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President Signs SAFETEA-LU Technical Corrections Bill into Law

Earlier today, President Bush signed into law H.R. 1195, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy For Users (SAFETEA-LU) Technical Corrections bill. This much-anticipated piece of legislation, which has taken several years to clear both houses, makes a series of technical and substantive changes to the 2005 SAFETEA-LU surface transportation law. It includes a provision for the Exposition and Foothill Light Rail projects that directs the Transportation Secretary to give consideration to elements of the first phase of both projects advanced with 100 percent non-Federal funds when considering the federal New Starts share. The bill also authorizes the Metro Rapid System Gap Closure Project under the Small Starts program.

Los Angeles Times Series will Probe Southern California Traffic

The Los Angeles Times this Sunday may publish the start of a four-part series of articles on traffic congestion in a five county area of Southern California. At least three reporters have been working on this series for well over a year. They looked at everything from goods movement to land use decisions, changing travel patterns, deterioration of freeways, public transit ridership and funding, among other issues, trying to figure out why traffic is so bad and what does the future hold.

The series will likely fault the state for “chronically under-funding highways and public transit,” but it also will note that the modal split for work trips in LA County has stayed about seven percent for more than 20 years despite billions spent on expanding bus

and rail lines. Staff members and I explained to reporters that we and the municipal operators, Metrolink, paratransit and smaller carriers, have been able to absorb a population gain of more than one million people during this period.

A lot more people are using public transit today than the mid-1980s (about 500 million in 1985 compared to about 600 million today). Even if the mode split is just seven percent, it still makes the difference between the arterial streets and freeways working. The Texas Transportation Institute has independently validated that the array of traffic solutions we, along with Caltrans and the municipal operators have implemented, have held the line on traffic – we are number one in terms of operational savings to squeeze more capacity out of congested streets and freeways and number three in the nation in public transit savings – we just need to do a lot more.

I also told a reporter that funding for highways and transit has not kept pace and is a far cry from the major investment in infrastructure made by our parents. In addition, I noted that most Angelenos still lack access to transit. However, we are in a new era of soaring gas prices that will likely not go down much because of limited oil supplies and the emerging economies of Russia, India and China. This has prompted gains in ridership and renewed interest in public transit, vanpools, carpools, bicycling, telecommuting and living and working in transit corridors. Local funding is needed to fully implement the Long Range Transportation Plan and give the public greater rideshare options than they enjoy today.

Media Inquiry into Metro Rail vs. High Gas Costs

Today, a reporter from a new television show on KWHY-TV Channel 22 interviewed Media Relations staff regarding the use of the subway as one of the best options to travel in the Greater Los Angeles area to commute to work, school, and entertainment due to the high cost of gasoline. The Universal City and Hollywood/Highland Metro Rail stations will be featured. A story is scheduled to run tonight.

Media Inquiry into Eastside Construction Impacts

Today, a producer from Telemundo Channel 52 requested a statement from us regarding tonight's street closure at First and Soto Streets in Boyle Heights for the next four weeks. Business owners complained that the street closure is affecting their business; however, the street closure won't begin until tonight. Community Relations staff emphasized that we have worked very closely with the business owners trying to mitigate as much as possible to reduce the impact during the next four weeks of construction. It was mentioned that other mitigation efforts such as marketing, signs and postcards were made to help advertise that the businesses will be open during construction. The work is needed to build the roof of the underground station and finalize improvements such as street restoration, curb and

gutter, sidewalk reconstruction and street lighting. A story is scheduled to run tonight.

Next Week's Procurement Postings

IFB for Repair of Cylinder Heads

We will release an Invitation for Bids (IFB) next week to procure services to repair and resurface Detroit series 50G cylinder heads. The procurement process blackout period is expected to run from June 9 through August 28, 2008.

The cylinder head resurfacing is required to support the maintenance and repair/overhaul program on our buses. The contract to be awarded will be for a two-year period.

Any inquiries concerning this procurement action during the blackout period must be directed to and may only be answered by Juelene Close, contract administrator, at (213) 922-1066.

RFP for Elevator/Escalator Maintenance & Repair Services

We will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) next week to procure Elevator/Escalator Maintenance and Repair Services. The procurement process blackout period is expected to run from June 9 through July 9, 2008.

A contractor is required to provide and perform complete preventative maintenance services, adjustments, replacements, repairs, inspection and testing of Montgomery KONE elevators and Mitsubishi Escalators currently installed at the Gateway Headquarters building. Preventative maintenance and repair services are needed for the safe and reliable operation of the elevators and escalators.

Any inquiries concerning this procurement action during the blackout period must be directed to and may only be answered by either Kenneth Takahashi, contract administrator, at (213) 922-1047, or, if he is not available, Veronica Hargrove, contract administrator, at (213) 922-2718.

Upcoming CEO Meetings & Events

Next week, I will be joining Director Failing in conducting an industry review meeting with potential design builders regarding the I-405 Carpool Project. In addition, I will be participating in the Mobility 21 Steering Committee Meeting and in the Regionwide CEO Meeting. Finally, I will be speaking at the Los Angeles County Division League of California Cities General Membership Dinner Meeting.

Of Note

In 1984, Urban Mass Transportation Administration (now FTA) ranked Metro Rail as "the most cost effective new rail system in the nation".

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