

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

August 27, 2015

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Director

RE: SBCCOG Transportation Update –August 2015

Adherence to Strategic Plan:

Goal A: Environment, Transportation and Economic Development. Facilitate, implement and/or educate members and others about environmental, transportation and economic development programs that benefit the South Bay.

FOLLOW THE MONEY...

FEDERAL

Congress Passes 35th MAP-21 Extension; Senate Approves Its Version of Long-Term Bill

To avoid expiration of highway funding authority on July 31st, Congress approved a 35th short-term patch to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) since 2005 with a three-month extension to October 29th. The extension injects \$8 billion into the HTF to pay for summer road, bridge, and other infrastructure construction projects across the nation.

As he signed the short term extension bill, President Obama chided Congress for again deferring the long term bill and for removing a provision of the bill that would have reauthorized the expired and dormant Import Export Bank. The bank has been unable to make international trade loans since Congress let its authority expire at the end of June.

The Senate on July 30th passed a six-year authorization of highway, transit and rail programs that only identified three years of spending. The final Senate bill combines the Comprehensive Transportation and Consumer Protection Act of 2015 (S.1732), which authorizes the office of the Secretary of Transportation for the next six years (fiscal years 2016 through 2021), with Senator Barbara Boxer’s Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act (S. 1647), and other component legislation from other Senate committees to form legislation commonly referred to as “The Highway Bill” or the “Surface Transportation Reauthorization Actl.”

The key ongoing issue for a 6-year reauthorization bill is how to pay for it. To avoid new taxes or fees, the Senate cobbled together nearly \$45 billion in adjustments to other non-transportation program budgets and one-time revenue generating sources that would fund three of the six years. In one creative example, the Senate would generate \$9 billion by 2020 by committing to sell 100+ million gallons of the 600+ million-gallon Strategic Petroleum Reserve between 2018 and 2025 at an estimated price ranging from \$76.25 in 2018 to \$91.13 per gallon by 2025.

House leaders rejected the Senate plan and said they would approve a fully-funded long-term bill with no new taxes (principally by reforming the federal tax codes) after returning from their August recess. Differences in the two bills would then be negotiated in a final bill to be sent to the President.

\$9.8 Billion In Federal TIGER Funding Requested; Only \$500 Million Available

The U. S. DOT revised downward its July estimate of the number of applications and funding requested in the 2015 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER). The program received 625 applications requesting \$9.8 billion before the close of the application deadline June 30. The applications broke down into the following categories: road projects - 60%; transit projects - 18%, rail projects - 8%, port projects - 6%, and bicycle projects - 6%.

The 2015 TIGER program has a budget of \$500 million which is a 19.6:1 ratio of requested funding to available funding. The Obama administration has requested \$7.5 billion for six years of TIGER grants in the HTF reauthorization, or \$1.25 billion a year on average.

STATE

State Gasoline Excise Tax Rate Lowered 6-cents A Gallon On July 1st

Under guidelines of a complicated gas tax formula enacted in 2010, the State Board of Equalization annually adjusts the state's gasoline excise tax rate. As a result, the statewide excise tax rate on gasoline was reduced on July 1st by 6 cents, from 36 cents to 30 cents per gallon. The new rate will remain in place through June 30, 2016.

Special Session On Funding State Highway Repairs Focuses On \$59 Billion State Backlog

The California Legislature has been meeting in a special joint session during July to develop a solution to the rising backlog in state highway repairs. At the heart of the problem is a combination of lagging state gas tax revenue and rising construction costs. The rate hasn't been raised from 48.6 cents per gallon since the early 1990s and cars are becoming more fuel-efficient.

To pay for the needed repairs, Democrats have authored several bills that would increase revenue by raising gas taxes and registration fees and charging an additional flat fee for electric vehicles - or charging a flat road use fee to all drivers.

Republicans oppose any fee or tax increases and are proposing to use general fund revenues that are at an all-time high, divert money from the state's high speed rail project and other projects, and use revenues from the new Cap and Trade market intended to fund projects that will reduce greenhouse gases. The discussion is only about state highways; it does not include addressing a shortfall for repair of local streets and roads.

Southern California Road Condition Ranks Second Worst In Nation

Potholes, cracks and ruts in rapidly deteriorating roadways are costing Southern California car owners an extra \$1,031 a year to drive on the second worst maintained roads in the nation, according to a report released July 23rd by TRIP, a 40-year-old nonprofit Washington D.C. think

tank that is backed by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers and suppliers, highway and transit construction firms and labor unions.

About 73 percent of the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana metro region's roads are in poor condition, second only to San Francisco and Oakland at 74 percent. Both regions ranked worse than Detroit and New York City. Fifteen California urban areas ranked among the regions with the most deteriorated pavements in the nation.

The findings were reported in "Bumpy Roads Ahead: America's Roughest Rides and Strategies to Make Our Roads Smoother".

Caltrans Is Developing Design Guidelines for new Class IV Category of Bikeways

The Protected Bikeways Act of 2014 (A.B. 1193, enacted in September 2014) requires Caltrans to establish a new category of bikeway in the state's Highway Design Manual. Currently there are three categories of bikeways – Class I bike paths, Class II bike lanes, Class III bike routes. The new category, Class IV, applies to cycle tracks, or separated bikeways. In May 2015, Caltrans initiated the Class IV design process by meeting with a broad coalition of bicycle advocates and local transportation agencies.

The Federal Highway Administration published its "*Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide*" in May 2015. The federal guidance may be used by Caltrans in providing design guidance for California. Caltrans will also be reviewing European design guidelines where cycle tracks are numerous and popular.

S. B. 1193 requires Caltrans to establish and publish minimum safety design criteria for Class IV bikeways by January 1, 2016. Kevin Herritt, in the Caltrans Local Assistance Sacramento office, is project lead. Herritt can be reached at: kevin.herritt@dot.ca.gov.

Assembly Bill Seeks To Reform Parking Minimums In Affordable Housing Developments

A controversial bill, A. B.774₂, would set statewide parking limits for affordable housing developments, making it less expensive to build affordable housing, to build housing for seniors and developmentally disabled. But some critics, including the California League of Cities, are concerned that it would lead to spillover parking impacts in neighborhoods and would remove local authority.

The bill is targeted at a very specific type of housing developed for people who either cannot afford a car or are not likely to drive. Projects in California that are 100% affordable housing or senior housing and that have unobstructed access to a major transit stop within a half mile could require no more than 0.5 parking spaces per unit. Projects that are 100% developmentally disabled housing within a half mile of a major transit stop could require no more than 0.3 parking spaces per unit. If the local jurisdiction strongly believes it needs to require more parking, the bill would allow the city to use a parking study, completed any time within the prior seven years, to require higher parking ratios.

REGIONAL

LA DOT Shows "People Streets" on New Web Map

LADOT has introduced a new web-based public map that shows the city's current and future People St. project investments. The People St. program, one of the City's Great Streets

initiatives, implements City investments in low-cost, high-return mobility projects, such as sidewalk extensions, called parklets, and plazas.

LADOT partners with communities to bring the People St. projects to fruition by sharing costs and responsibilities. Every year, communities are encouraged to apply through the program to secure the partnerships, with project ideas coming from neighborhoods rather than from the City.

LADOT hopes community leaders and the public will use the People St web map to identify places in their neighborhoods that might benefit from a parklet or plaza installation, and then apply to the program. The goal is to spark community interest in partnering with the City to improve residents' mobility network for all travel modes. Community Partners are required to be active players in order to build neighborhood support for Plazas and Parklets, identify an appropriate site, conduct outreach, raise funds required for materials and furnishings, install project elements, and provide and fund long-term management, maintenance, and operations of the project.

The People St. ESRI web map marks the first time LADOT has been able to pull City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), and County of Los Angeles data into a single view of the City's transportation infrastructure network as well as parks and other public open space. Layers, such as existing and future Metro rail lines, bicycle facilities, and street designations can be toggled on and off, and zooming in provides even greater detail.

View the People St map at peoplest.lacity.org/projects.

Metro Updates Its Joint Development Policies To Improve Affordable Housing

The Metro Board of Directors' in July approved changes to the way the agency partners for development on Metro-owned land. In the past, Metro joint development was often called "TOD" for Transit Oriented Development. In the new policy, TOD has morphed into "TOC" Transit Oriented Communities. The changes to Metro's Joint Development Policy include:

- Setting an overall affordable housing goal for 35 percent for Metro's joint development program. Past Metro projects completed have 31 percent affordable housing overall.
- Discounting the price of Metro-owned land to incentivize affordability. The discount would be equal to the percentage of affordable housing developed, up to a maximum 30 percent land discount.
- Extending the duration of its Exclusive Negotiating Agreements (ENAs.) to 18 months or longer to incorporate the time needed for environmental clearance of projects. ENAs used to be approved for six months
- Earlier emphasis of "first last miles facilities", such as walkways, bike parking, etc., in joint development projects

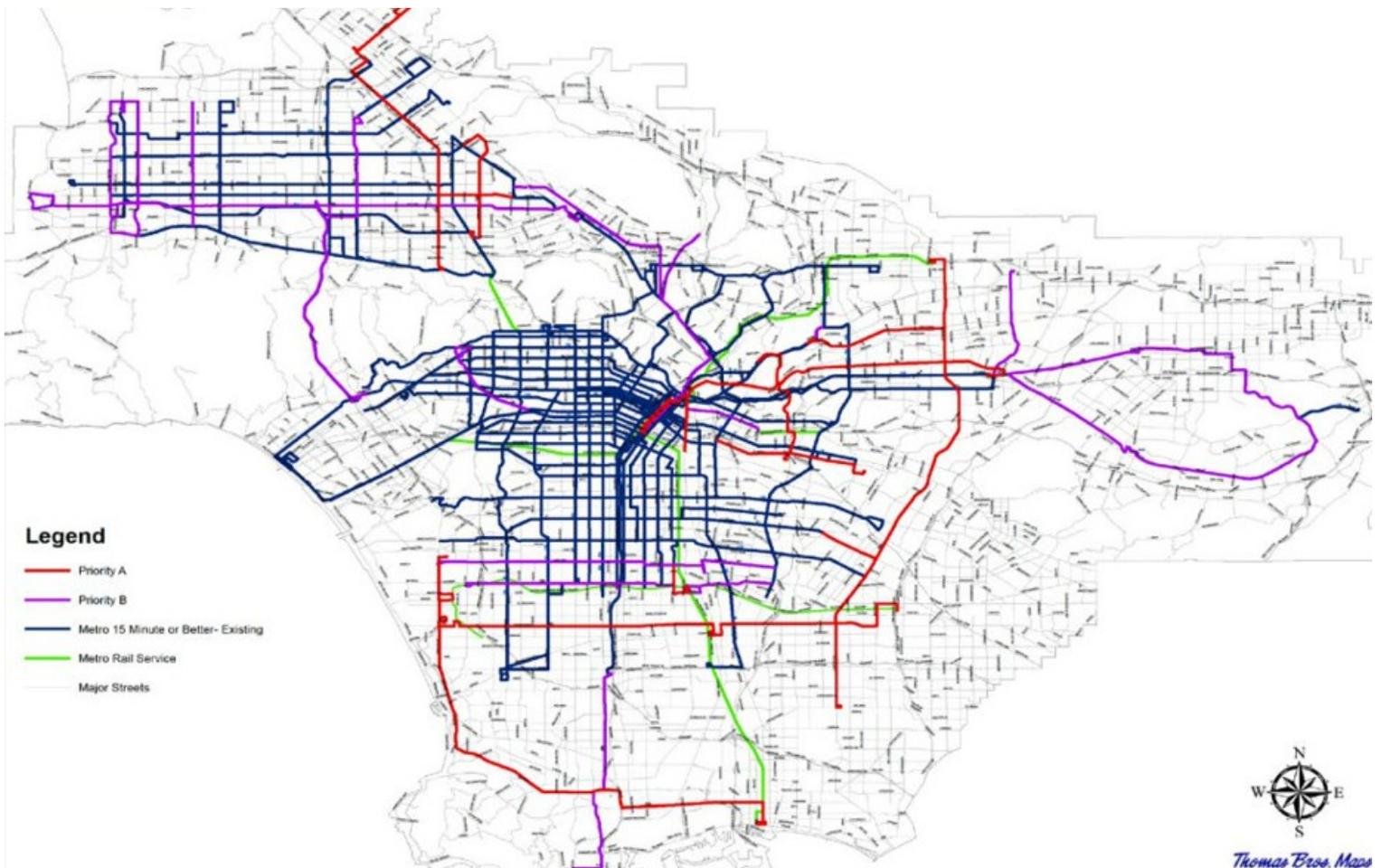
For additional details, see the staff presentation and the full 14-page revised Metro Joint Development Program Policies and Process document.

Metro Releases APTA Blue Ribbon Committee's Bus Service Restructuring Analysis

An APTA Blue Ribbon Committee convened in January 2015 by Metro proposed in June increasing bus frequency for many lines in the system by reducing or eliminating Metro service on some of the low ridership lines and on lines that duplicate municipal transit services.

The committee recommended creating a "high frequency network" of buses that run at least every 15 minutes - even during off-peak hours. The committee also recommended offsetting the increased costs of the more-frequent services by cutting service of low performing lines, shortening lines and offering free transfers to connecting municipal lines, reducing the number of bus stops to make Metro stops $\frac{1}{4}$ mile apart, and slightly increasing load standards used to determine when a bus is considered too crowded during rush hour. Metro buses have an all-day "loading standard" of 1.3—meaning they allow 1.3 passengers for every seat. The new plan would raise that standard to 1.4 during peak hours. The new standard would put Metro in line with cities like New York, Seattle and Philadelphia, which tolerate more crowding on buses.

Here's the proposed "high frequency network" map. (No map was provided of proposed service reductions). Dark blue routes already run every 15 minutes; those in red and purple are proposed for increased service frequency:



Metro Bike-Share, Take 2

In June 2015, the Metro Board of Directors approved an \$11 million contract for Bicycle Transit Systems (BTS) to open a 1,000+ bikeshare project to downtown Los Angeles in early 2016. Santa Monica and Long Beach have executed contracts with a different vendor, Cyclehop, which also intends to open the two systems in 2016.

Metro Board offered several motions to ensure interoperability of systems that are approved for the Metro-sponsored program. BTS uses a bike station system and Cyclehop uses a bike-mounted system. Metro wants both vendors to comply with common interoperable specifications for the bikes to enable an efficient sponsorship program and to allow payment with the Metro TAP card.

Torrance seeks grant to create preserve for rare plant on transit center site

Torrance is seeking a \$500,000 State grant to create a 2-acre preserve that will protect a “seriously endangered” plant adjacent to the site of the Regional Transit Center at 208th Street and Crenshaw Boulevard.

The preserve for the Southern Tarplant, listed by the state at the highest threat level possible before it’s considered extinct, will require four years of monitoring and maintenance by an experienced restoration team.

The Tarplant was discovered on the former industrial site last year as the city conducted a required environmental analysis. To bolster that population, biologists will create a hybrid of the plant and transplant it to Madrona Marsh. The fenced preserve on the transit site will include interpretive signage for educational purposes.

Microtransit Start Ups May Disrupt Public Transit and Airport Shuttles

A new type of private sector start up combines Uber-like smart phone ride hailing technology with shuttle vans that serve recurring trips. In the same way Uber and its competitors have impacted taxi services, the new service models may impact transit ridership. The start-ups are trying to compete with pricing set between a private taxi and public transit service. By reducing the cost of taxis and increasing the timeliness and reliability of transit through technology, these companies could revitalize the moribund market for carpooling.

There are two broad categories of microtransit: One service modal is an ad hoc shuttle which operates in certain service areas based on user demand similar to an airport shuttle. The key operating concept of this model is that the shuttles operate on variable routes in real time based on pickup requests received directly from smartphones in the hands of available passengers.

The other model is a service that lets you split the cost of a ride with other nearby commuters or recurrent users who regularly need to get to a similar destination, similar to a carpool. The service is created and is available as soon as enough riders have indicated an interest in going to the same destination at approximately the same time. The key is to get 10 customers on a vehicle rather than three. It is unclear if there will be a sustained customer base density to make the route deviations efficient compared to fixed-route transit stops.

Since most of these startups are only in one or two cities, and they run very limited routes, it’s too early to predict if they will attract and retain current transit riders. It’s also an open question

whether various municipal regulations will permit private companies to run this sort of semi-public transport. Academics that have studied the options are encouraging cities to coordinate the services with their transit operator to enable transit restructuring, improve last-mile and feeder services and to consider unified payment systems for transit and microtransit with subsidized transfers for low income riders that use both networks

Six L. A. City Council Members Question Plan To Let Uber, Lyft Pick Up At LAX

Citing "significant questions" over equity and public safety, six members of the Los Angeles City Council said Wednesday that they want to reexamine the new rules adopted in early July by the L. A. City Board of Airport Commissioner that would allow Uber and Lyft to pick up passengers at Los Angeles International Airport.

Earlier this month, the Commissioners gave the green light to a policy creating a permitting process for app-based ride-hailing companies such as Uber and Lyft to operate at LAX. At least 10 of the 15 City Council members would need to approve the reconsideration motion that was introduced on July 29th to allow the Council to require changes in the current plan approved by the Airport Commission.

CARB Awards LA City Grant To Bring Electric Car-Sharing To The Poor

Recognizing that low income families are unlikely to be able to afford electric cars for years to come, the California Air Resources Board awarded the City of L. A. a \$1.6 million Cap and Trade grant to put 100 car-share vehicles, at least 80 of which are electric, into the low-income neighborhoods ringing downtown.

The car-share program will focus on Westlake, Pico-Union, Boyle Heights, and Koreatown, areas home to large numbers of new immigrants and other low-income residents that may not have a bank account, a cellphone or internet connection. It will be administered by community organizations that are already familiar with the needs and resources in the service areas.

Different from the typical sharing service areas in which users sign up online and locate and book cars on their smartphone, the program operator might need to include a call center to help people reserve cars and the operators need to speak more languages than English.

The L.A. city council still needs to formally accept the grant when it comes back from its summer recess, says L.A. Chief Sustainability Officer Matt Petersen. Then they can put out a call for proposals to decide who will operate the car-share program. He hopes to have cars operating by early 2016. The city is also working on installing 1,000 public EV charging stations by 2017; this pilot will install 110 of them in the car share communities.