

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

October 27, 2016

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: Jacki Bacharach, SBCCOG Executive Director
Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Director

RE: SBCCOG Transportation Update – September 2016

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

Congress Approves Spending Bill, Averting Government Shutdown

Congress averted an October 1st government shutdown by approving the first continuing resolution of the budget season on September 28th. The short-term spending bill, which was authorized through December 9th, included funding to fight the Zika virus but postponed until the lame duck session after the November 8th election an amendment to a water projects bill, the Water Resources Development Act, which would authorize emergency assistance to communities such as Flint, Michigan where the president has declared a state of emergency because of contaminants like lead.

House Passes Bill To Reimburse Federal Workers For Using Ride-Hailing Services

To ensure that federal employees can take advantage of ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft or emerging bike sharing programs when they travel on official government business, the House of Representatives unanimously passed the Modernizing Government Travel (MGT) Act (H. R. 5625) on September 22nd. If passed by the Senate and enacted by the President, the bipartisan bill would add the options of ride-hailing apps and bike-share programs for government employees on official business to transit and carpooling reimbursement programs. The legislation would require the General Services Administration (GSA) to issue regulations clarifying that federal workers can be reimbursed for using transportation services like Uber and Lyft, bike-sharing, or any similar technology that emerges in the future. The bill also requires the General Services Agency to issue a report analyzing the cost savings generated from workers using ride-hailing services.

STATE

New California Law Prohibits All Hand-held Cellphone Uses While Driving

Beginning in January 2017, California residents can no longer drive and hold their cellphone in their hand. This means that picking up your smart phone to seek a specific music track, pick a contact to call, and reroute yourself in mid-navigation can no longer be done while a vehicle is being operated and your phone is in your hand. If drivers mount their phones on something while they drive, they

will still be able to use voice commands or swipe at the phone but taking photos or streaming videos could earn drivers a ticket.

The bill, AB1785, was signed by Governor Jerry Brown on September 29th and will become effective on January 1, 2017. The law was written to keep pace with updates in smartphone technology that have gone far beyond making a phone call. On average, texting takes a driver's eyes off the road for an average of five seconds: that's enough time to travel the length of a football field. Drivers will have to pay \$20 on their first offense, and \$50 for each ticket thereafter.

Gov. Brown Approves \$900 Million For Cap And Trade-Funded Environmental Programs

Governor Jerry Brown on September 14th approved \$900 million in funding for environmental programs to resolve a two-year deliberation on how to spend the state's Cap and Trade fees charged to California polluters. The funding package includes \$363 million in clean vehicle incentives, \$95 million to plant more carbon-capturing plants in urban areas, \$135 million for transit and intercity rail construction, \$140 million for grants to local governments and neighborhoods for energy efficiency programs, \$50 million to reduce methane emissions from cow manure, and \$40 million to promoting composting to reduce methane emissions from organic material decomposing in landfills.

In addition to these programs, the Cap and Trade spending plan allocates 60% for special projects, including high speed rail, and leaves \$462 million of projected Cap and Trade revenues for future allocations. The governor also signed legislation requiring that at least 10 percent of cap-and-trade proceeds benefit low-income households.

CEC Studies Producing Energy Driving On Innovative Road Surfaces

The California Energy Commission is investing \$2 million to study whether piezoelectric crystals can be embedded in road surfaces to produce electricity from the mechanical energy created by vehicles driving on roads. The commission is choosing a company or university to undertake small-scale field tests of how the small crystals, which generate energy when compressed, could produce electricity for the grid if installed under asphalt. The \$2 million California is using to test the technology will come from a renewable investment fund created by the California Public Utilities Commission. Bidding will end Nov. 18, and the commission will award the contract in the spring.

California Receives \$293.1 Million Federal Bonus For Meeting Project Deadlines

California will receive a \$293.1 million transportation funding bonus for meeting its 2016 fiscal year deadlines for federally funded projects. The money will be split between the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and local agencies.

The bonus money comes from a pool created from federal transportation funds states do not spend before federal deadlines. The pool this year reached \$2.8 billion and California received the largest share of any state. The agency will get roughly \$185 million while local transportation agencies could share up to \$108 million. The funds are required by September 27 to be prioritized for projects that meet federal deadlines.

REGION

Flyaway Bus Service Between LAX And Santa Monica Ends

After losing more than \$1.17 million in 27 months, Los Angeles World Airports officials cancelled LAX FlyAway Bus service between Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and Santa Monica on September 6th. The service was introduced in July 2014 to reduce traffic congestion by giving travelers an alternative way to get to the airport. The line picked up/dropped off passengers on Second Street near the Santa Monica Pier. A one-way ticket cost \$8.

Airport officials noted ridership turned out to be low, averaging 1.3 riders per trip which might give LACMTA pause about its commitment to construct Phase 3 of a rail line that would extend a Sepulveda Corridor rail line between West L. A. and San Fernando Valley to LAX.

TOMORROWLAND TODAY – *With the increase in the pace of technical innovations in transportation, we have added this new section to the Transportation Update*

California rules drive away self-driving cars

True autonomous vehicles, in which the car can completely drive itself, promise to significantly reduce the number of crashes; provide increased mobility to children, the elderly, and others who are unable to drive themselves; and bring about more freedom and personal time for drivers who will no longer have to concentrate on the road while commuting to work or making long drives. Since it's a matter of when, not if, we'll see these cars on the roads, many states are preparing for them.

California, home to Silicon Valley, has predictably been at the forefront developing the technology for these cars of the future. But, thanks to its conservative regulations, California will likely see fewer economic and safety benefits from self-driving cars than it could. The state's current rules require automated vehicles to have a \$5 million insurance policy for liability to people and property. By comparison, the state only requires human drivers to have \$30,000 of coverage per accident. California's rules also bar using automated vehicles for commercial purposes. Yet early adopters of self-driving cars may be trucking companies and large fleet owners who will be most able to lower their costs and benefit the most from self-driving vehicles.

California's self-driving car rules also require human drivers to be in the driver's seat and to have some method of taking control of the vehicle. Yet, Google's self-driving vehicle doesn't have a steering wheel or pedals because the vehicle is operated remotely.

Companies like Google have responded to the conservative state regulations by moving some of their research and testing to states with less onerous regulations, including Michigan, Nevada and Texas. Even the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the risk-averse agency that oversees car safety, believes California's laws are poor policy. At this summer's Transportation Research Board Automated Vehicle Conference several NHTSA speakers urged states to avoid overly prescriptive laws that create a patchwork of legislation and make interstate driving more complicated.

California is rumored to be responding to the potential lost economic and safety opportunities by updating its rules for autonomous vehicles. The updated regulations were supposed to be completed by the end of last year, but have not been released.

D. C. MetroAccess Hopes To Save Up To \$6 Million A Year From Ride Hailing Partnerships

A new initiative by Washington D. C. MetroAccess is hoping to save to \$6 million annually by converting some MetroAccess trips to a less costly option that pays ride-hailing companies to provide the ride. Washington D. C. Metro plans to issue an RFP at the end of this month with the intent to award a contract to up to three companies in early January and start service in March.

MetroAccess, like AccessLA, provides door-to-door services for eligible elderly and disabled riders. Under the program, MetroAccess plans to partner with providers such as Uber and Lyft to establish an alternative to its door-to-door services. Metro will pay up to \$15 per trip to the contracting company, reducing its expenses significantly when compared to the MetroAccess cost of \$44 per trip. MetroAccess customers will have the choice of booking— through the use of technology— a ride on the same day they need it, a significant improvement from the current MetroAccess requirement that trips be booked 24 hours in advance.

The ride hailing option is expected to be popular among customers who don't need wheelchair-accessible vehicles to travel. The RFP will require one-third of the vehicles to be accessible to wheelchairs. Metro estimates that between 150,000 and 250,000 trips will be taken during the first year of operations.

Self-Driving Buses Are Being Tested In Real Traffic On Public Streets; Looking for a Niche Role

Several new autonomous transit options are being tested around the globe in real traffic on public streets. In addition to proving the technology, the tests are exploring the role that minibuses and ride hailing applications will play to reduce congestion in urban transit environments.

In Helsinki, Finland, where two self-driving minibuses are travelling on public streets, the goal of the program is not to replace the current transit system, but to use the mini-buses on narrow streets or in low demand areas to provide first/last mile access to the urban transit system. Finland has become a breeding ground for autonomous-vehicle testing, as the country doesn't require drivers to be behind the wheel on public roads. Lyon, France launched this past weekend what is being called the world's first driverless bus in its downtown Confluence area. The bus, which uses LiDAR radar technology and motion sensors to help it avoid accidents, can seat up to 15 passengers, and is now serving rides to the public, daily.

Uber recently acquired the self-driving truck start-up Otto, and is pitching its services to shippers, truck fleets and independent drivers. Ford Motor Co. announced in early September that it hopes to begin selling fully driverless vehicles to consumers by 2025, about four years after the automaker begins marketing the technology to ride-sharing and delivery fleets. Local Motors, a startup company, is holding public trials just outside Washington D. C. for their driverless Olli minibuses. In the Netherlands, Mercedes Benz is testing semi-autonomous, conventional buses that can navigate roads at up to 43 mph. And Singapore is aggressively pursuing self-driving car technology to transform its transit system. The autonomous minibuses also are being tested on private roads in Dubai and Japan.

In order to reduce congestion and safely accommodate all these new autonomous public and private vehicles, a model that connects them to the urban public transportation networks is critical for the future of mobility. "If autonomous cars can one day better perform some of the functions of transit, shouldn't we let them? Shouldn't we take the opportunity to focus on whatever traditional transit does best in an autonomous-car world?" writes Emily Badger for The Atlantic's CityLab. "The implication in this raises (at least) two more questions: Exactly where (and when) will it make sense for people to use buses or rail instead of autonomous cars? And if autonomous cars come to supplement these services, should transit agencies get into the business of operating them?"

Crenshaw North Rail Line Planning Jumps Rail Development Queue

Under a new arrangement between LACMTA and the City of West Hollywood, the proposed northern extension of LACMTA's Crenshaw/LAX Line could begin construction decades earlier than currently planned. The extension would extend the Crenshaw/LAX line from Exposition Boulevard to the Hollywood/Highland Red Line station in Hollywood using a 6 to 9-mile route through the cities of Los Angeles and West Hollywood.

In a September 16th letter to West Hollywood City Councilmember Lindsey Horvath, LACMTA CEO Phil Washington provided insight on the agency's effort to bring the planned light rail extension to "shovel ready," condition, in the event that Los Angeles County voters approve the transportation ballot initiative Measure M. The West Hollywood City Council voted unanimously to support Measure M on September 20th.

Washington committed to completion of a feasibility study for the northern extension by June 2017 and an environmental impact report on the preferred route in 2018. That potential start date is more than two decades ahead of what is detailed in the Measure M Expenditure Plan adopted by the LACMTA Board on June 23rd, which calls for construction of the project to occur between 2041 and 2047. The new schedule would jump the northern extension 6 years ahead of the current schedule for the Green Line South extension from El Segundo to Crenshaw Boulevard in South Torrance to be completed in 2030.

Although the Green Line extension is fully funded to Torrance within the Measure M Expenditure Plan, accelerating construction of the Crenshaw North extension would require securing additional funding that is not currently identified in the Measure M Expenditure Plan. Possible sources of additional funds include local tax measures, state and federal grants or financing and public-private partnership.

It also is not certain that LACMTA ultimately will agree to route the northern extension through West Hollywood. Metro's original budget for the extension assumed it would run from San Vicente and then along La Brea Avenue on WeHo's eastern border to the Hollywood/Highland Red Line station, for a total of six miles. But the City of West Hollywood is advocating that a 9-mile route from San Vicente to Santa Monica Boulevard will better benefit West Hollywood and Metro by increasing ridership by more than 300%. Other options considered by Metro are running the extension from San Vicente to Fairfax Avenue and on to the Hollywood/Highland Red Line station and ending the extension at the Wilshire/Vermont Red Line station.

“Share The Road” Bicycle Signs Being Replaced By Signs With A More Direct Message

In an effort to increase bicycle safety, Columbus, Ohio is replacing their “Share the Road” yellow triangular bicycle signage and sharrows with a less ambiguous, more assertive sign that simply says: “Bikes Can Use Full Lane.” The new signs have proved to be a more effective way to encourage drivers to maintain a safe distance from riders on narrow roads.

The new signs are white rectangles (indicating proper lane usage), instead of the typical yellow diamond of warning signs. Columbus officials believe it is more appropriate to treat bicyclists less like potential hazards and more like the legal road users that they are, and to remind other road users of that fact.

KB Home Unveils Concept Home Of The Future

Homebuilders are struggling to design homes meeting “net-zero” energy standards mandated for 2020, meaning it produces as much energy as it consumes, while planning new design elements that will serve the owner’s needs through 2050. The house of the future is taking shape today at a factory in Cypress, the brainchild of Los Angeles-based KB Home, Irvine-based KTG Architecture, and Washington-based Builder Magazine. The newest design concepts will be unveiled at the Greenbuild International Expo and Conference to be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center October 5th and 6th.

The concept home includes several new transportation assumptions and elements:

- The homeowner of 2050 won’t park her car in the garage after returning from work. Because of Uber and Lyft, she doesn’t need a car, and there’s no garage either. Instead, the owner will stroll directly to the front door, touch an app on her smartphone and say, “Arrived.” The door unlocks. The lights come on. The air conditioning starts to whirl. And the stereo launches a favorite playlist.
- There is a rooftop landing pad for the Amazon drone. The drone would signal a trap door to a small freight elevator, that would lower the packages indoors.
- To securely store FedEx and UPS packages arriving when nobody’s home, the house has a delivery door.