

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

December 14, 2020

TO: SBCCOG Steering Committee

FROM: Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Director

RE: SBCCOG Transportation Update Covering November 2020

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 Transition: 5 Potential Transportation Policy Changes

The new administration may change federal policy in the following five areas:

1. **SAFE Rule Elimination.** In August 2018, the National Highway Traffic Safety Agency (NHTSA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) proposed the Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicle Rule. The Rule creates national fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks at 2020 levels and repeals California's higher fuel efficiency standards. The Biden Administration will likely withdraw the rule.
2. **Climate Change and Transportation.** Biden will include climate experts across many agencies with a strong focus on transportation. California may be a national model as Phil Washington (LA Metro CEO) and Therese McMillian (MTC CEO) are key members of Biden's transportation transition team. Agency transition teams are in charge of reviewing current projects and ongoing initiatives, meeting with career federal employees, and preparing the members of the incoming cabinet for their roles and priorities.
3. **COVID Relief v. Infrastructure Stimulus v. Reauthorization.** There will be only so much room to adopt new spending measures in a divided Congress. With a COVID relief (including transit subsidies) a near certainty, and a surface transportation reauthorization due late in 2021, a "bipartisan" infrastructure bill may be a tough sell.
4. **Reauthorization?** Biden has proposed a \$2 trillion infrastructure plan to promote clean energy and modernize current U.S. systems. But expect more tinkering with the INVEST Act (the transportation reauthorization adopted in June). Earmarks may make a comeback. How to pay for it remains an open question.
5. **State Exodus?** Federal agencies modeling California policies are likely to hire away expertise from the Golden State. ARB Chair Mary Nichols is a potential selection to head US EPA. How many other state leaders will head to D. C.?

Federal Transportation Funding Bill Advances

The transportation funding bill authored by U.S. Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) moved out of committee November 10th. Collins, Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, was one of the authors of the FY 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban

Development funding bill, which has broad, bipartisan input and support. The bill will now go to Conference Committee before heading to the House and Senate floors for a vote.

The bill provides \$74.8 billion in new funding, \$561 million more than last year. Included in the bill are \$1 billion for BUILD grants, which provide federal assistance for transportation projects across the country; \$46.4 billion for Federal-aid highways from the Highway Trust Fund, consistent with the recent extension of the FAST Act; \$18 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration with increased funding for aviation safety; and \$2 billion for Amtrak.

State

Caltrans To Advance Road Charge Testing

With support from a federal Surface Transportation Funding Alternative grant, California will undertake a second round of tests to determine how road charge can work with four technologies: usage-based insurance, ridesharing, electric vehicle charging stations/pay-at-the-pump systems, and autonomous vehicles.

Interested in participating? The demonstration will begin in January 2021 and run for six months. To learn more or participate in the next round of demonstration projects, use this link: The first step is to fill out the information requested on the Caltrans California Road Charge website: <http://www.caroadcharge.com/engage/contact-us/>.

California Updates Regulations in Anticipation of Robo-Taxis

Robotaxis do not exist yet. Some experts suspect the driverless services won't circulate widely for another decade. But in November, the California Public Utilities Commission adopted new rules that updated regulations first established in 2013 for ride-hailing services. The new rules govern how ride-hail services without a driver behind the wheel might work.

There are separate rules for autonomous vehicles with safety drivers and those without. But operators of both types of services will have to hand over lots of information to the government: data on where robo-taxi riders are picked up and dropped off; how many miles the vehicles travel; whether the vehicles are powered by gas or electricity; whether rides are available in underserved communities; and a safety plan, which Californians will be able to comment on.

At the California Public Utilities Commission, ride-hail companies, autonomous vehicle developers, advocacy groups, and local governments have been intensely debating what a driverless taxi service should look like, and what the companies operating on public roads should be required to do. Many commenters suggested the agency take steps it did not take in regulating ride-hail companies a few years ago. The new regulations require more public data from the companies, and are more stringent about accessibility requirements and environmental effects of developing technology.

Region

Redondo Beach Leads Biking and Walking Injuries And Fatalities

According to the California Transportation Injury Mapping System, the Artesia and Aviation corridors are among the most dangerous the South Bay. Redondo Beach has approximately

three times the number of residents as Hermosa Beach and twice the number of residents of Manhattan Beach. But even on a per capita basis, Redondo is an outlier in its number of cycling and pedestrian collisions and deaths.

Between 2010 and 2019, Redondo Beach had four cycling fatalities and eight pedestrian fatalities. By contrast Hermosa Beach had no cycling or pedestrian fatalities. Manhattan had one cycling death and one pedestrian death.

Metro Approves NextGen Bus Plan; Implementation to Begin In December

The L. A. Metro Board of Directors approved a three-tiered NextGen bus plan at its October 23rd meeting after three years of planning. The initial changes in routes and schedules for the nation's second busiest bus system will begin in December 2020, with a second and third round of changes coming in June 2021 and December 2021.

Under the new service plan, buses will arrive every five to 10 minutes for 83 percent of current riders compared to around 48 percent today. One of the key changes will be to combine most rapid and local bus lines that currently operate on duplicative routes. These new combined services will stop fewer times than a prior local bus but a few more than a prior rapid line. In combination with transit signal priority that has been a key part of rapid service, all riders on the former rapid routes will have faster door-to-door trips.

Port of L. A. Issues RFI For Zero-Emission Trucks at The Port Of Los Angeles

Los Angeles issued a Request for Information (RFI) on November 3rd to solicit proposals on expanding the use of zero-emission technology at the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) with a goal of achieving all zero-emissions drayage trucks serving the San Pedro Bay port complex by 2035.

As part of the RFI, the private sector is asked to provide input to POLA as it looks at strategies to develop and adopt zero-emission trucks at the site. The Port is currently engaged in 16 different zero-emission demonstration projects designed to bring feasible technology to the marketplace. The RFI is designed to recruit the best ideas available to help POLA serve as a catalyst and make a meaningful impact on climate change.

Proposers were asked to make the best use of public and private funding sources; new asset management solutions that can accommodate San Pedro Bay Ports' scale; proposal for charging and fueling infrastructure; maintenance and procurement methods and models for public-private partnerships.

Urban Planners Are Coming for Your City's Curb Space

A panel of transportation and logistics experts at the Vision Zero Cities Conference in mid-October predicted continued and long-lasting changes in the way curbs, sidewalks, and curbside parking spaces are organized, managed, and prioritized, in part due to the intermittent closure of retail and restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Road pricing has become a common policy tool and urban planners are beginning to focus on its cousin, the curb, by asking about valuing the various uses of curbs that are provided free to parked automobiles. In their view, curb space should be charged for, using technology that can calculate a curb's current occupancy rate, its latent demand and what its market price should be used for to prevent overcrowding and suboptimal curb use. Some interesting uses:

Toll lanes: If those lanes were subject to tolls, they could function as an express toll lane with a policy that allows buses to use the lanes for free.

Bus shelters: The bus riding experience could be improved by using curb space at intersections for bulb outs with permanent bus shelters. Large well-lit structures with maps, seating and advertising are too big for most sidewalks, but become feasible when curb space is available.

Micro-mobility lanes: Provide a protected right of way for bikes, scooters and mopeds. Using curb space to install protected micro-mobility lanes would make streets and sidewalks safer for all users.

Micro-mobility parking: Convert one parking space per block to safely store shared-bikes and scooters.

Paid just-in-time drop-off zones: Avoid double parking by Uber or FedEx by designating some curb space as paid drop-off space, charging per minute. Mobile apps will soon be able to direct deliverers — not just those in trucks, but also those in smaller vehicles — to available spaces in the last mile before a stop.

Leased carshare parking: A curb pricing program could allow carshare companies to lease a certain amount of curb space for their operations.

Outdoor dining: Make this al fresco use permanent post-pandemic by renting the space to adjacent restaurants.

Paid parking: Of course, there's nothing wrong with using curb space for old-fashioned traditional paid parking, by the hour or even the day. Pricing the curb would entail a balancing act for different users. Persons with disabilities, for example, should have complimentary access.

General street beautification: Above all, better curb management means nicer streets. Space that isn't used for free parking can go for everything from wider sidewalks to more seating, parklets, trees and flower beds. Cities could even use the added space to build elaborate road medians, pushing traffic flow away from sidewalks and pedestrians.

The biggest challenge to this (and the reason market-based curb management isn't common) is the difficulty of determining the real value of a specific stretch of curb space. Beyond parking meters and residential permit parking, public agencies have yet to put a price on that free public sidewalk and curb lane. By including a pricing structure in each innovative use of the curb, local jurisdictions can take a step toward using the space to better address cities' needs.

'Live and Work From Anywhere' Is Here To Stay

Working from home was intended to be a temporary measure for millions of workers in the early days of COVID-19. With no clear end in sight eight months later, employers are offering a perk that would have been unthinkable at the start of the year: Live and work from wherever you want — permanently.

It is a monumental shift for corporate America, one that's forcing companies to rethink the ways they conduct business, manage employees and shape their corporate cultures. But there is often a catch.

Tech companies are leading the way. Facebook, Twitter, VMware, Stripe and ChowNow are among those that have rolled out permanent work-from-anywhere policies and salary adjustments, and are preparing for a wave of employees to distance themselves from headquarters and other main offices. In May, Mark Zuckerberg predicted that up to half of Facebook's employees would work from home within five to 10 years.

The benefits for workers are clear: less time stuck in traffic, more time at home, greater freedom to set and manage one's own schedule, and the possibility of relocating to a more affordable city or to be closer to extended family.

For employers, the greatest upside is the ability to attract new employees who live in places they would not have hired from in the past, giving them a competitive edge over rivals who insist on in-office workers.

Since surveys have shown only 10% of employees said they want to be in the office post-COVID the majority of the time, and to make things fair post-COVID under the new policies, existing knowledge employees that don't need to work in an office are also being allowed to move wherever they want to live. It is not clear how companies will handle employees that need to work at the office on a regular schedule or how much compensation will be discounted for employees that only work from home part time. Twitter is adjusting pay on a case-by-case basis.

There is also no consistent HR policy on how working from home will change corporate communications protocols, virtual meeting policies, and opportunities for advancement. Twitter has also adapted its coveted high-tech campus perks: With employees spread in far-flung locations across numerous time zones, Twitter has sought to maintain a sense of togetherness this year by hosting virtual tea times, cooking demonstrations and magic shows, as well as a Virtual Hack Week.

Other employers have provided access to remote yoga and meditation classes; provide reimbursements or financial allowances for day care, at-home fitness equipment and Wi-Fi; and are given \$1,000 to help set up home office spaces. Some employers are offering one-time bonuses up to \$20,000 to permanently work from home anywhere in the U. S.

For those who move to less-expensive cities, some companies that allow working from anywhere are adjusting pay based on factors including the cost of labor and income tax rates in an employee's new location. In some cases, employees have seen their salaries cut by more than 10% based on the cost of living differential between their former workspace and their new home office. Other companies are eliminating geographic compensation zones in the U.S. by putting all employees on the same highest compensation regardless of where they live and work.

Private Sector Is Developing Flying Taxis in Time For The 2028 Los Angeles Olympics

A race is on to develop a commercial flying taxi service in time for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. The helicopter-like service is tentatively called Uber Air and the company plans to eventually oversee production of 10,000 electric aircraft annually. The first air shuttles could be in service as early as 2023.

Hyundai is the latest company to join Uber to refine the technology so it would be available by 2028. Uber and Hyundai are also working in partnership with two aircraft companies, Embraer and Pipistrel Aircraft. The company expects the cost of operating a helicopter will be close to \$700 per flight hour. The electrically-powered personal air vehicle (PAV) will have the capability to carry up to four passengers on trips of up to 60 miles at speeds reaching 180 mph.

With so many vehicles projected to be zipping around the city's skies, Uber is planning to construct "skyports" where passengers can board aircraft en-route to another hub. Architecture firm Gensler is designing the flying taxi stations that will be distributed throughout Los Angeles at strategic points where passengers can easily access public transportation or shared devices like bikes and scooters.