

# Food for Thought

## CONGESTION PRICING ON L.A. COUNTY FREEWAYS CHARGING FOR PEAK TRAVEL

Los Angeles traffic congestion is heading from bad to worse. We consistently have been ranked as the urban area with the worst traffic congestion in the country. The average commuter spends 72 hours per year idling in traffic. The average freeway speed during the afternoon peak period in the region is projected to deteriorate to 21 miles-per-hour in 2035—unless we find additional solutions beyond completing the highway and transit projects in the pipeline.

Funding formulas through fuel taxes and state and federal programs fail to meet our need. We are now faced with congestion reduction choices that include the option of roadway pricing or congestion pricing.

This year the Metro Board of Directors took action directing agency staff to identify by summer 2008 at least three demonstration projects where pricing will contribute to increasing capacity and throughput, improve air quality, and raise revenues.

### What is “congestion pricing?”

Congestion pricing is the concept of charging for the use of a transportation facility, such as a roadway, based on the level of traffic congestion. The greater the level of congestion, usually occurring during morning and evening rush hours, the higher the cost to use the facility. Congestion pricing seeks to change commuting behavior while generating additional funds for more transit, vanpools and other transportation options to increase mobility. Additionally when integrated with other traffic management options, it should help improve the travel speed of the managed lanes as well as the general-purpose lane.

Congestion pricing is not a panacea, but it is a tool that many cities throughout the world have instituted or are exploring as a means to reduce congestion. It has been proven to ease congestion by shifting some rush hour highway traffic to other transportation modes such as vanpools and freeway express buses or to off-peak periods by charging for use of selected roads during a selected time. It has worked successfully in London, Stockholm, Singapore, Minneapolis, San Diego, and Orange County.

### Demonstration Projects Metro Considering the Los Angeles region

Under the current proposal, carpool lanes would be converted to HOT lanes along the following freeways:

- I-10 (El Monte Busway)
- I-110 (Harbor Freeway Transitway)
- I-210 from the I-605 to the I-710

Metro has proposed a one-year demonstration pilot project starting in the summer of 2009 to convert these carpool lanes into High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes to give drivers (whether solo or carpooler) the option to drive on these facilities (at a minimum speed of 50 m.p.h.) in return for toll payments.

The toll will be collected through an easy to use electronic “fast pass” collection system so that patrons do not have to wait in line at toll booths. Various pricing formulas will be evaluated by Metro. In other metropolitan areas tolls range from \$4.00 to \$10.00 during peak commute hours.

Revenues generated by the tolls will be used first to pay for the operations of the managed lanes. It is expected that any additional revenues generated from the tolls will be used to improve or enhance transportation services along or near the managed corridors. These may include additional bus and rail services, roadway improvements, and other complementary services.

Congestion pricing benefits all because it provides more options to commuters from all walks of life. Each commuter may select which mode makes the most sense to her or him in terms of cost and travel time. At certain times of day, the least expensive travel options—ride sharing and transit—may also be the fastest.

Metro, in partnership with Caltrans the Southern California Association of Governments, and other transportation organizations will inform the communities of Los Angeles County on proposed options for congestion reduction that includes transit options as well as roadway pricing options.

For more information, check out [http://www.metro.net/projects\\_programs/congestion\\_reduction/congestion\\_reduction.htm](http://www.metro.net/projects_programs/congestion_reduction/congestion_reduction.htm)

## CALENDAR

All meetings are open to the public

### APRIL

- 3-Green Cities Task Force
- 9- GIS Working Group
- 14-Steering Committee
- 15-Legislative Committee
- 16-Livable Communities
- 23-Infrastructure Working Group
- 24-Transportation Committee
- 24-Board of Directors

### MAY

- 12-Steering Committee
- 14-GIS Working Group
- 20-Legislative Committee
- 21-Livable Communities
- 22-Green Cities Task Force
- 23-Transportation Committee
- 23-Board of Directors
- 28-Infrastructure Working Group

### JUNE

- 9-Steering Committee
- 11-GIS Working Group
- 17-Legislative Committee
- 18-Livable Communities
- 19-Transportation Committee
- 19-Board of Directors
- 25-Infrastructure Working Group

Contact [jacki@southbaycities.org](mailto:jacki@southbaycities.org) for further information

## CONGRATULATIONS!

FORMER TORRANCE MAYOR  
AND SBCCOG CHAIR

DEE HARDISON

WHO HAS BEEN SELECTED BY  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER TED LIEU AS  
THE 53RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

WOMAN OF THE YEAR

# South Bay Watch

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

## 9TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY SUMMARY



On February 22, 2008, the South Bay Cities Council of Governments hosted the 9th Annual General Assembly entitled, “Bracing for the Boom: Are Cities Ready for their Aging Population?” The Assembly, held at the Carson Community Center, brought together scholars, practicing planners, elected officials, local government representatives and nonprofit advocates to discuss and debate the challenges cities will see as “baby boomers” age. The Assembly also emphasized that this presents a great opportunity for local government and

the state to take advantage of the potential this generation has for enriching and benefiting society. In the next 20 to 30 years “baby boom” retirees will have a positive economic impact. The challenges for local and state government are how to harness this potential.

We know that over the next several decades, California’s 60 and older population will grow substantially. As the “baby boomers” reach retirement age they will begin to retire in droves. This has sobering implications for the tax base and work force as “boomers” begin to reach their 80s. The expansion of services such as transportation, medical, and informational as well as protection services, will be necessary. Demographic changes will vary by area and each individual city will need to tailor its own specific set of solutions.

The “baby boom” generation is deeply attached to the automobile and for the first time in history older generations will rely less on public transit. The “baby boom” generation is also living further and further away from dense urban centers. City’s current transportation systems are not properly equipped to transport aging populations. Paratransit services are exceedingly expensive and currently ADA services do not account for much of the travel among people who don’t drive.

The Assembly highlighted some solutions. The South Bay is rich with resources and the “boomer” generation is the area’s largest resource. The South Bay Cities need to find ways to best engage their senior communities and integrate them into civic life. Retirees are a valuable resource and must be brought into planning processes.

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## SBCCOG HONORS ANN MARIE WALLACE WILLIAMS – FORMER GRASSROOTS COORDINATOR FOR THE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

At a recent Board meeting, Ann Marie was honored for her service to the SBCCOG as she leaves the League to teach Political Science at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa.



The League of California Cities is an association of California city officials who work together to enhance their knowledge and skills, exchange information, and combine resources so that they may influence policy decisions that affect cities. Working with the South Bay, Ann Marie provided the South Bay cities information on legislation, training programs and action alerts.

Seen in the picture - 1st Vice Chair and Rolling Hills Estates Councilmember Judy Mitchell (right) and Ann Marie Wallace Williams (left)

### Spring 2008

A quarterly bulletin to inform local leaders of subregional progress and alert them to emerging issues

Published by the South Bay Cities Council of Governments

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## SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS IS PLEASED TO INTRODUCE YOU TO ITS

SOUTH BAY ENERGY SAVINGS CENTER STAFF – THEY ARE THERE FOR YOU!



From left to right: Martha Segovia, Kathie Baldwin, Barbara Dye, Marilyn Lyon, Karen Pecot, Alex Llamas (Carmen Oliver not shown)

### MEET OUR STAFF

#### **Barbara Dye – Deputy Director for Sustainability Programs**

Barbara brings years of experience with local government and nonprofit organizations to the operations of the Energy Center. She handles the Green Task Force and assists with other environmental issues, helping to build a sustainable organization for the Center. Barbara will promote cooperation among the public agencies in the region, advocate for sensible environmental policies and develop programs to achieve significant local energy savings. She is full of enthusiasm for her new role!

#### **Marilyn Lyon – Project Manager**

Never coming to rest, Marilyn Lyon is the spokesperson for the SBESC - out in the community meeting with businesses, homeowner groups, service clubs and others to deliver the message of how the SBESC can help save water, energy and money. In addition, she sets up the community outreach and exhibits, training programs and workshops and all with a smile!

#### **Kathie Baldwin – Office Manager**

Not only does Kathie Baldwin take charge of the office, keep the data base and web site up-to-date and design and produce SBESC publications, but on her own initiative, she has just become a Certified Green Building Professional. This certification is gained by taking a comprehensive course offered by Build It Green which she passed with a 99% score! Kudos to Kathie!

#### **Alex Llamas – Audit Manager**

Alex is a Professional Engineer with many years of experience with Edison, Los Angeles Unified School District and other major firms. He will manage the energy savings program at SBESC, ensuring the successful implementation of energy efficiency and water conservation projects with the South Bay's public agencies, school districts, and businesses. We welcome Alex to the team!!

#### **Carmen Oliver – Trainer**

Carmen has worked for SBESC for three years, providing energy efficiency seminars for residential customers as well as small businesses. She is the owner of Management Excellence, a consulting company specializing in energy efficiency, management, and procurement. Carmen spent 13 years in the energy industry, holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from California State University at Northridge, and is a Certified Energy Manager (CEM).

#### **Martha Segovia – Program Assistant**

When Martha is not at an event talking about SBESC and its services, she is in the office answering phones, assembling materials, supporting the operations with a quiet commitment. SBESC is fortunate to take advantage of Martha's bi-lingual ability to broaden its reach!

#### **Karen Pecot – Office Assistant**

Karen assists Kathie in adding data into the database. She takes the minutes at the SB Partnership Meetings, and assists Martha in preparing for upcoming workshops and seminars. She also covers the office when Martha is out in the field.

You can reach SBESC @ 310-543-3022 or [www.sbesc.com](http://www.sbesc.com)

## City Showcase

## CITY OF TORRANCE REQUIRES TRAINING TO BE A CITY COMMISSIONER

The City of Torrance is a charter city with 13 commissions and boards that serve in advisory roles to the Torrance city council. Subject areas range from infrastructure and planning – Planning, Water, Airport, Traffic and Environmental Quality to people - Civil Service, Commission on Aging and Youth Council to services - Parks & Recreation, Library, Cultural Arts, Cable TV Advisory Board, and Disaster Council.

All commissions serve four year terms, except the Youth Council which is appointed for one year, and, depending on when appointed, are eligible to serve up to eight years.

In 2006 the City Council adopted an ordinance requiring all commissioners to be certified prior to appointment in order to prepare prospective candidates on the roles, responsibilities and requirements of commission service. All certified commissioners are required to take the class again every two years to remain eligible for appointment. Recertification allows an opportunity for the City to provide new information that may have occurred since a class was first given.

At a free two hour class attendees receive a look at the city operations from four city departments. The Finance Director goes over the structures of city, county, state and federal government, gives an overview of the city organization showing where the operating funds come from and how they are allocated. A member of the City Manager's staff focuses on the application process and how City staff liaisons interact with the appointed commission. The City Clerk explains processes including what to expect in a meeting as well as information about possible financial disclosure

### GA Summary Continued from Page 1

Smart growth and livable communities have the potential to answer many of the aging community's transportation needs. The South Bay also needs to look at innovative transportation resources such as "empty seats in cars" or ridesharing. Cities must support families and friends of seniors as these are the largest group of care-takers for the elderly.

The program included comments from State Assemblymembers Betty Karnette, Ted Lieu, and Curren Price, State Senator Jenny Oropeza as well as LA County Supervisor and Metro Board member Don Knabe.

Speakers included: Dr. Eileen Crimmins, Associate Dean of the Davis School of Gerontology at the University of Southern California who discussed how the demographic makeup of cities will change; Dr. Sandra Rosenbloom, Professor of Planning and adjunct Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Arizona who talked about transportation and mobility for the elderly; Kathy

and ethics in government. The City Attorney speaks about the Brown Act and the open government laws that apply to all elected and appointed agencies.

At the end of the session, one or two currently seated commissioners are invited to share their experiences on commissions and the class closes with a question and answer period.

Regular commission appointments are made in early January and classes are held twice a year - in April/May and in September/October. Reservations are required as space is limited in each class. Classes are added depending on demand.

More information about the commissions is available on the City of Torrance website at [www.tornet.com](http://www.tornet.com) and can be found in Torrance Seasons mailed quarterly to all households in Torrance or from the City Clerk's office. The City Clerk maintains an "interest list" year round. Torrance residents can call 618.2870 to be added to the list for the next class.

All commission and board meetings are open to the public. Everyone is invited to attend meetings to learn more about what commissions do. A monthly meeting calendar, current agendas and minutes can be found online at <http://www.tornet.com/8752.htm>.

Many people come away with a new view of city government. Responses range from "I learned so much about how the city operates" to "Wow, my spouse needs to come to this". Most of the councilmembers in Torrance began their service to the city on one or more of the city's commissions.

Sykes, Senior Advisor on the Aging Initiative for the US EPA who spoke about the benefits of healthier more livable communities for seniors; Bob Warnagieris, EdD Executive Council Member for the AARP who discussed the AARP's actions for creating livable communities and; Helen Dennis, columnist for the Daily Breeze who ended the Assembly with the Takeaway Message.

Panelists focusing on resources available in the South Bay included: Ed Long, Co-Founder & Director of Legal Programs for H.E.L.P.; John Eberhard, Sergeant for the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department; Cindy Snodgrass, Recreation Supervisor for the City of Torrance Community Services Department; Pastor Herrera, Jr., Director for the LA County Department of Community Affairs and Marilyn Rafkin, Director of Community Care Services for the Beach Cities Health District.

In addition there were over 35 exhibits on senior programs, services and products.

# 2008 SBCCOG 9TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY - MOBILITY OPTIONS FOR THE SOUTH BAY



## SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THANKS THE SPONSORS OF THE 9TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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# City Showcase

## GAP CLOSED - DOUGLAS STREET PROJECT IS COMPLETE

by El Segundo Mayor Kelly McDowell

Nearly twenty years after the first federal funding for the project got the OK from Congress, the last one thousand feet of Douglas Street in El Segundo are complete. You can now drive southbound on Douglas all the way from Imperial Highway to Rosecrans Boulevard.

With the restoration of two-way traffic on Douglas and Nash Streets—which with luck will occur by June—this project will relieve a substantial part of the north-south traffic burden on Aviation and Sepulveda Boulevards.

The Douglas Street gap-closure project has not been easy sledding. Its twenty-year journey in search of money has been rocky in many respects.

The project had to cross the railroad tracks just north of the Green Line station in Continental Park, the big office development on Rosecrans Boulevard. This would have been relatively easy and inexpensive if you could build an at-grade crossing where cars drive across the tracks, like the one on Douglas just north of the newly-completed part of the road.

No can do! The California Public Utilities Commission decreed some time back that there will be no new at-grade crossings because drivers too often try to outrun trains, misjudge, and get whacked by a locomotive that can't stop in time.

OK, it's hard to imagine that happening very often on a little-used stretch of track with slow-moving trains, but that rule alone made the project about \$10 million more expensive because of the need to build an underpass beneath the tracks. (Overpasses are about the same cost.)



*From left to right: Don Knabe, Richard Lundquist, Bill Fisher, Ted Lieu, Jane Harman, Kelly McDowell, Carl Jacobson, Eric Busch, Carole Inge and Jim Kaufman*



*Classic cars first to navigate new Douglas Street Opening.*

“Prevailing wage” standards applied to the project because the federal government provided much of the money. That further increased the cost.

Public works construction costs were at an all-time high at the time the project went out to bid. The bids came in at about \$10 million over our estimates. But the city could not wait for building costs to drop because much of the funding was on a short time-frame and would evaporate if we did.

Hard work by the El Segundo Employers' Association, then-consultant John Barna (now the Executive Director of the California Transportation Commission), city staffers and legislative staff from the late Assemblyman Mike

Gordon's office—not to mention the incredible people at the state's Infrastructure Bank—closed the funding gap.

In less than two weeks El Segundo had a loan in hand for \$10 million—the bank's lending limit. Many thanks to everyone who made this project a reality and who had the determination to stick with a job that lasted a generation.