Attachment B

MONTHLY SBCCOG TRANSPORTATION REPORT

COVERING APRIL 2023

Edited by Steve Lantz

SBCCOG Transportation Director

FEDERAL

FTA Announces $14 Billion In Federal Funding To Support Public Transit

As part of its annual support to transit systems nationwide, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on April 13th published details about the $14 billion in federal formula funding that helps communities maintain and operate the trains, buses, and ferries that provide more than half a million transit trips every month. Formula funding makes up more than two-thirds of the annual $21 billion transit program. Approximately $630 million will go to the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim area.

The funding helps states and transit agencies improve public transportation by meeting local goals such as upgrading stations and tracks, transitioning to next-generation buses, planning and designing new transit corridors, and providing specialized service for seniors and riders with disabilities.

FHWA Expands Its Online Training Catalogue

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Local Aid Support (LAS) team continues to expand its catalog of online training resources designed for local government and Tribal transportation professionals. To access all training, visit https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/clas/online_training.aspx.

The courses are available at no cost but registration is required for regular access to the courses and for generating certificates upon completion. The online transportation training is available anytime and can be taken at the student's pace. Various topics include Asphalt Materials and Paving Mixtures, Geosynthetic Reinforce Soil – Integrated Bridge System, Gravel Road Series, Project Bundling, and the new Motor Grader Operator training modules.

US DOT Seeks "Safe Streets & Roads for All" Funding Applications

The USDOT's Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) Fiscal Year 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity is now open for applications. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and tribal initiatives through grants designed to prevent deaths and serious injuries on the nation's roadways. The deadline for applications is July 10, 2023, by 5pm (EDT). For more information, please visit the SS4A website.

US DOT Is Accepting Applications For Its PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program

The US DOT PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program aims to fund projects that improve the resilience of surface transportation systems, such as highways, public transportation, ports, and intercity passenger rail, in response to the climate crisis. By funding projects that improve resilience to natural hazards and climate change impacts, the PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program aims to reduce damage and disruption to the transportation system and improve the safety of the traveling public.

The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Administration (USDOT), has a funding allocation of up to $848 million for the fiscal years 2022 and 2023 available for Planning Grants, Resilience Improvement Grants, Community Resilience and Evacuation Route Grants, and At-Risk Coastal Infrastructure Grants. Applications are due August 18, 2023. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is available here.

Two-Thirds Of Car Sales Could Be Electric By 2032 Under New US EPA Proposal

Two-thirds of new car sales could be electric by 2032 under a new proposal released by the Biden administration. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) projects that 67 percent of new light-duty passenger cars sold in the U.S. could be electric that year under its new proposed clean car regulations. For medium-duty vehicles, the share of news sales that are electric could be 46 percent.

Instead of mandating the level of electric vehicle sales. EPA is proposing to require that automakers limit the greenhouse gas emissions coming from their fleets – which could be done by making more of their vehicles electric or by upgrading the gasoline-powered engines in their cars.

The agency is also proposing to end the sale of diesel medium-duty and heavy-duty vehicles by 2042 and target other pollutants coming from vehicles that form soot and smog and can be harmful to peoples' health. On March 31st, the White House cleared the way for the Environmental Protection Agency to allow California to impose strict zero-emissions requirements on heavy-duty vehicles sold in the state. The state needed approval from the White House because the standards exceed Environmental Protection Agency requirements.

STATE

California Transit Association (CTA) Proposes Restoration Of TIRCP Funding

The CTA released a $5.15 billion, five-year budget proposal on April 25th to address transit's "fiscal cliff" that has occurred as ridership hasn't recovered from the pandemic. The proposal would restore the $2 billion of TIRCP funding that was cut in the Governor's January budget (which created a $4 billion regional allocation over the next two years) with an option to use up to 25% toward transit operations. The proposal also includes $1.35 billion additional funds from the diesel fuel tax, $2.5 billion from unallocated cap-and-trade revenue; $300 million from transit development projects; and $1 billion from undesignated future.

The California Senate budget proposal is not as comprehensive. But it does restore TIRCP funds and includes a statement that indicates funds could be flexed as needed to address operational shortfalls, which would be paired with reform and accountability measures. As of the end of April, the Assembly had not released its proposal and the Governor could revisit the issue in his May Budget Revision.

California Hits ZEV Sales Goal Two Years Early

In 2012, former Gov. Jerry Brown set a goal of 1.5 million zero-emissions vehicle sales by 2025. By April 21st over 1.5 million zero-emissions vehicles have been sold in California. So far this year, 21.2% of all new cars sold in California have been zero emissions, according to the California Energy Commission which has provided $2 billion in consumer rebates issued through its Clean Vehicle Rebate Project.

Assembly Bill Would Improve Homeless Programs On Transit Properties

AB 1377 would require that applicants for funding through the state Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program include in their annual reports data and a narrative summary of steps that the applicant has taken to improve the delivery of housing and services to people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, on transit properties that operate in their jurisdiction.

AB 1377 would provide the additional accountability measures needed to ensure that local agencies closely coordinate with transit operators to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in transit public spaces. Government Relations staff will testify at the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee on the bill at its first hearing on Wednesday, April 12.

REGION

After Pushback, Metro Weighs Hub For Unhoused People Outside Long Beach

LA Metro wants to create a "Hub of Hope" providing food, showers and services for unhoused people who ride the train. Although Metro has been seeking a site at end of the A Blue Line in downtown Long Beach, the City of Long Beach is opposed to a hub within its city limits.

Metro first proposed an alternative to the downtown Long Beach site at the Wardlow or Willow A Line station three miles north of downtown. It was met with opposition from residents who worried about the same issues downtown business owners worried about. The latest proposed location, at the Metro A Line (Blue) Del Amo station, is just outside Long Beach's city border in Compton which is about seven miles from the current end of the A line.

Culver City Scales Down Innovative Mobility Pilot

On April 24th the Culver City Council voted to eliminate the protected bike lanes to add more car lanes on Washington and Culver Boulevards at the conclusion of the MOVE Culver City project. The stretch of changes on Culver and Washington boulevards made them the first streets in L.A. County to feature a designated bus lane for 2.6 miles and a bike lane for 1.4 miles.

A report released in April revealed that since the pilot was fully implemented in 2022, bus ridership went up by 38% and there was an increase in cycling activity by 57%. Even micro mobility — the use of electric scooters or e-bikes — increased by 68%. However, the data showed that not everyone was on board: 58% of those polled said they opposed the protected lane due to traffic, parking, and business impacts.

Changes Approved For Inglewood's People Mover

In the face of community pushback, the City of Inglewood has moved the maintenance and vehicle storage facility for the Inglewood Transit Connector (ITC) people mover from a Vons supermarket site on Manchester Avenue to its northern terminus Market Street Station at the K Line (Crenshaw) station. This would allow for the Vons, as well as other attached retail spaces, to remain in place.

In addition to the Market Street station, plans also call for stops at Manchester Avenue and Hardy Avenue. Should the project secure Federal funding, construction could begin in 2024, with the system operating by the time the Summer Olympic Games return to Los Angeles in 2028.

Officials Celebrate "Quicker, Safer" Intersection At PCH, Hawthorne Boulevard

Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn and Torrance officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 6th to celebrate completion of an intersection improvement project at Pacific Coast Highway and Hawthorne Boulevard. The $20 million project now provides three through lanes, dual left turn lanes and a dedicated right-turn lane in all four directions.

FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL TRENDS / INNOVATION

Our Streets Are Getting Smarter – Here's What Roads Could Look Like In The Future
By 2050, the number of cars on the road is expected to total three billion. And with most of the world's population expected to live in urban cities by then, there will be a growing demand for smart streets. Our roads will have to innovate, much like the cars themselves. Here are four possible ways smart street technology will evolve.

Artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure
Real-time technology can help inform new urban safety measures and efficiencies – and much of that data is coming from our roads. AI-powered sensors in cities capture everything from vehicle speed and traffic volume to the make and model of cars on the road. Sensors can analyze and optimize traffic flow, reduce congestion, and minimize accidents, all in real-time**.**

Electric charging roads
By 2050, roughly half of cars on the road will be electric. The transition from gas to electric vehicles will mean an increased demand for charging infrastructure. Tech companies at the forefront of wireless transfer charging are developing power transfer pads made from recycled materials to integrate into the road's surface. These electrified street lanes will theoretically allow electric vehicles to charge as they drive. Implementing this technology may help allay concerns about long-distance trips that deter drivers from switching to electric vehicles. In addition to charging as they drive, the surface pressure of cars could also serve as a source of renewable energy.

Pavement "sunscreen"
Smart street technology of the future will also have to battle the heat island effects of climate change, to which urban areas are especially vulnerable. Phoenix is piloting a cool pavement program. The process involves spraying a water-based asphalt treatment on top of existing pavement. It works by acting as a protective 'sunscreen' for the road while its reflective properties reflect rather than retains heat. The city claims that the project has seen a 10.5-to-12-degree Fahrenheit decrease in pavement surface temperature since its implementation. Skeptics argue that the air would become hotter and reflected light could potentially be too bright for drivers and contribute to traffic accidents.

Jigsaw puzzle roads
Modular or "jigsaw" roads are plastic blocks that are more durable and sustainable than regular pavement and are designed to be quickly disassembled and reassembled like puzzle pieces. The mobile nature of jigsaw roads will allow cities to adapt quickly to traffic patterns, construction needs, or emergencies. They are already being used as bike and foot paths in Belgium and the Netherlands. Whereas traditional pavement guides rainwater to a sewer, PlasticRoad's recycled plastic blocks have hollow channels inside to capture, filter, and store water or transmit it directly into the soil. These channels can also hold pipes, telephone cables, and electric wiring.

Highway Construction Costs Have Risen 50% In Two Years; $21 Billion In Lost Buying Power

The Federal Highway Administration in April released its updated index of highway construction costs for the July-September 2022 quarter, and it shows that construction costs have increased 50 percent since December 2020 with the resultant loss of $21.5 billion in buying power since the end of 2020.
The National Highway Construction Cost Index (NHCCI) started in the third quarter of 2003, based at an even 1.0000 and the third quarter 2022 index was 2.7862 which means that highway construction cost almost 2.8 times as much in summer-fall 2023 as it did 20 years prior.

FHWA estimates that approximately one-third of the increase was in the price of asphalt, which is mostly based on the price of crude oil. The next biggest component of the increase was grading and excavation, which is heavily dependent on the price of the diesel fuel burned by the earthmoving equipment. But one-sixth of the 9 percent cost increase was in the bridge category, which is mostly steel, the cost of which is mostly independent of oil prices.

Even if petroleum gets cheaper, at some point the added money from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will test the capacity of steel mills, cement kilns, and gravel pits to produce materials in sufficient quantities to meet increased demand without more price increases, to say nothing of demands of labor for increased wages in a tight labor market.)

Only 2% Of E-Scooter Drivers Obey Traffic Rules; Injuries On Sidewalk Worse Than On Street

According to evaluations by the European Board of Trustees for Road Safety (KFV), 98% of e-scooter drivers do not blink or give a hand signal, 17% wear a helmet, 15% drive on the sidewalk illegally, and 12% even drive through the traffic light when it was red.

In the US, nearly 3 out of 5 e-scooter riders were injured riding on the sidewalk — and about a third of these riders got those injuries in places where sidewalk riding is prohibited. Only about 1 out of 5 was injured riding in the bike lane, multiuse trail or other off-road location.

On a more positive note, only about a quarter of the injured scooter riders were commuting to work. The rest were running errands or riding for fun or a social trip. Past research has shown that most e-scooter riders prefer the bike lane overall, one was rarely available in the instances in which riders were injured in the road or sidewalk. Moreover, riding alongside pedestrians may not be sustainable as e-scooter usage continues to expand.