares would take effect is October, pending approval of the governing board.