

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

November 9, 2015

TO: SBCCOG Steering Committee

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

RE: SBCCOG Transportation Update – October 2015

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.

FOLLOW THE MONEY...

FEDERAL

House T. & I. Committee Approves \$325B Six-year Federal Highway Bill

The House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on October 22nd approved a bipartisan bill to spend up to \$325 billion on transportation projects over the next six years. The measure, known as the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015, would spend \$261 billion on highways, \$55 billion on transit and approximately \$9 billion on safety programs if Congress can come up with a way to pay for the final three years.

The Senate passed its version of the reauthorization bill last summer. The House balked at that bill, in part, because it contained six years' worth of transportation commitments but only three years' worth of funding. The House bill essentially ducks the six-year cost issue by requiring lawmakers to pass new legislation to "unlock" additional funding after the initial three years, instead of guaranteeing it in advance. Once the House acts on the T & I version of the bill, the House and Senate hope to conclude a brief conference to reconcile the differences in the two bills and get the final multi-year transportation funding measure to the President by Thanksgiving.

Both the Senate and House highway bills would maintain the federal government's current spending level of about \$50 billion per year for transportation projects, adjusted for inflation. To reach that level of spending, Congress will have to come up with approximately \$16 billion per year to supplement revenue from the federal gas tax.

Another interesting provision of the highway bill would make it harder to add toll lanes to federal highways by requiring states to approve legislation before participating in a federal pilot program. Present law requires states to construct new lanes on highways (not convert existing lanes) that they want to add tolls to unless they are granted an exemption, which has thus far been limited to three states (Virginia, Missouri and North Carolina). The proposed legislation

does not expand the number of pilot program slots, nor does it allow funds collected through tolls to be diverted to other purposes. The pilot program was established by a 1998 transportation funding bill that was approved by Congress.

Congress Passes 3-Week Highway Trust Fund Extension & Extends PTC Deadline 3+ Years

The House extended the current act that provides ongoing authorization of federal transportation funding for the 36th time on October 27th. The Senate approved the extension on October 28th. The bill (H.R. 3819) would extend federal transportation spending currently set to expire October 29th until November 20th to allow time for Congress to resolve the differences in the House and Senate versions of the multi-year transportation reauthorization bills..

House and Senate lawmakers also agreed on October 21st to add a provision to the bill that will extend the deadline by at least three years for positive train control to be installed on the nation's railroads. Railroads currently have until December 31st to install the automated navigation and crash avoidance system which regulates the speed and track movements of trains.

In addition to the three-year extension, the proposed regulatory changes would offer railroads the option to request another two years to complete the work. Railroads seeking the additional time will have to submit plans before December 31, 2018; the Department of Transportation will approve such plans on a case-by-case basis. The freight railroads had indicated that they would not be able to meet the December 31, 2015 deadline and would be forced to shut down the national freight rail network to get rid of the pilot program, not expand it.

The measure does not authorize any new money, because lawmakers included enough highway funding in the three-month transportation bill that was approved in July to last until the end of the year in case they needed more time to finish work on a multiyear highway transportation funding reauthorization bill. Congress has not passed a transportation funding bill that lasted longer than two years since 2005.

FAA Tests Technology To Ground Rogue Drones Within 5 Miles Of Airports

The Federal Aviation Administration announced on October 7th that it is testing anti-drone technology that would ground rogue drones flying within a five-mile radius of select airports. The technology is supposed to detect radio signals from rogue drones operating too close to airports.

The FAA is partnering with an information technology company, CACI International, headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, to assess the safety and security capabilities of CACI's product that can pinpoint the drone operator and "force the drone to land."

The FAA receives about 100 reports per month from pilots reporting drone sightings but the agency does not yet know how many airports or at which airports they will test the technology.

USDOT Publishes New Strategic Freight Plan And New Data On Freight Transportation

The U. S. Department of Transportation released a Draft National Freight Strategic Plan on October 18th and The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) jointly published the "Freight Analysis Framework," a report on the latest data from freight transportation on October 20th.

The National Freight Strategic Plan lays out the challenges: 70 million more people in the next 30 years; a 40 percent increase in freight volume by 2040; ports that will see larger and larger vessels carrying more and more containers; a tripling of air freight; a doubling of multimodal shipments; and double the volume of imports and exports. The draft plan proposes new ways to encourage states and local governments to invest in and plan freight projects, and ways to accelerate technologies that can improve safety and efficiency while expediting project delivery to make a modernized freight network a true national priority.

The Framework report, the first product of its kind, is the most comprehensive publicly accessible data set pertaining to freight movement; it includes data on the amount and types of goods transported between metropolitan areas, states and regions by land, sea and air. The new framework will assist local jurisdictions to track the growth of freight on the nation's transportation system, which has grown by almost a third since the bottom of the recession in April 2009.

USDOT Awards \$500 Million In 7th Round of TIGER Grants

After reviewing 627 eligible applications from 50 states, several U.S. territories, and Tribal governments that requested a total of \$10.1 billion for needed transportation projects, USDOT announced on October 29th the 39 TIGER projects selected for the \$500 million available in 2015.. The following three California projects were approved:

1. Metro's Urban Rail to Rail Active Transportation Corridor Connector Project - will convert an unused 6.4-mile railroad corridor into a bike and pedestrian path through South Los Angeles that connects the Crenshaw/LAX Light Rail Project, the Metro Blue Line and the I-110 Silver Line to restore a blighted area of unused railroad tracks to an inviting corridor safe for pedestrians and bicyclists. Once completed, a 6.4-mile bicycle and pedestrian multi-use corridor through historically disadvantaged South Los Angeles communities will link three regionally significant north-south transit lines – the Metro Blue Line LRT, Crenshaw/LAX Light Rail Transit, and the Silver Line BRT. Specifically, existing railroad track along a Metro-owned right-of-way will be removed, six-miles of Class I bicycle path infrastructure will be paved, safety features (such as crosswalk marking, curb ramps, repainted stop bars, and signage) will be installed, new crosswalks will be constructed, and lighting and landscaping features will be installed. (\$15,000,000 in TIGER funds of a \$34,300,000 project);
2. Port of Hueneme Intermodal Improvement Project in the Oxnard Harbor District. (\$12,300,000 in TIGER funds of a \$24,483,324 project); and
3. Urban Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal Modernization Project at the Port of San Diego. (\$10,000,000 in TIGER funds of a \$22,129,000 project).

STATE

California Transportation Special Session Chugs Along

The California Legislative Special Session on Transportation grinds on with the formation of a 10-member Senate / Assembly Conference Committee on October 18th and the convening of two hearings in October (in Sacramento and Ontario). Assembly member Autumn Burke and Senator Ben Allen are representing the South Bay on the 10-member conference committee.

The two sessions convened so far have produced no transportation funding deals. Although Democrats and Republicans alike want to fix California's dilapidated streets, highways and bridges, there's not enough support among the Republicans for the higher taxes the governor wants to pay for it. Taxes and fees can't be raised by the legislature without Republican support because such measures require a two-thirds vote.

Advocates have proposed other ways to get the money for road repairs. One option is having the Legislature ask voters for the higher taxes, rather than pass them outright. Another idea is a bond measure for other state expenses that could free up money for road repairs.

COWABUNGA!!!! Powered Skateboards are BAAAACK!

A 1977 state law banned gas powered skateboards. But powered skateboards will be legal on January 1, 2016 because Governor Jerry Brown signed AB 604 in mid-October which will allow people age 13 and older to ride electric skateboards in bicycle lanes, pathways and roadways and anywhere else that bicycles are allowed in California. Under the law, an individual city can still decide for itself whether to allow them.

Governor Brown Signs Bill Authorizing L.A. County Transportation Sales Tax Measure

The Governor signed SB 767 on October 7th. The new state law will allow L. A. Metro to place on a future ballot a measure in which Los Angeles County voters may be asked to approve a half-cent increase in the sales tax for transportation projects. The measure would need a 2/3 majority of voters. Metro has yet to determine the structure of the proposed measure.

The Metro Board must make a go/no go decision no later than the regularly scheduled meeting in July 2016 in order to ensure placement on the November 2016 ballot. A preliminary Expenditure Plan and Ordinance would be released in March 2016 with the final Expenditure Plan and Ordinance considered by the board in June 2016 and submitted to the L. A. County Board of Supervisors in July/August 2016.

County voters previously approved three half-cent tax increases for transportation: Proposition A in 1980, Proposition C in 1990 and Measure R in 2008; but voters narrowly failed to provide the needed 2/3 majority vote for Measure J in 2012.

Caltrans Launches Yearlong Process to Develop a Statewide Bicycle And Pedestrian Plan

Caltrans on October 27th launched the planning process for the first California State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (CSBPP) that will focus on improving safety and access for everyone across all modes, particularly bicycle and pedestrian.

The new focus is in keeping with Caltrans' new mission to "provide a safe, sustainable, integrated, and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability". When completed in the upcoming year, the CSBPP will help guide future investments, such as Caltrans' Active Transportation Program (ATP), which funds projects that take cars off the road, helping to clean the air, conserve our natural resources, and promote healthier, sustainable communities. To date, Caltrans has allocated \$360 million statewide in ATP grants for 114 biking and walking projects in ATP grants.

The CSBPP will provide a framework to guide the planning and development of non-motorized transportation on State facilities and maximize the use of future investments. Staff expects it will also lead to improved connections between the State's bicycle and pedestrian facilities with the existing network and other modes of transportation, as well as help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicles miles traveled. The Plan will not replace existing policies and implementation plans at the regional and local levels.

Caltrans has planned a comprehensive statewide outreach program and introduced the CSBPP website at www.cabikepedplan.org, where visitors may take an online survey and sign up for email updates about new project information and outreach activities. Stakeholders can also follow the hashtag #CSBPP on Twitter for more information.

REGION

L. A. City Considering Six Parking Changes

Los Angeles Parking Reform Working Group presented six recommendations in a 40-page report to the Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee during the last week in October. Here's the six major areas or reforms the LAPRWG report lays out:

- *Expand performance-based pricing* - Expand LA's ExpressPark program, the variable pricing system now used in Downtown LA that changes the price of parking meters based on the demand for parking spots throughout the day. The city already plans to bring similar meters to Westwood, Hollywood, and Venice, but the LAPRWG wants the city to push the program even further. The report also calls for public pricing structures that account for holidays or events nearby venues such as Staples Center.
- *Adopt a freight parking program* - Citing an explosion in home delivery, the report calls for a reform in how the city deals with freight vehicles that are double parking short-term. The report calls for the city to identify the 20 demonstration streets where freight drivers get the most citations and establish new "freight loading only" zones to alleviate the problem. In addition, a special parking permit would be issued to freight drivers to give them access to freight spots and reduced fines for non-safety parking violations. If successful, the program would then expand throughout the city.
- *Reevaluate the street cleaning program* - The LAPRWG calls for all street cleaning vehicles to be tracked by GPS to allow street cleaning restrictions to be updated in real time rather than posted for two-hour blocks of time. . So if you're parked in a street cleaning zone and the street has already been cleaned or cleaning has been cancelled that week, you won't get a ticket. The report also recommends a text- or email-based

notification system to inform residents when a street has been cleaned and it's safe to park there again.

- *Reevaluate Preferential Parking Districts* - The report calls for a tweak to the way LA handles neighborhoods with overnight permit parking. The report suggests allotting one side of the street for residents and the other side for non-residents parking short term.
- *Experiment with information and communication technology* - Street signs in LA have been attacked in the past for their notoriously confusing and sometimes conflicting parking information. The report calls for street signs to carry a unique QR code that would allow drivers to pull up parking info for that street on their phone. A more ambitious recommendation is to replace static signs with dynamic signage. These would be signs that completely change the information on display depending on the need in real time.
- *Segregate parking revenue for management and reinvestment purposes* - This recommendation would keep parking money in a dedicated Parking and Access Enterprise Fund rather than the General Fund. The revenues would be used for sidewalk repair, new signage, improved bus stops, and carshare programs.

Why Isn't Metro's Transit Ridership Growing?

According to L. A. Metro, ridership peaked in April 2014 and has since declined by about 5 percent. Some statistics show an even steeper drop. In the third quarter of 2015, bus ridership was off 9.3 percent compared with the same period in 2013.

In response, in October 14th article in L. A. Weekly asked: If employment is up, if young people are embracing urban life, renting lofts in the Arts District and selling their cars so they can take public transportation, and if L.A. leaders are adapting to give them what they want, providing WiFi at bus stops and building new rail lines faster than any other city, why are fewer people taking L. A. Metro's buses and trains?

Metro cited the following combination of factors in the article that may have curtailed rail ridership:

- Undocumented immigrants now are eligible for driver's licenses. That gives them the option to drive when they might otherwise have been forced to take public transportation. The licenses became available in January, and the state has issued more than 500,000 of them.
- On the rail side, the agency has been working to repair the Blue Line, which is 25 years old. That has led to service disruptions. Blue Line ridership is down 9 percent since 2013. Ridership is also down on the Red Line (6.6 percent), the Green Line (12 percent) and the Orange Line busway (9.9 percent). The two newest lines, the Gold Line and the Expo Line, have seen overall increases since 2013. However, even the Expo Line is down 6 percent from its peak in 2014. Metro noted that service issues also have beset the Green Line. The MTA recently closed turnstiles on the Red Line and did more fare checking on the Orange Line to discourage fare evasion, which may explain the decline on those lines.

- On the bus side, Metro noted that several other agencies in Southern California and around the country are seeing reduced ridership on their bus lines. Transit officials note that passengers seem to be migrating to rapid service. Lines with infrequent buses are shedding passengers, while those with faster and more convenient service are seeing increases.

In recent months, transit officials have developed a Strategic Bus Network Plan to address the declines. The agency is looking to expand some of its rapid bus service, and to make existing bus lines more efficient by reducing bottlenecks. They're also trying to improve communication with the general public about service delays.

A key element of the Plan is to speed up service by eliminating numerous bus stops that are too close to each other under the theory that, if you can get people to gather at fewer stops, you get a faster service and more people at each stop improves personal security. However, some critics of “stop thinning”, worry that the elderly, the disabled, and riders with small children will need to walk further on sidewalks that require more than a billion dollars in repairs.

There are a number of recent examples of relatively successful bus stop consolidation efforts:

- San Francisco MUNI found that more than 70 percent of its stops were too close together. Long Beach Transit did an extensive analysis of its bus stops in 2014 and has eliminated nearly 20 stops in a pilot project on its Broadway/Ximeno line. Ridership increased somewhat as a result of the changes.
- Santa Monica’s Big Blue Bus has been eliminating stops as part of its recent Expo Line integration overhaul. The agency’s recommended stop spacing is 1,000 feet to 1,325 feet for local service which is adjusted based on ridership at the stop being considered for elimination.

Uber may be affecting car purchases

According to new survey, the rise in popularity of ride-sharing app Uber is already having a significant impact on customer attitudes towards the purchase of new cars. A CNBC survey, found that among 2,400 respondents, Uber usage has grown from 4 percent in 2014 to 17 percent in 2015.

According to the survey, 22 percent of Uber users aged 18 to 64, who have used the service in the past 6 months, said they were delaying or holding off buying a new car for that very reason. Although the car sharing service could be a source of new auto sales, the survey findings translate to approximately 3 to 4 million people who may hold off on buying a new car because of Uber.

5 Tech Tools Governments Can Use to Alleviate Traffic At A Tipping Point

A September 2015 report by McKinsey and Co. said the key to managing transportation at a tipping point is for governments to be flexible and encourage innovative solutions. The consulting firm proposes 5 ways in which local governments can find and implement solutions to specific problems brewing (although nobody knows for sure which ones will work and which ones will be the most important or useful.)

The report describes are five technologies government can directly implement, participate in, or encourage that offer promise for solving traffic issues:

1. Leveraging the crowd

Crowdsourcing is finding its way into the halls of government. Using open-ended smartphone apps, cities are looking at new ways to solve the same problems they've always faced, including traffic issues.

Several apps provide real-time smartphone reporting of potholes and other small problems. The city can respond to the incident and communicate to the sender when the problem is resolved. An app in Boston sits passively in users' pockets as they navigate the roads, collecting information on the smoothness of the ride and delivering that data back to the city. The city can then analyze the inputs to find potholes and bumpy roads in need of repair for other reasons — essentially putting cars and cell phones to work as roaming sensors in the employ of the city.

Austin, Texas, is creating an app that connects bicyclists to traffic signals. The goal is to encourage more bicycling by making lights turn green faster as bicycles approach them.

Taken together, apps and other crowdsourced platforms are presenting to government an opportunity to identify problems more efficiently and engage citizens more directly.

2. Vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure connections

Cars are getting smarter — not just because they're on the verge of being able to drive themselves or because they're becoming more fuel efficient, but also because the U.S. is looking to turn them all into mobile data points.

The concepts of vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) technology are well on their way to becoming a reality. The idea is to connect cars to each other via computers, allowing them to know where other cars are and augment driver decisions — or, if cars are driving themselves, make better-informed decisions. On top of that, some are hoping to connect vehicles to infrastructure like traffic lights to create better pictures of congestion and to let cars know ahead of time when a light will change.

The U.S. Department of Transportation sees potential benefits in V2V/V2I spanning the entire transportation system. DOT estimated two of the technologies alone, “left turn assist” and “intersection movement assist,” could prevent up to 592,000 crashes and 1,083 fatalities per year.

3. Car-free zones

Some cities close off streets to cars for a day to accommodate parades and festivals like Ciclovía. Some keep them that way permanently. According to the McKinsey report, major cities around the globe like Paris, London and New York have begun to create car-free zones in an effort to make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to get around.

4. Bike sharing programs

In 2008, Washington, D.C., one of the nation’s most congested districts, launched the country’s first municipal bike-sharing program, where citizens pay a membership to get easy access to bike racks. Commuters can then ride those bikes to other racks and drop them off.

Bike share operators have also sought to make the projects smarter, fitting the bikes with GPS trackers and monitoring which stations bikes are taken from, where they end up and how long it took them to get there. Many are opening up that data, anonymized, to individual users, who can access dashboards that tell them how many calories they’ve burned biking, estimates of their carbon offsets and how far they’ve cycled.

5. Multi-modal transit networks

All the above solutions — along with long-standing services offered by government entities like buses, carpool lanes and trains — present a mostly unexploited opportunity to create transit networks in which a person uses technology to find the fastest, cheapest, most efficient way to get from point A to point B.

Singapore offers an “ez-Link” program that allows customers to pay for buses, trains and some taxicabs with the same card. London’s Oyster card similarly integrates payment across various types of transit.

Some projects are seeking to simplify trip planning in other ways. The Century City Transportation Management Organization offers a commute planning dashboard where users can plot out possible routes comparing the cost, time and carbon emissions associated with using various means of transportation to get where they need to go. Users earn points for choosing low- or zero-carbon methods, and can then redeem those points for coupons to be used for public transit. (This is similar to the Smart Mobility Tool being designed for the South Bay.)

Perhaps the most ambitious project is in Helsinki with a goal to make private cars unnecessary by 2025. The city and private sector are working together to create an app that adds payment to plot out a multi-modal commute and to book and pay for any part of that commute they need to with one click. Helsinki is also offering on-demand bus service.

Microsoft Testing Bike Crash Avoidance Software

Microsoft engineers and City of Bellevue, Washington planners have a sci-fi inspired strategy for curbing bike and pedestrian injuries on city streets: By using video analytics, they want to predict and prevent crashes at intersections before they happen.

The project will use video images from the city’s existing 200 video traffic cameras used by police to investigate crimes and transportation officials to optimize the timing of traffic lights.

The Microsoft scientists are developing software for analyzing the footage, identifying whether a car, bike or pedestrian is using a street or sidewalk, their rate of speed and their trajectory. They’re writing algorithms to look for potential collisions and near misses in order to identify dangerous intersections and roads.

The project started this past spring and is in the proof-of-concept phase. Microsoft researchers have experimented with video collected on their Redmond campus and are testing footage from a

limited number of Bellevue's cameras. Microsoft hopes to have a working system running within the next 12 months. From there, the dream is to develop technology that could be used by municipalities and governments internationally.

The analysis can also provide an estimate of bike volumes and a sense of how well the drivers, bikers and walkers are following traffic rules.