



Metro

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CEO Roger Snoble

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House Panel Examines Congestion Pricing and Transit Issues

The House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee convened a hearing today to review the Administration's FY 2009 budget request for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Focusing on the fact that revenues in the Highway Trust Fund have been depleted, Subcommittee Chairman John Olver (D-MA) expressed his belief that the Bush Administration has deliberately tried to "chip away" at the federal role in transportation infrastructure investment. He said while the Administration has chosen to do nothing about increasing the federal gas tax, the balance in the Highway Trust Fund, which funds both highway and transit programs, has declined from \$7-\$8 billion in the year 2000, to almost nothing today.

Much of the hearing focused on the US Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) efforts to increase private sector investment to help fund transportation capital projects. There was a robust discussion about the use of toll roads and congestion pricing to reduce congestion as well as raise revenues. In addition, numerous members inquired about the USDOT's Urban Partnership Agreement program in which more than \$850 million in discretionary grants was awarded to five cities (Miami, Seattle, New York, Minneapolis and San Francisco) to support their efforts to reduce congestion through increased tolling and congestion pricing. Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Joe Knollenberg (R-MI) asked the USDOT for evidence about the success of the Urban Partnership Program and pricing programs in general.

Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Los Angeles) applauded Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Jim Simpson for working cooperatively with us, specifically in helping to secure the \$491 million Full Funding Grant Agreement for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Light Rail Extension. She also asked a series

of questions about the FTA's New Starts program and how it might be improved to better consider the economic development benefits of transit projects.

LRTP Community Meetings Underway

Last week, staff conducted the first two community meetings on the 2008 Draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in West Hollywood and in the Board room here at Gateway Headquarters. Approximately 75-80 people attended each meeting and about 25 people provided verbal comments at each.

In West Hollywood, City Councilmembers Jeff Prang, Abbe Land and John Heilman were in attendance and spoke about the need to increase overall funding for transportation, especially transit; the need to expand Metro Rail to the Westside; and the need to ensure that West Hollywood is a part of that rail network. A representative from Assemblymember Feuer's (D-LA) office was also in attendance.

Many of the public comments also dealt with support for expanding rail to the Westside; the currently ongoing Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study; and recommendations they would like to see come out of that study. Other views expressed indicated that buses in the area are stuck in increasingly high levels of congestion; the need for good urban planning and good connections to rail; strategies for changing travel behavior; opposition to reduction in bus owl service; expanded bike lanes; interest in bus lanes; and interest in projects to improve north/south connections to the San Fernando Valley as well as between the Expo Light Rail Transit and an eventual Westside subway extension.

At the meeting in the Gateway Board room, comments generally indicated that we are doing the right thing and headed in the right direction, but that we need to do more work to provide congestion relief to people in the county. Topics covered included: extending more rail lines along Metro's Rail System; adding more transit oriented development; developing and implementing environmentally friendly technology; decreasing automobile dependency; improving transit times on public transit; and increasing overall funding for public transportation through new sources of funding.

Other views expressed ideas of using existing right-of-ways along the county's flood control channels for public transit; running longer hours on the Metro Rail system closer to 24/7; improved connectivity on the system; strategies for changing travel behavior; opposition to reduction in bus owl service; and developing and expanding bike lanes.

The next Draft 2008 LRTP Community Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2008 at 6:30 pm at the Carson Community Center, Room 107, in the City of Carson. Four other meetings are scheduled around the County

Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension Project Construction Update

Today, I toured the six-mile alignment of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension (MGL EE) and stopped at the 1st/Boyle construction site to observe the work related to the concrete deck removal and street restoration that began late last week. The deck removal (photos attached) and street restoration is being performed in four phases at the four locations where cut-and-cover construction is being completed at the underground stations and portals. Phase 1 is scheduled to be completed by the middle of next week. Construction on the MGL EE is approximately 80 percent complete. Work on all eight stations is well underway with tracks and electrical systems being installed in the tunnels and along the at-grade guideway. The Project has over 2.8 million safe work hours and is on-time and within budget.

Wellness Wednesdays Launches at Carson Division 18

The United Transportation Union (UTU) and our Operations Management team have collaborated over the past three months to develop a wellness program to improve the health and well being of our employees.

The joint UTU-Metro Wellness Program, appropriately entitled Wellness Wednesdays, was launched today at Division 18. The event was attended by James Williams, UTU Chairman, Carolyn Flowers, Chief Operations Officer, Dana Coffey, South Bay General Manager, Cynthia Karpman, Carson Division Transportation Manager, BW Robertson and Victor Andrews, Carson Division's Wellness Ambassadors and Cheryl Brown, Wellness Administrator for Carson Division. Major health care providers such as Kaiser, Blue Cross and HealthNet were available to take health screenings for the Operators. Also in attendance was a Breast Cancer Prevention organization.

Blood pressure readings and measurement of Body Fat and Body Mass were provided. The Operators participated in warm-up exercises and an aerobics class session. Healthy snacks were distributed to those who participated in a Health Risk Assessment survey. Operators also worked out as a part of the regular weekday aerobics class.

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Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
1 Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, California 90012-2952
Phone: 213-922-6888
Fax: 213-922-7447
