South Bay Cities Council of Governments

July 25, 2019

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Director

RE: SBCCOG Transportation Update Covering June 2019

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.

FEDERAL

House Appropriations Committee Approves Fy 2020 Transportation Funding
By a vote of 29 to 21, the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations formally approved a fiscal year 2020 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) funding bill on June 7th. The measure would provide the U.S. Department of Transportation with a total budget of $86.6 billion; roughly $167 million above the amount enacted for fiscal year 2019 and $3.7 billion above the amount requested in President Trump's budget proposal last Spring. The bill includes:

- $48.9 billion for the Federal Highway Administration, which is $404 million below FY 2019 but $1.7 billion above the President's budget request
- $13.5 billion for the Federal Transit Administration, which is $60 million above FY 2019 and $1.1 billion above the President's budget request
- $2 billion for Amtrak
- $1.75 billion for discretionary Highway Infrastructure Programs, which is $1.5 billion below FY 2019 but $1.45 billion above the President's budget request
- $1 billion for national infrastructure investments via the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development or BUILD grant program
- $10 million to fund a new program, the Highly Automated Systems Safety Center of Excellence

The Appropriations Committee's 2020 transportation funding measure is included in a five-bill package that began receiving consideration on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives on June 20th. Besides transportation programs, the measure would dedicate funding for fiscal 2020 for programs at the Departments of Commerce, Interior, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Senators have yet to unveil companion legislation.

Cities Create National Coalition To Figure Out How To Cope With All These Scooters

Scooter sharing caught cities flat-footed. In response, cities have created a new coalition, known as the Open Mobility Foundation, to figure out what to do with all these electric mobility devices parked on their streets and sidewalks.

L. A. Department of Transportation is leading the new foundation which has a long list of goals: improving safety; making sure dockless vehicles are equitably distributed across cities; ensuring scooters aren't blocking the sidewalks or generally affecting the quality of life in cities; analyzing terabytes of data produced by scooters; and guaranteeing the privacy of scooter riders is protected.

LADOT is sharing a digital tool it created in 2018 called the Mobility Data Specification (MDS) with more than 50 cities across the U. S. to help cities manage all the scooter and bike-share companies hitting their streets. The application uses location data from scooters and bikes to inform transportation policy, such as where to place bike lanes, as well as enforcement actions, like which company's customers aren't following the rules of the road. Reportedly, the data would not be shared with police without a warrant, would not contain personal identifiers, and would not be subject to public records requests.

The new foundation is being co-founded by the Rockefeller Foundation, and will be advised by the New Cities Foundation. The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) unveiled a list of recommended best practices last month called "Managing Mobility Data". Some private sector mobility providers are opposing the effort with legislation in California (AB 1112).

Mass Transit Ridership Down Across the Nation
Total U.S. transit ridership was down another 2.36 percent over the first three quarters of 2018. Heavy rail was down 2.86 percent; light rail, 3.97 percent. Bus trips were down 2.32 percent. The only category that came in higher was commuter rail. The numbers from Los Angeles are perhaps the most alarming. Through the first three quarters of 2018, L.A.'s heavy rail subway lost 4.45% of its riders; the light rail system lost 5.21%.

L. A. Metro buses have lost nearly 95 million trips over a decade, according to federal data. The 25% drop is the steepest among the busiest transit systems in the United States and accounted for the majority of California's transit ridership decline.

Why are riders abandoning the transit systems? There isn't one answer. Metro is studying the reasons people aren't riding in Los Angeles through their Next Gen Study (see next). Other possible reasons for ridership declines stem from a complex mix of factors including: the rise of Uber and Lyft, flexible work schedules and work from home arrangements, the price of gasoline, concerns about safety and sanitation on the public transit system, a new ability of undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license, and a rise in car ownership per household, especially around the edges of the urban core where housing is more affordable but transit is scarce.

REGION

Next Gen Study Seeks To Grow Ridership, Improve Metro's Market Share
To reverse its decade-long rideship decline, Metro has spent the past two years analyzing its ridership and competing travel options to inform a redesign of its network of 165 lines and

14,000 stops for the first time in a generation. Metro staff is exploring options to grow ridership throughout its bus and rail network.

The analysis is based on data from 5 million phones, tablets and other devices showing where residents, tourists and business travelers go and whether the bus or train can compete with other mobility options.

One of the key initial findings is that when taking the train or bus is as fast or faster than driving, people will take transit 13% of the time, significantly up from the current 3% mode share.

However, the challenge is considerable. The average speed of a Metro bus has dropped 12.5% over the last 25 years, according to data analyzed by UCLA. The delays are worse on major corridors, including Vermont, which has at least 10 hours of severe congestion per day and an average local bus speed of 9 mph.

One lasting solution being considered is to create dedicated lanes for buses on major streets and bus rapid transit services with frequent stops in urban centers and less frequent stops in the suburbs. However, exclusive bus lanes are controversial since they impose a cost for drivers: a loss of parking, a loss of driving space, or both.

Advocates have also urged an expansion of "all-door boarding," which allows riders to enter through any door on two of Metro's busiest rapid bus routes on Wilshire and Vermont. The strategy could reduce wait times by 42 seconds when 30 people board at one stop, a Metro analysis found. However, fare collection and enforcement are a problem with all door boarding. In response, Metro CEO, Phil Washington has proposed the agency eliminate fares by imposing congestion pricing fees to replace the forgone fare revenues.

Service frequency is also a key to retaining and recruiting riders. Yet scheduled service hours fell from nearly 7.78 million in the 2008 fiscal year to 7 million in 2018, according to budget documents. Metro is considering more frequent service on routes that are conducive to trips of less than two miles. Those trips — to a daycare, a laundromat, or a grocery store — represent 46% of the county's travel, but just 2% are taken on transit partly because most short trips are made outside rush hour, in the afternoon or evenings, when buses run less frequently.

The agency could add 500,000 trips per day if its share of short trips tripled to 6%, more than enough to make up for recent ridership declines. But it would require running buses frequently enough that riding would be faster and easier than walking, biking or driving. Metro is considering designing bus routes that stop more often within major commercial and residential centers, and stop less often outside those areas.

Metro staff aims to present service concepts to the Metro Board in July and/or September and a draft service plan in November/December. Service changes are not expected until July 2020.

Metro Wants Drivers to Rent Out Their Cars

L. A. Metro is encouraging drivers commuting to a transit hub in Los Angeles to consider renting their car out while it sits in the parking lot all day. The transit agency has partnered with the car-sharing platform Getaround to allow participating drivers to place their personal

cars at transit hubs and rent them to transit riders who may want to drive the final leg of their trip.

The service allows personal cars to be outfitted with technology to enable them to be located, unlocked and rented via a mobile app, much like users may unlock a bike or e-scooter. Prices start at $5 per hour, depending on the type of vehicle. Metro began its partnership with Getaround in February, licensing more than 100 car-share parking spaces at 37 Metro stations.

L.A. Council Calls For Study Of Fines For Scooter/Bike Violators

The Los Angeles City Council on June 25th called on its police and transportation agencies Tuesday to develop a list of possible fines the city should impose for infractions by riders of e-scooters or dockless bicycles. According to a report from the Los Angeles Fire Department, between Jan. 15 and May 25, there were a total of 80 reported incidents involving e-scooters, with 37 people requiring a trip to a hospital.

The council directed the Los Angeles Police Department and the Department of Transportation to examine the number of reports the city receives related to the devices, and to create a scale of fines for violators. The agencies were also asked to identify areas that are overpopulated with bikes and scooters, and to create a public education campaign about the city's enforcement plans.

Once the city departments develop the proposed list of fines, the issue will return to the council for a final vote.

TRENDS

Google Will Now Tell You How Crowded Or Late Your Bus Or Train Is Likely To Be

Google announced on June 27th a new transit crowdedness prediction application in its Maps app that shows how crowded your bus or train is likely to be before heading out on your commute.

Google is basing these details on past rides as reported by its users. Over the past several months, after completing their trips, riders were given four options: many empty seats, few empty seats, standing room only, or cramped standing room only.

Google has collected enough data that it can begin offering predictions to customers who use Google Maps to plan their daily commute. The new feature is available in 200 cities around the globe.

In addition, Google Maps is also launching live traffic delays for buses in places where commuters don't already have real-time information direct from local transit agencies. You'll now be able to see if your bus will be late, how long the delay will be, and more accurate travel times based on live traffic conditions along your route. You'll also see exactly where the delays are on the map so you know what to expect before you hop on your bus.

Flying Taxis Are A Thing

Development teams at Uber, Boeing, AirBus and others are separately developing flying taxis that they expect will begin service as soon as 2023. If Uber's ambitious plans come to pass, L.A. and Dallas area motorists tired of sitting in mind-numbing traffic can opt for Uber Elevate's ride-sharing taxi service by 2023.

The Uber vehicles, designed in partnership with Safran Cabin, meanwhile, will have four passenger seats and a space for luggage. The first Skyport for Uber Elevate's flying taxi service will be built in Santa Clara, California through its real estate partnership with Related Companies. The second planned Skyport will be constructed in the Dallas-Fort Worth area of Texas in partnership with Dallas-headquartered Hillwood Investment Properties. Testing of the vehicles and Skyports is slated to start as early as next year. Uber estimates the cost of operating the vehicles to be around $700 per flight hour.

Skyport designer, Gensler, imagines a metropolis where passengers arrive on e-bikes, e-scooters, public transit, traditional ride sharing vehicles, or, in the future, autonomous vehicles, then dock or charge their electrical mode of transit, and explore the "Concessions Village" at the station level.

Boeing announced in June it has partnered with Mountain View, California-based Kitty Hawk — a relatively small startup backed by Google co-founder and Alphabet CEO Larry Page. Kitty Hawk has been developing a couple of small aircraft since its founding four years ago. Boeing said the new partnership will combine the innovation of Kitty Hawk's team with Boeing's scale and aerospace expertise, and gives the plane-maker access to an expanding and potentially lucrative market.

Boeing's main rival, Airbus, has been making progress with its electric, autonomous Vahana VTOL aircraft, and there are at least ten other companies working on their own designs.