

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

June 26, 2014

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Consultant

RE: SBCCOG Transportation Update – June 2014

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.

NOTE: During the past four and a half years, the SBCCOG Transportation Update postings have been organized into Federal, State and Regional sections. Starting with this edition, we are trying a different organizational design with postings gathered under sections that answer the question, “Why is this important?” Let us know how you like the new approach.

FOLLOW THE MONEY...

SOUTH BAY

Metro Recommends Funding for FY 15-16 Open Streets Events in South Bay

Metro staff has recommended \$2 million funding be provided in each of the next two fiscal years to help cities stage 12 “open street” events. The Metro Board will consider the staff recommendations in June.

Open streets events are car-free festivals in which city streets are opened primarily for bicycling and walking. The events are modeled after the popular CicLAvia events that have been sponsored by the City of Los Angeles over the past few years. Applications from the South Bay were submitted by Carson, Hawthorne, Inglewood and Lawndale. Metro staff recommended funding in the upcoming two-year cycle for:

- “Lawndale Community Bicycle Ride” on a square-shaped loop route – Fall 2015.
- “Car Free Carson” on a primarily east-west route, apparently on Carson Street, including connection with Metro Blue Line Del Amo Station – Spring 2016

TRANSIT

Metro Will Raise Fares in 2014, Postpones Decision for 2017, 2020

The Metro Board of Directors on May 29th voted in increase one-way bus and rail fares in September from \$1.50 to \$1.75, day passes from \$5 to \$7, and monthly passes from \$75 to \$100. Staff had proposed a three phased fare increase, but the Board decided to defer the recommended increases in 2017 and 2020. The action also modified Metro's transfer charge policy to allow free transfers in the direction of travel within 2 hours of purchasing the first fare using a TAP card. Metro's farebox recovery rate is 26%, and the Board was concerned that unless that ratio is increased to 33% it could jeopardize the agency's chances of receiving future federal grants.

Purple Line Wilshire Subway Awarded \$2.1 Billion In Federal Grants and Loans

The federal government announced on May 22nd a \$2.1 billion grants and loan package to help fund an extension of the Purple Line subway under Wilshire Boulevard from Western Ave. to La Cienega Blvd. The \$2.1 billion from the U.S. Department of Transportation includes a \$1.2 billion grant -- the largest single federal grant ever received in Los Angeles -- and an \$821 million low-interest loan.

HIGHWAY

Metro Board Makes ExpressLane Permanent, Imposes \$1 Monthly Transponder Fee

The Metro board voted on April 24th to make the ExpressLanes toll lanes on the I-10 and I-110 permanent following successful completion of the federal demonstration project. The Board also voted to impose a \$1 monthly fee for each transponder.

The state legislature must also approve permanent continuation of the ExpressLanes. Issues surrounding the approval include use of the surplus revenues generated during the demonstration period and in the future, reimbursement of the state costs related to the facilities, and the potential conditions under which new ExpressLane segments could be developed on state-owned freeways or converted from existing high occupancy vehicle lanes in Los Angeles County.

In the South Bay, an ExpressLane is being studied on the I-405 and I-105 and an extension of the current I-110 ExpressLane has been proposed between the SR 91 and I-405 freeways.

FUNDING PROPOSALS

USDOT Warns of Highway Trust Fund Insolvency

In a letter sent Wednesday May 7th to all state transportation department leaders, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx began to formally prepare for a possible Highway Trust Fund insolvency, which could require a delay in reimbursements to states for funds already committed.

US DOT estimates the Highway Account of the HTF will most likely drop below the \$4 billion funding level which is necessary to properly manage day-to day- financial transactions as early as July or August, which is well ahead of surface transportation bill MAP-21's expiration at the end of September. At some point between when the account falls below \$4 billion but before the account runs out of money, USDOT will likely institute cash management strategies designed to keep the account solvent, such as delaying reimbursements to states and their transit agencies.

Federal Fuel Tax Reauthorization Race Begins In Congress

On April 29th, President Obama started the surface transportation reauthorization race in Congress in the hope of getting a multi-year extension approved before the current authorization, MAP-21, expires at the September. The Obama Administration submitted a four-year, \$302 billion proposal, known as the “Grow America Act”, or “Generating Renewal, Opportunity, and Work with Accelerated Mobility, Efficiency, and Rebuilding of Infrastructure and Communities throughout America”. The act would allocate \$199 billion for highways and road safety, and increase highway funding by about 22 percent over fiscal year 2014 enacted levels. The plan also calls for more than \$72 billion for the Federal Transit Administration (an increase of 69% over the FY 2014 level), \$5 billion for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants (up 108% from the FY 2014 level), \$3 billion for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (up 32 percent from the FY 2014 level), about \$3.7 billion for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (up 12 percent from FY 2014), and \$19 billion for the Federal Railroad Administration (an increase of 243%, due to \$9.5 billion set aside for a new Rail Service Improvement Program, which received no funding in FY 2014). The administration bill relies on corporate tax reform to raise \$87 billion to fill the deficit in the Highway Trust Fund. But an agreement on tax reform is unlikely, leaving lawmakers to find another funding source.

U.S. Senate and House committees also have begun hearings on their versions of the federal gas tax reauthorization bills. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee unveiled a six-year \$265 billion transportation bill on May 12th. The Senate's transportation bill lasts two years longer than President Obama's four-year \$302 billion proposal, but it includes less annual funding for road and transit projects. A six-year surface transportation measure would require roughly \$330 billion to maintain current FY 2014 spending levels (an average of \$55 billion a year including inflation). Trust Fund revenue and interest over the same period are projected to bring in only \$234 billion, according to the latest (April 2014) Congressional Budget Office estimate. The task of determining how the transportation bill will be funded is assigned to the Senate Finance Committee.

Transit officials immediately criticized the Senate bill for holding transit spending at current levels. They claim the country needs to spend \$2.5 billion more per year – from federal, state and local sources – just to keep the state of the nation’s transit systems from getting even worse.

A bi-partisan financing option proposed in H.R. 2084 would create a financing entity, called the American Infrastructure Fund, to provide loans or guarantees to state and local government for financing transportation projects. State and local governments would pay back the loans at a market rate determined by the American Infrastructure Fund. The bill would also direct the Treasury Secretary to issue \$50 billion worth of bonds for infrastructure projects. Revenues generated from the bond-backed loans would be retained in the American Infrastructure Fund.

The Obama Bill also includes a proposal that would allow states to collect tolls on interstate highways to raise revenue for roadway repairs. The proposal would reverse a long-standing federal prohibition on most interstate tolling. Although tolls are charged on a few of the older segments of the federal Interstate System, most of the 46,876-mile system is toll-free.

Another strategy -- using general funds to supplement Highway Trust Fund revenue -- has been severely limited by the bipartisan budget agreement negotiated between Sen. Patty Murray (D-

WA) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) in late December 2013. This agreement requires any General Fund transfers into the Highway Trust Fund to be fully offset during the year in which the transfer occurs.

Study Proposed To Replace California's Gallon Tax With a Vehicle-Miles-Travelled Tax

A proposed state bill, SB 107, would authorize the California Transportation Agency to study the feasibility of taxing motorists based on the number of miles they drive instead of the current 18-cent-per-gallon state gas tax. The bill does not authorize any new tax. It would have the state study how to measure mileage driven by volunteer motorists and report to the Legislature by June 30, 2017.

The state gas tax was last increased in 1990. A combination of inflation, cars getting better mileage and more hybrids and electric vehicles on the road mean the gas tax revenues are falling short of covering the ever-inflating costs of maintaining the state's transportation system. Oregon is planning next year to offer volunteers an option of paying a 1.5-cents-per-mile tax or the current 30-cents-per-gallon tax.

Advocates Urge State To Stop Diverting Truck Weight Fees From Highway Repair

In a joint letter from the California Alliance for Jobs and Transportation California, construction and labor leaders on May 27th called on the Governor and the Legislature to redirect truck weight fees back to road repair and rehabilitation. The fees are paid by commercial vehicles to mitigate additional roadway damage caused by heavy trucks. Since 2011, the truck weight fees have been directed to the State's General Fund. The diverted fees, which raise nearly a billion dollars a year, are being used to pay the debt service on general obligation transportation bonds to relieve pressure on the State's General Fund. The letter concludes that there is no justification for permanently diverting money that should be going to repair and rehabilitate California's roads.

CTC Allocates \$541 Million of \$1.3 Billion For Maintenance and Rehabilitation

The California Transportation Commission on May 21st allocated \$1.3 billion in transportation funding across the state. Citing the need to "fix it first", the CTC allocated \$541 million of the \$1.3 billion for maintenance and rehabilitation projects on the State's 50,000 lane miles of highways. The allocation also included the final program allocations from the 2006 Proposition 1B bond which funded 99 projects at a cost of \$11.7 billion.

TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION: STARTS AND STOPS ...

SOUTH BAY

Car2go To Offer Point-to-point Carsharing in the South Bay

Car2go will be expanding its carsharing network in Southern California into the South Bay on June 6th, by providing the company's first service in the Los Angeles region. The initial car2go Home Area, where members can pick up or drop off a car2go, covers approximately 28 square miles, and will include El Segundo, Hawthorne, parts of Torrance, Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach and Lomita. The Car2go South Bay network initially will include 150 smart vehicles.

Members can use the car2go service by the minute, and will pay only for the time they use the vehicle, with discounted rates for hourly and daily use. Parking, fuel, insurance and maintenance are included at no additional cost. There are no annual or monthly contracts for the service.

Car2go also recently added Canadian cities to its Regional Access program that enables car2go members to use the service in all of car2go's cities across the U.S. and Canada, including Austin, San Diego, Washington, D.C., Portland, Miami, Seattle, Minneapolis, Columbus, Denver, Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Montreal.

Car2go membership is free for a limited time using the promo code SURF. For more information or to register, visit: LA.car2go.com or www.car2go.com.

TRANSIT

Lawsuit Claims A Private Bus Needs an EIR To Use A Public Bus Stop

Activists sued the city and county of San Francisco on May 2nd over an 18-month pilot program that allows unmarked buses run by Google and other private companies to stop at San Francisco MUNI stops for a fee of \$1 per stop per day. The plaintiffs claim that San Francisco has violated the law by exempting the project from review under the California Environmental Quality Act. The activists are challenging public guidelines that allow such action for a data-gathering phase of a plan that doesn't create a "major disturbance" to an environmental resource.

A city study estimates that 350 private buses account for 35,000 boardings each day at 200 San Francisco sites, many of them MUNI stops, which the plaintiffs contend the private vehicles currently are not legally allowed to use. The lawsuit, filed by a coalition of transit and housing activists and a labor union, argues that, in addition to displacing lower-income workers, the buses will increase pollution, boost risks to pedestrians and bicyclists and interfere with public transit. The principal plaintiffs are SIEU Local Union 1021 and the Coalition for Fair, Legal and Environmental Transit.

HIGHWAY

I-405 Northbound Carpool Lane Is Open

After 4 1/2 years of construction, the 10-mile northbound carpool lane on the I-405 Freeway through the Sepulveda Pass between Westwood and the San Fernando Valley opened on May 23rd. In addition to creating the carpool lane, workers demolished and rebuilt three bridges over the freeway (at Mulholland Drive, Skirball Center Drive and Sunset Boulevard). The project also reconfigured 27 on-and off- ramps to bring them up to current design standards and erected more than 20 miles of new soundwalls and retaining walls.

The project cost \$1.1 billion, including \$317 million in federal funds and more than \$600 million in state and local funding. It took about a year longer and cost about \$100 million more than originally expected.

The new stretch completes the nation's longest continuous carpool lane pair, running 36 miles from southern Orange County to near the northern tip of the San Fernando Valley. The new northbound lane matches the length of existing HOV southbound lane. Occasional freeway lane closures are expected through the end of the year to complete the roadway re-alignment, paving and striping.

DETOURS, TWISTS AND TURNS

SOUTH BAY

Gaffey Street in San Pedro To Become A “Great Street”

Gaffey Street is one of the first six Los Angeles City streets selected for Mayor Garcetti’s Great Streets Initiative. An advisory panel will work with the city’s department of public works to develop the beautification improvement concept for the stretch of Gaffey between the I-110 freeway and 13th Street. The city expects that the re-imagined street and sidewalk infrastructure will attract new businesses and provide a people-friendly gathering place that is less oriented to the car. An initial concept includes parklets and tree planting with improved accessibility for pedestrians, wheelchairs, strollers and bicycles.

Approximately \$3 million funding for Gaffey Street improvements was provided to the city by Caltrans in 2008 in conjunction with the ownership transfer of the street (from the 110 Freeway to Ninth Street) from the California Department of Transportation to the city of Los Angeles. No timetable has been set up for any specific upgrades along the corridor.

HIGHWAYS

Detours Begin as 30-month Desmond Bridge Replacement Project Starts

Drivers on the southbound 710 Freeway are experiencing a long-term surface street detour for 30 months as crews on May 10th closed the freeway’s connector to westbound Ocean Boulevard in preparation for a \$1.2 billion project to replace the Gerald Desmond Bridge. Motorists heading to Terminal Island will detour to southbound Pico Avenue, then to an on-ramp that reconnects westbound Ocean Boulevard to the bridge. Pico and Pier D Street will have a temporary traffic light to improve traffic flow.

About half of the vehicles currently using this connector ramp are traveling to the Port of Los Angeles, officials said. Trucks and other vehicles whose destination is beyond the Port of Long Beach are being asked to consider using the I-110 (Harbor) Freeway, SR-47 or other alternate routes to avoid the surface street detour. The current bridge will remain in use for drivers and will be taken down once the new bridge is completed.

The public is encouraged to sign up at www.newgdbridge.com for weekly traffic alerts.

LAWA

LAX Construction Creates Road Closures And Detours

LAX is undergoing a significant number of roadway and terminal improvements. The latest impacts to travelers will be the closure of Center Way from Theme Way to East Way, the temporary and intermediate closure of the Upper/Departures Level Roadway, and the relocation of the TSA Screening Area on the south side of the Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT), among other ongoing construction projects.

Every night, short portions of Lane 4 (the inner lane) on the Lower/Arrivals Level Roadway will be shut down in front of pre-selected terminals, two at a time, from May 27 to June 24, from 1 a.m. to 8 a.m., for Ground Penetrating Radar exploration. There will be two sets of crews, one starting at Terminal 1 and working west, the other starting at Terminal 4 and working east.

North Center Way between Theme Way (the street near Parking Structure 2A) and East Way will be closed from 12 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday through Friday, and from 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday as needed, as part of the Center Way widening effort. This closure is ongoing through Aug. 29. This effort will ultimately result in a three-lane road for part of Center Way North, which will ease traffic congestion for motorists.

The northbound portion of East Way, as well as part of one lane of southbound East Way, will be closed from World Way North to World Way South from May 27 to Sept. 5, 12 a.m. to 3 p.m., for roadway improvements related to the Center Way widening project.

Sidewalk closures will be in effect at the following locations:

- Terminal 7's lower level sidewalk and median will be closed for work on curbside escalators. Pedestrians will be rerouted from June 2 to Aug. 8.
- The sidewalks along Center Way North will be closed between the Central Utility Plant and East Way, and along East Way for the Center Way Widening effort.
- There will be periodic and intermittent partial sidewalk closures outside TBIT on the Upper/Departures Level due to work on the exterior canopies as part of the New Face of LAX Project, which aims to unify the exterior appearance of LAX's nine terminals. Closures are expected to occur from 12 midnight to 9 a.m. and from 4 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. through July 14. Some escalators outside TBIT may also be periodically impacted by this work.
- Portions of the sidewalk in and around Terminal 1 and Parking Structure 1 through July 3 and at Terminal 7 and Parking Structure 7 from June 2, 2013 to Aug. 8, 2014 will be temporarily closed during non-peak hours for Americans with Disabilities Act improvements to the sidewalk ramps, sidewalk evenness, crosswalks, and parking structure stalls.

Renovations inside terminals are also underway in:

- Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT): The Southside TSA screening area closed for construction of escalators and elevators leading to the upper level of the terminal on May 30. A temporary TSA screening area opened in the rear-center of TBIT's ticketing area on May 29 to relieve congestion caused by the southside screening area closure. This temporary area will ultimately consist of eight TSA checkpoints and will be used until the final TSA screening area partially opens to the public Fall 2014.
- Terminal 4: As the Terminal 4 Connector Project — bridging Terminal 4 and TBIT post-security — continues construction on the airfield, it will impact the use of some west-facing gates in Terminal 4. During the interim, passengers are being bussed to remote gates on the west side of the airfield. The Terminal 4 Connector is expected to complete construction in late 2015.
- Terminal 5: Delta Airlines is continuing its upgrade effort. Passengers will encounter construction barricades and work-related noise on both the arrivals and departures levels. Work is anticipated on this project through 2015.

See more at: <http://smdp.com/disruptions-expected-at-lax-during-construction/134946#sthash.BZVaQxfC.dpuf>

LAWA / Metro Rail Dance Continues

Since the Crenshaw/LAX light rail project final design is progressing and construction is expected to begin soon, LAWA staff and the Crenshaw/LAX Project Team are working to incorporate options for pedestrian and vehicular connections between the automated people mover (APM) and light rail line at the Aviation / Century Station. If the connection between the APM and light rail line were located at the Aviation / Century station, a pedestrian bridge would connect the two stations.

While final design continues, the two agencies are also finalizing the Supplemental Analysis of Alternatives report that explores connection options between the two lines either at an intermodal transportation center (ITF) near Lot C or routing the light rail line directly to the Tom Bradley International Terminal. To date, an alternative locating the ITF above the Southwest Maintenance Facility and a route using 98th Street have been eliminated.

TRANSFORMATIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR THE SOUTH BAY

Are Driverless, Connected Cars Just Around a South Bay Corner?

Google on May 27th revealed the first prototype of its self-driving car. The tiny two-seater has no steering wheel, no accelerator pedal and no brake pedal, lots of extra sensors, and a foam front to protect pedestrians if there's a crash. Its top speed is 25 miles per hour, its range about 100 miles. The company will initially make 100 of the vehicles.

As an indication that the Tomorrowland Autopia is just around the corner, the California DMV also released official testing rules for automated vehicles in May. The DMV is scheduled to adopt rules governing public operation of such vehicles by 2015. While the autonomous Google car could be commercially viable by 2020, researchers expect the driverless cars to take until 2050 to become a predominant form of transportation.

Self-driving electric cars may have significant potential benefits for communities. They could address some significant climate change concerns. They could coordinate steady speeds, much less stopping, and even aerodynamic caravans, for vastly improved mileage making car travel cheaper and more efficient per mile traveled. Regular car use could be opened up to people who can't take solo car trips right now like children, elderly or disabled people, and people who don't know or don't want to learn to drive. Used in car sharing services, they could save considerably compared to the current cost of car ownership. Driverless taxis would save the principal cost of a taxi – the driver wage and benefits.

Despite the hype and development pace, autonomous vehicles will not soon replace buses and trains in the urban core. In these areas, driverless taxis could feed riders to higher-capacity bus and train routes and provide inexpensive, on-demand, door-to-door suburban trips. Individuals could travel in privacy, without owning a vehicle—or multiple travelers with compatible pick-up and drop-off points could share a driverless cab.

Perhaps most importantly, a 20 mph speed limit in cities like London and Tokyo has been shown to have cut fatal crashes in residential areas in half. Many other cities in the U.K. and Europe have lowered their speed limits to approximately 20 mph, and New York appears to be considering the same.

A key public sector challenge is to integrate automated vehicles on city streets, where vehicle flows are too complex for the stand-alone automated guidance systems currently being refined because cars are making left turns, parallel parking, and stopping for pedestrians and red lights.

In one scenario for decongesting streets, automated vehicles would communicate with a roadside computer that safely orchestrates their intricate web of movements through an intersection. The necessary technology, dubbed Level 4 automation by the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, will need to safely guide vehicles that reliably and accurately sense their environments in adverse conditions, interpret myriad chaotic and ambiguous situations, predict the behavior of different road users, surmount legal, liability, and ethical obstacles—and do it all affordably. In short, Level 4 and driverless taxis could be decades away.

Because of technological limitations, driverless vehicles probably appear first in areas where population densities are lower than the urban core with its network of buses and trains. Because prototypes and early versions of the automated vehicles could begin appearing on South Bay streets as soon as six years from today, South Bay cities might benefit from anticipating the future need to incorporate autonomous vehicles in their complete street designs, street signal systems, neighborhood development plans, and community plans.

Will South Bay Streets Be Paved In Solar Panels?

Solar Roadways inventors are seeking investment capital for a system of modular solar panels that could be paved directly onto roads, parking lots, driveways, bike paths, parks and other spaces. They have developed a working prototype featuring hexagonal panels that have the potential to power nearby homes, businesses, and electric vehicles, as well as LEDs that can make road signage. The firm claims the panels have been tested for traction, load testing, and impact resistance. The panels are designed to withstand a 250,000-pound load, typical of the heaviest trucks.

L. A. City Bicycle Survey Results Released

A Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition bike count in September 2013 recorded 18,000 bicyclists at 120 count locations in the City of Los Angeles during a six hour period over several days. Los Angeles City Councilman Mike Bonin cited the study on May 12th during the kick-off of Bike Week L.A. and called for more bicycling infrastructure investment to increase bicycle ridership.

Some key findings from the survey:

- Compared to streets with no bicycle pavement markings, sharrows are correlated with 22 percent more ridership, bike lanes 86 percent more ridership, and bike paths 391 percent more ridership. Bicycling counts are highest on bike paths, near universities, and in low-income communities.

- Female bicyclists made up less than a fifth of the bicyclists counted. The disparity was “lowest on the highest quality bikeway,” with it being most pronounced on streets with no bike facilities at all.
- Wherever there was bike infrastructure, there were fewer instances of rules being flouted. Bicyclists were less inclined to use sidewalks or go the wrong way on streets with bike facilities.
- Just 1% of all commuters in Los Angeles city commute to work on bikes, which is above the national average of 0.6%, according to data collected from the census’s 2008-2012 American Community Survey. This is compared with 11.1% of workers who use public transportation and the 3.7% who walk to work. Portland, Oregon has the nation’s highest rate of bicycle commuting at 6.1%.

The report recommends adopting an “8 to 80” standard in the L. A. city’s 2035 mobility plan that aims to make bicycling accessible and comfortable for people with a wider range of ages from the young to the old.

UK 'Cycle Streets' Provide An Aggressive Planning Model

A consultation document issued by the United Kingdom Department for Transport released in May would prohibit drivers from overtaking cyclists on designated “cycle streets” that could be introduced in cities throughout the United Kingdom. The initiative is proposed in a bid to reduce the number of bicycling road deaths in the UK which total over 19,000 per year. The initiative would introduce a new 15mph speed limit on certain lightly-trafficked roads where cycle flows are high; cyclists would also be given priority over motorists. Police would be able to issue citations to any drivers who flout the new rules.

The scheme is likely to be introduced in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle upon Tyne and Oxford. 'Cycle streets' are already widely used in the Netherlands and Germany. But in the Netherlands, cycle streets are only used where cyclists outnumber motorists by two to one, a situation rarely seen in Britain.