

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

May 28, 2015

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Director

RE: SBCCOG Transportation Update –May 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

DOT Secretary Foxx Accepts Temporary Gas Tax Extension

After months of public hang-wringing, the Department of Transportation dusted off its annual press release warning that the federal Highway Trust Fund will run out of money in late July or early August unless Congress passes legislation to replenish it by the end of May.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx on April 28th acknowledged that federal lawmakers would not act to authorize a new federal gas tax by the May 31st expiration date and would need to approve the 33rd short term continuation of the current gas tax authorization, known as MAP 21. House Transportation Committee Chairman Rep. Bill Shuster thinks a year-long extension costing an additional \$10 billion is needed by the end of May to get through the end of the year in order to prevent interruption of current construction projects that typically are completed during the busy summer construction period.

A bipartisan group of House members introduced H.R. 1846, “The Bridge to a Sustainable Infrastructure Act”, on April 16th to hike the federal gas tax and index it to inflation to pay for a new transportation bill. The measure would increase the gas tax, which has been 18.4 cents per gallon since 1993, index it to inflation in January 2016, and reset it in three years unless Congress comes up with a new way to pay for federal transportation projects.

The sponsors estimated the unspecified 2016 increase would generate \$27.5 billion that can be used to pay for nearly two years' worth of transportation projects and give lawmakers time to find a new infrastructure funding source to replace the gas tax. Two weeks later, on April 28th, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said a gas-tax hike is dead on arrival in Congress. The federal government typically spends about \$50 billion per year on transportation projects, but the gas tax only brings in approximately \$34 billion annually at its current rate.

House Bill Proposes to Slash TIGER Funding in Transportation Appropriations Bill

The House Appropriations Committee released a budget for FY 2016 in April, which begins in October 2015, that proposes to drastically reduce funds for projects that promote walking and

biking. The budget proposal calls for keeping transit and highway funding about the same as this year. It also calls for reducing the federal TIGER program, which has helped fund ready-to-go transportation projects, from \$500 million to \$100 million. The bill calls for reducing the size of individual grants from a minimum of \$10 million to \$2 million, and from a maximum of \$200 million to \$15 million. The bill would also increase the required local match from 40 to 50 percent. The appropriations bill also proposes cuts to the New Starts program, which provides federal funds for major new transit projects. Under the House proposal, New Starts would receive \$200 million less in total funding, for a total of \$1.92 billion. No change would be made to funding for projects that already have federal funding agreements

Sen. Rand Paul (Ky.), a Republican presidential candidate, is teaming up with Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer (Calif.) on legislation known as the "Invest in Transportation Act of 2015" to tax up to \$2 trillion in corporate revenue currently stored in foreign banks to pay for domestic infrastructure projects. The measure would offer companies a 6.5 percent tax rate on profits they return voluntarily to the U.S., known as repatriation, to boost federal transportation funding.

National Groups Urge Congress to Fund Local Priorities

Six national associations (representing regions, counties, cities, mayors, and MPOs) called on Congress during April to direct more funding to the owners and operators of the majority of the system. They requested that funds from the State Transportation Program (STP), Transportation Alternative Program (ATP in CA), and Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) programs be sub-allocated to regions and local governments. Additionally, they requested that thousands of bridges that were removed from the National Highway System in MAP 21 be restored to eligibility.

US DOT Makes \$500 Million Available for 7th Round of TIGER Grants

US DOT has \$500 million for transportation projects to be awarded under a seventh round of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program. TIGER 2015 discretionary grants will fund capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and will be awarded on a competitive basis to projects that will have a significant impact on the nation, a region or metropolitan area.

The grant program will focus on capital projects that generate economic development and improve access to reliable, safe and affordable transportation for communities, both urban and rural. A minimum of 20 percent of funds will be for projects in rural areas. The highly competitive TIGER grant program supports innovative projects, including multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional projects, which are difficult to fund through traditional federal programs.

The FY 2015 Appropriations Act does not provide dedicated funding for the planning, preparation, or design of capital projects; however, these activities may be eligible to the extent that they are part of an overall construction project. These federal funds leverage money from private sector partners, states, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations and transit agencies. The 2014 TIGER round alone is leveraging \$600 million in federal investment to support \$1.9 billion in overall transportation investments.

STATE

Caltrans Adopts Ambitious Goals: Triple Biking, Double Walking and Transit by 2020

Caltrans released its new Strategic Management Plan on April 16th that includes revolutionary changes in priorities and performance targets that for the first time explicitly recognize the importance of biking and walking rather than limiting Caltrans' traditional focus to motorist safety. The new plan includes active transportation and Vision Zero, within its priority number one, "Safety and Health." It also sets a goal of tripling bicycle mode share and doubling walking and transit mode share by 2020—that means not just the number of trips, but the percentage of total trips in California. That broad goal also includes lowering vehicle miles traveled (15 percent by 2020) and reducing the percentage of greenhouse gases from transportation to match current and proposed state mandates.

The 2012 California Household Travel survey showed that bicycle mode share in 2012 was 1.5 percent (up from 0.8 percent in 2000), walking trips were 16.6 percent of all trips, and transit trips were 4.4 percent. With the new policy, Caltrans is committed to supporting an increase of bike trips to 4.5 percent of all trips in California over the next five years, increasing walk trips to 33 percent and transit to almost 9 percent of all trips. Of course that also means lowering the share of car trips by an equal amount, dropping from about 3/4 of all trips to about half.

State Bill Would Prohibit Bridge Tolls for Bikes and Pedestrians

AB 40, a bill in the California Assembly that would prohibit state-owned bridges from charging tolls for pedestrians and bicycle riders, passed the Assembly Transportation Committee with a vote of 31 to 2. A previous similar bill was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

Road Repair Bill Would Raise California Gas Tax, Vehicle Fees

A new bi-partisan legislative proposal (SB 16), would create the "Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account" in California that would be funded with three new revenue sources: 1) A 10-cent gas tax increase; 2) a \$35 vehicle registration fee increase – with a \$100 surcharge for zero-emission vehicles; and, 3) a 35 percent vehicle license fee increase, phased in over five years.

Together, the three proposals would raise at least \$3.5 billion a year for road and highway maintenance. The plan allocates the first 5% of funds to "aspiring counties" that pass a new sales tax measure for transportation. The remainder is split equally to fund the State Highway System through the SHOPP and Local Streets and Roads through city-county subventions.

Any deal will require Republican votes and Governor Jerry Brown's signature. Brown called for new infrastructure spending in his January State of the State address.

AB 1360 Would Allow Transportation Network Companies To Offer Ridesharing

California's Passenger Charter-Party Carriers' Act generally requires charges for transportation offered or afforded by a charter-party carrier of passengers to be computed and assessed on a vehicle mileage or time-of-use basis, rather than on an individual-fare basis, with a few exceptions. The law prevents transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft from arranging carpools.

A new bill, AB 1360 would exempt from the current charter-party carrier state law a rideshare program operated by a transportation network company that: 1) prearranges a ride among multiple passengers who share the ride in whole or in part, provided that the vehicle seats no

more than 7- passengers, not including the driver; 2) is operated by a participating driver, as defined; 3) is not used to provide public transit services or carry passengers over a fixed route; 4) is not used to provide pupil transportation services or public paratransit services; and 5) the fare for each passenger is less than the fare that would be charged to a single passenger traveling alone.

Assembly Committee Approves AB 779 to Delay Level-Of-Service Phase-Out

The Assembly Natural Resources Committee on April 28th voted 7-0 to approve A. B. 779 which would delay implementation of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) guidelines that would replace Level of Service (LOS) with Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) as the basis for evaluating environmental impacts under CEQA.

Currently, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) bases environmental impacts of traffic on LOS, which results in favoring car capacity over actual environmental benefits. A switch to measuring VMT changes the goal from "moving cars" to "reducing car trip lengths". In 2013, California passed S.B. 743 which required the OPR to develop a replacement for LOS that more closely reflects state climate change goals.

OPR's guidelines would excuse most true infill projects from any transportation analysis under CEQA because projects within a half mile of a major transit stop, as defined in the bill, would be exempt. Infill projects do much better than sprawl projects with the proposed guidelines because sprawl projects induce so much VMT.

OPR is scheduled to submit a second draft of its guidelines in the summer, which will be followed by a 45-day public comment period. There could be more drafts, and more public comment periods, if changes are substantial. A.B. 779 goes next to the Assembly Appropriations Committee and from there to the floor of the Assembly.

State Mandatory Bicycle Helmet Bill For All Turned Into A Safety Study

State Senator Carol Liu's SB192 was introduced earlier this year and sought to expand the law making helmets, currently mandatory for cyclists under 18, required for everyone. But a number of bike groups such as the California Bicycle Coalition and the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition say an adult helmet mandate could discourage people from getting on a bike in the first place and urged the legislature to focus on increased funding for better bikeway infrastructure and improved bicycle safety education.

Revised bill language is now asking the state's Office of Traffic Study to work with the California Highway Patrol to investigate helmet use and report back in early 2017. The author hopes that the agencies can examine current bicycle helmet use and accident reports to determine what percentage of adults do not wear a helmet when they ride a bike, and also determine how many deaths and injuries would have been prevented if those riders had been required to wear helmets.

REGIONAL

Metro Proposes Replacing Rail Line Names with Numbers

With a bow to New York City, LA Metro is considering renaming all fixed-guideway lines using a simplified letter-based naming convention. Like in New York, colors would be used as a secondary means of differentiating between lines.

The new naming scheme would affect all Metro rail lines as well the Orange and Silver bus rapid transit lines. Under the new scheme, the following changes have been proposed:

- The Blue Line and Pasadena/Foothill branch of the Gold line would become the A Line
- The Red Line would become the B Line
- The Purple Line would become the C Line
- The branch of the Green Line terminating in Redondo Beach would become the D Line
- The Expo Line and Eastside branch of the Gold Line would become the E Line
- The Orange Line busway would become the G Line
- The Silver Line busway would become the J Line
- The under-construction Crenshaw Line would become the K Line
- The branch of the Green Line terminating at the under-construction Aviation/Century station would become the L Line

The presentation references a phased rollout of the project, beginning with the Blue, Green and Expo Lines. A second phase would expand the letter-based system to the Orange, Red, Purple and Silver Lines, followed by a final phase which would affect all services routed through the Regional Connector and the Crenshaw/LAX Line.

Waze Partners with Los Angeles City; Neighborhoods React To Preserve Quiet Streets

Waze-guided vehicles are coming through a neighborhood near you. The Waze software application routes drivers to their destination using algorithms that take into account real-time data collected from other users, historical data, and the quality of drive. Created in Israel and sold to Google in June 2013, the app has been so effective in changing traffic patterns in LA that neighborhoods have started complaining about the increased volume of traffic using their once-sleepy public neighborhood streets.

On April 21st, Los Angeles City Mayor Eric Garcetti announced a data-sharing partnership with Waze. Several government departments will give Waze information about construction, film shoots, road closures and other events affecting L.A.'s streets. The city will also provide data on nearby hit-and-run incidents, which could motivate users to report what they saw to police. In return, the city will receive real-time data about traffic patterns and roadway conditions, including reports submitted by users. The data exchange could eventually be linked to the city's 311 hotline system, which allows residents to submit requests for services like graffiti removal or street light repairs.

April 28th, L. A. City Councilman Paul Krekorian introduced a motion that would make the app take steps to "reduce the impact of cut-through traffic that results from use of Waze and similar traffic apps that divert drivers from major avenues onto small residential streets that aren't designed to accommodate them, resulting in far greater congestion and traffic for residential neighborhoods."

As part of the announcement, Waze said it had 1.3 million users each month in the Los Angeles metro area. The US Census Bureau's most recent estimates for the population of the Los Angeles-Long Beach metro area is 13.1 million people. This implies there are at *least* 100 Waze users for every 1,000 people in Los Angeles. As a portent of the future, Tel Aviv has more than 3 times the LA adoption ratio.

Battle lines are being drawn. Critics of the motion wondered why the app should limit the efficiency of public street infrastructure by preventing utilization of unused streets during periods

of high traffic congestion. The critics claim these public streets were never secret and people should be able to use them if they like. Concerns expressed by Police Chief Beck several months ago about the security of posting police officer locations at crime locations and traffic incidents on Waze seem to have been resolved.

Researchers Take AIM at Traffic Lights In Age of Autonomous Vehicles

As part of the internet of things, a traffic light technology revolution is being conjured in academic institutions. If the promise of connected and self-driving cars which allow data about individual journeys, routes and vehicles to be centrally and remotely monitored and controlled is to be realized, traffic signal systems will need to transform.

At the artificial intelligence laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin, engineers are exploring autonomous intersection management (AIM) with a futuristic hypothetical question: Once computers are in full control of our cars, do we even need traffic lights at intersections? Rather than stop at red lights, self-driving cars would remove the human foot from the equation and schedule a slot through an intersection in real-time, speeding up or slowing down to ensure they're in the right place at the right time – and not smashing into another car. Once the driving is not a human task and people grow to trust the software controllers, people will get used to the idea of cars going through the intersections because the efficiency gains from AIM will be so high that they'll offset the perceived risk.

The researchers believe AIM will not only remove time waiting at lights, but will cut fuel usage and emissions as well by smoothing acceleration. Perhaps most important is the ability to reduce fatal traffic accidents, since 1/3 of them occur at intersections.

But this futuristic vision is not just around the corner. As cars become more connected – whether it's through satellite navigation or simply the smartphones in our pockets – better data in means we get better data out on the road. And data will also come from air quality sensor data and camera images. When merged together in the internet of things' cloud processing platform, AIM might turn traffic lights green quicker or send a text message to a car, or alert satellite navigation systems in the car to autonomously change the routing.

And although traffic data makes it possible to see the movement of traffic in real time, and traffic lights themselves are operated remotely, don't expect the signals to turn the lights green as you pull up since the signal system is balancing traffic in all directions. That's why the initial schemes for self-driving vehicles may be focused on "platooning", with a lead car in control of a train or group of followers. Under this approach signals couldn't be allowed to change midway through a platoon, or it would leave stragglers behind. Platoons would need to transmit their status to the intersection and the signal change would need to be advanced or delayed to treat the platoon as a single long vehicle. Either the platoon could signal that it's cleared the intersection or there would need to be infrastructure sensors to check the whole platoon is through."

Other real-world challenges to be conquered include system security and how to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and slow speed vehicles. Hence, the first priority will be to improve traffic safety.

L. A. City Unveils Simplified Street Parking Sign: Pictures Worth 1,000 Words

On April 3rd, the city unveiled new "easy-to-read" parking signs that are actually easy to read. The "grid-style" signs rely on color coding and graphic representations rather than words—a perfect fit for the age of emoticons. So long as drivers know the time and the day of the week,

and can see colors, determine that green is good and red is bad, it's hard to see them getting confused by the new designs:

Before:



After:



Could A Transportation-Themed World's Fair Be Coming to Los Angeles?

A group of venture capitalists, architects, engineers, and marketing gurus, under the name Los Angeles World's Fair (LAWF), are brewing plans for a two-year fair showing off the technology and culture of the 21st Century under the Theme: "The Connected City." They are seeking \$100,000 on the Indiegogo crowdsourcing website to support economic and architectural feasibility.

LAWF—which has the support of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors and METRO Los Angeles, as well as corporate backing from the engineering firm Psomas—wants to build the first "decentralized" world's fair, with venues scattered across all 88 cities in Los Angeles County. The region's growing transit network (the latest expansions of which are slated for a 2023 completion) would serve as the fair's infrastructural and thematic underpinning.

The two-year fair would show off technology and culture of the future—including a Hyperloop, "3D printed gourmet delicacies," and self-driving cars.

In case you are wondering if World's Fairs still exist, they're now called Expos, they happen every five years, and can actually be quite successful. Milan is hosting one in May. However, the U.S. is no longer a member nation of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), the global regulatory body of expos and fairs. Due to the failure of the New Orleans fair and the one prior, and anti-internationalist sentiment in '90s-era Congress, the U.S. stopped paying dues to the BIE in 2001.