

# South Bay Cities Council of Governments

May 23, 2019

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors  
FROM: Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Director  
RE: SBCCOG Transportation Update Covering April 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**

### **Federal Infrastructure Bill Discussions Begin Anew**

President Trump met with the Democratic leaders on April 30<sup>th</sup> to frame a \$2 trillion comprehensive infrastructure package to repair and improve the nation's roads, bridges and broadband networks. The meeting renewed efforts that broke down last year when Trump proposed a \$1.5 trillion bill funded mostly with private sector financing and only \$200 billion in federal investment.

The sticky part still is figuring out whether to fund the program from new gas taxes or other means. Several Republican lawmakers have dismissed the \$2 trillion as a meaningless sum until it's clear how it would be raised. It is unlikely Republican leaders will propose major tax increases until they know where Trump stands. The parties expect to meet again in three weeks to focus on funding mechanisms.

### **Secretary Chao Explains Requested Budget Cuts During House Hearing**

The House Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development subcommittee held a hearing on April 10<sup>th</sup> about the DOT's budget request for fiscal year 2020, the first such hearing since the White House released the President's budget requests which total nearly \$84 billion for the DOT, a budget request that reduces the department's funding by about 20% compared with FY 2019.

Democrats on the committee were clearly upset with the funding reduction which is driven by the sequestration cap adopted in 2018 that requires USDOT's discretionary budget to be cut by \$5 billion from the FY 2019 levels. Democrats also expressed concern that the budget does not address the looming insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund and offers no path forward after the FAST [Fixing America's Surface Transportation] Act expires at the end of FY 2020.

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao noted the FY 2020 request is 8.9% higher than the President's previous requests. Compared to the FY 2017 enacted level, prior to the budget cap deal increases, the overall increase for FY 2020 is almost 8%. Chao also emphasized the importance of injecting money into rural areas after several committee members cited high levels of fatalities on

rural highways. The DOT secretary said that, while the Obama administration focused its funding on urban areas, the Trump administration is shifting that focus to rural areas.

### **U.S. DOT Makes Available \$900 Million In Infrastructure Grant Funds**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has formally announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$900 million in discretionary grant funding through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants program. To view the NOFO, click [here](#). The deadline to submit an application for the FY 2019 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants program is July 15, 2019.

Fiscal Year 2019 BUILD Transportation grants are for investments in surface transportation infrastructure and will be awarded on a competitive basis to projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. BUILD funding can support roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports or intermodal transportation. Up to 50% of the funds will be awarded to projects that emphasize improved access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities in rural areas.

USDOT is interested in projects that improve infrastructure condition, address public health and safety, promote regional connectivity, facilitate economic growth or competitiveness, deploy broadband as part of an eligible transportation project, or promote energy independence. The maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$90 million can be awarded to a single State.

To provide technical assistance to a broad array of stakeholders, DOT is hosting a series of webinars during the FY 2019 BUILD grant application process. Details and registration information regarding these webinars will be made available at: <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants/outreach>.

### **National League Of Cities Offers New Micro-Mobility Guide**

The National League of Cities (NLC) released a new guide, “Micro-mobility in Cities: A History and Policy Overview” designed for local leaders learning how to best to integrate micro-mobility options — like e-scooters and bikeshares — into their communities and to tailor local regulations for these new modes of transportation.

The guidance includes recommendations including:

- Get out in front of surprise deployments.
- Utilize pilot programs to consider right of way policy, cost structure, sustainability and opportunities to work with different companies.
- Consider safety.
- Develop a plan and agreement for trip data.
- Reevaluate bike infrastructure.
- Focus on equity.
- Be proactive about learning from other cities.

## **STATE**

### **CA DMV Releases Proposed Regulations For Testing Autonomous Trucks On Public Roads**

The California Department of Motor Vehicles has proposed regulations to allow companies to test light-duty autonomous vehicles on public roads. These are minor amendments to current regulations on autonomous vehicle testing, removing a prohibition on trucks and on using test vehicles to deliver goods. The 45-day comment period on the proposed regulations ends May 27.

The proposal would allow companies to test vehicles that weigh less than 10,000 pounds, which is what counts as “light-duty” trucks. That includes vehicles that most bicycle riders and pedestrians would consider humongous, such as Ford F-150s or similar vehicles. The companies testing vehicles would not be allowed to charge for delivery. They would be allowed to charge for the goods themselves.

Comments on the regulations will be accepted until May 27 at the email address below. A public hearing will be held on May 30 in Sacramento to discuss the regulations, any comments that have been received, and to hear from the public.

More information is available at: <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/vr/autonomous/bkgd>.

## **REGION**

### **Pilot Program To Curb Waze Traffic On Side Streets Approved By LA City Council**

With mobile traffic applications such as Waze causing a flood of traffic on tiny side streets, the Los Angeles City Council approved a pilot program on April 29<sup>th</sup> to restrict the routing of vehicles onto certain streets as a condition of entering into data-sharing agreements with developers of mobile mapping applications. The unanimous action gives staff permission to start a dialogue with the tech companies to see if they will work more closely with the city to reduce the impact their apps are having on small residential streets and increase the level of traffic safety in our neighborhoods.

### **Grants Available For Enhanced Mobility Of Seniors And Individuals With Disabilities**

L. A. Metro is making available \$10,201,958 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Federal Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. The goals of the Section 5310 Program are to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available when public transit is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable.

The FY 2019 competitive selection process provides operating and capital assistance to eligible private non-profit organizations, State or local government authorities, and/or operators of public transportation under specific conditions, for public transportation projects that:

- 1) Are planned, designed and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable;
- 2) exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; and/or
- 3) improve access to fixed route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit, and for alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.

The application deadline is July 31, 2019 at 3 p. m. Interested applicants are encouraged to register and attend one of two informational workshops on May 16, 2019 and May 21, 2019. The workshops will provide an overview of the program and application process. Go to the 5310 program website and select the “Workshop” tab for schedule, location and registration information.

For additional information, please contact Ruben Cervantes at (213) 418-3197 or CervantesR@metro.net, or Anne Flores at (213) 922-4894 or FloresA@metro.net.

#### **L. A. City Vision Zero Plan Is Failing To Meet Fatality Reduction Benchmarks**

Fatal car crashes have risen 32% since 2015, the year Vision Zero began. In that time, more people have died in traffic collisions — 932 — than were shot to death in the city, according to coroner’s data. There has been a modest decline in the number of deaths over the last two years, which city officials attribute to new street safety projects. In 2017, 246 people died. Last year, the number was 242, including 127 people walking and 21 people on bicycles, a decline of 1.63%.

Vision Zero in Los Angeles began in August 2015. The city measures progress from 2016 because it was the first full year the initiative was in effect. By that calculation, deaths have fallen 7%.

LADOT made about 1,080 changes to streets in 2017 and 289 last year, Hou said. The city changed the timing on traffic signals, added fresh paint to hundreds of crosswalks and installed white plastic posts at dozens of street corners to force drivers to slow down.

Of the 40 most dangerous streets, 26 have new safety features. An additional seven are slated to be finished by June. Six larger reconstruction projects will take longer because they call for street resurfacing and the installation of traffic signals, sidewalks and protected bike lanes, according to the city.

The proposed LADOT FY 2019-20 budget, released April 18<sup>th</sup>, includes \$117 million for traffic and safety improvements, up from \$91 million last year.

#### **L. A. Metro Considering E-Scooter Parking Rules For Stations**

L. A. Metro is considering a “micro-mobility vehicles program” to manage shared e-scooter and e-bike parking at Metro stations. The program is designed to be self-sustaining, so there are application fees, monthly parking space fees, and impound fees. All these would be paid by scooter-share/bike-share companies. On Metro property, two hours after being reported, improperly parked devices would be removed by towing companies. The proposal includes a \$100 fee for devices parked outside of designated areas. Devices blocking wheelchair access are subject to a \$338 fee.

Metro has sorted its stations into four categories. These range from 1 being the most spacious sites to 4 being the most constrained. Metro would allow in-station parking in categories 1 through 3. Docks in category 1 stations would be located in the parking lots. Docks at category 2 and 3 stations would be located in pedestrian areas. For category 4 stations, devices would need to be parked off of Metro property, for the most part parking on adjacent city sites.

## **TRENDS**

### **Protected Bike Lanes Are Built To Improve Safety So Ridership Is Not A Key Justification**

The League of American Bicyclists found that fully 40 percent of collisions between people driving and those biking were "hit from behind" incidents, where drivers just go right over the people on bikes.

Protected bike lanes, and the road diets that are sometimes required to install them, are essential to safety and active transportation is a key Climate Change strategy in many communities, and are heavily used in urban settings. And, since 40% of collisions between people driving and those biking were "hit from behind" incidents, where drivers just go right over the people on bikes, safety rather than ridership is the key metric being used to justify the bike track investments.

Protected bike lanes, and the road diets that are sometimes required to install them, are essential to safety. But Climate Adaptation requires the facilities to be used. And since safety rather than ridership is the key metric for justifying the cycle track investments, usage data is lacking. There is little data being generated that shows how effective the protected bikeway facility investments are and how important they are in climate adaptation.

There are numerous urban success stories. Bike ridership jumped more than 413 percent after Seattle spent \$12 million to upgrade a key corridor from a regular painted bike lane on Second Avenue into a one-mile curb-and-landscape-protected bike lane through downtown. The city reports that there have been about 83,000 trips on the protected bikeway since December. Toronto claimed a 300-percent hike on Sherborne Street. And New York City says cycling is up 70 percent since 2011, when the city truly began expanding its vast protected bike lane network.

However, ridership in the suburbs is less documented. Temple City won awards when it installed a \$17 million, 2-mile protected bikeway on Rosemead Boulevard from Callita Street to Lower Azusa Road in 2014. But the facility attracts just a few riders each day since the lane doesn't extend into the city of Rosemead to the south or the county of Los Angeles to the north and doesn't connect to destinations that make bike transit as success (e.g.: schools, workplaces, or colleges).

Long Beach has seven protected bike lanes that are separated from cars by rows of parked vehicles or barriers made of concrete or rubber. The city justifies the road-diet facilities as a safety measure, not based on their use.

Santa Ana opened its first 1-mile protected lanes on both sides of Bristol Street where the rider is protected by medians and planters on one side and the curb on the other. The city doesn't track ridership.

Los Angeles opened its first two-way bike track on Spring Street on April 29<sup>th</sup>, by converting a single painted lane between Third Street and Ninth Street. The \$2.3 Million project will also add a two-way bike lane on Main Street in Fall 2019 and will include pedestrian crossing and bus/bike safety improvements with maximized parking and loading zones. The project elements have been justified as a safety improvement.

Pasadena is holding public meetings on designs for a \$ 6.9 million, two-way protected bike lane along Union Street between Arroyo Parkway and Hill Street mostly funded by a \$5.6 million SB 1 grant and \$745,000 from L. A. Metro. It would be the first protected bike lane in the city after community opposition killed a proposal for a road diet and bike lane on Orange Grove Boulevard last October.

## **Scooter Trips Surpass Docked Bike Share For The First Time**

Scooter ridership in America has outpaced traditional docked bike share for the first time. In 2018, riders took 38.5 million trips on shared e-scooters across American cities, almost doubling ridership over a year and topping the number of trips made on city-sponsored bike share for the first time, according to a new analysis by the National Association of City Transportation Officials. About 36.5 million trips were taken on bike share. Only 3 million trips were taken on pedal dockless bike share, as companies like ofo and Lime shifted their investments toward scooters or, in ofo's case, got out of American micro-mobility almost entirely.

## **Congestion Pricing Technology Needs To Evolve**

The technology supporting traffic reduction efforts like congestion pricing largely mirrors toll road technologies with cameras on gantries and backroom processing of the transponder readings to attach a mailing address for citations. However, the technology is poised for an upgrade.

The next generation of the system is set to be released in Singapore which will place technology in every car that is “essentially a GPS box” that allows the state to charge the car for the use of any congested roadway. But GPS is not yet able to distinguish between lanes.

Other systems, like the one in London, are relying on video-enabled license plate readers. The congestion pricing geofence affects a roughly 16-square-mile section of central London and has resulted in a roughly 15 percent reduction in traffic, according to a report by the U.S. Department of Transportation. However, the video license plate reader system can be fairly equipment intensive and requires the enforcement agency to have accurate addresses attached to the car registration - a process that could prove problematic, given that each U.S. state runs its own motor vehicle department. A system that uses only cameras also presents problems when capturing multiple lanes of traffic or heavy bumper-to-bumper traffic, as opposed to reading a transponder signal. So many agencies are considering a combination of transponder and video technologies.

The refinement of GPS-based systems or the expansion of 5G networks could open the door to more innovative tolling strategies but it will require fiberoptic backhaul networks to carry real-time video data.

## **A Painted Bike Lane May Not Be Safe**

A new study published in “Accident Analysis and Prevention”, found that when there are painted bike lanes, drivers feel no need to slow down or move out away from the person on a bike, leading to very close passes on average about 1.25 feet closer on streets with a painted bike lane and car parking than on streets with no bike infrastructure. The study also found that one in 17 of the passes are only four inches.

The study team used a device to record the passing distance for 60 riders in Victoria, Australia. Over the five-month study period, they recorded more than 18,500 car-bike overtaking events.

When the cyclist and driver share a lane, the driver is required to perform an overtaking maneuver in which the driver and cyclist are more aware of each other. In contrast, on roads with a marked bicycle lane where the driver is not required to overtake in a shared lane, drivers are less likely to pass the bicyclist at a safe distance.

In a separate study, test cyclists were given 8.5cm (3.3 inches) more clearance by cars if they were not wearing helmets. When the researchers donned female wigs, they got more clearance, 14cm

(5.5 inches) more than apparent males in helmets. Both studies conclude that the best way to protect people on bikes, to encourage more people to ride, and to keep cars and trucks out of the bike lanes is to properly, physically separate them.

### **Auto Manufacturers Partner With Amazon to Enable Package Deliveries To Vehicle Trunks**

GM, Volvo and Ford are opening their vehicles' trunks to Amazon.com., entering a partnership to enable delivery of packages directly to millions of "mobile storage" lockers. Using an Amazon app in conjunction with late-model vehicle apps, delivery drivers can unlock the car, place packages in the trunk or back seat and then relock the vehicle. It is aimed at addressing consumer concerns about the security of packages left unprotected on front porches.

The automakers are seeking to earn income from services beamed into their vehicles. Besides the Amazon deal, Ford has formed partnerships with mobile car washes ordered off the FordPass and LincolnWay apps to clean cars on the spot with roving crews. Ford also is in discussion with other retailers and grocery chains to expand delivery services to their "connected" cars.