



Metro

Daily Brief

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CEO Roger Snoble

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House Panel Examines Transportation Challenges of Metropolitan Areas

Earlier today, the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit convened the first in a series of hearings to explore emerging themes in transportation policy and review issues pertaining to next year's reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. Today's hearing focused on the transportation challenges facing metropolitan areas, and invited witnesses included representatives of metropolitan planning organizations, state and local governments and think tanks.

Robert Puentes of the Brookings Institution asserted that the current federal transportation program is adrift and out of touch with the needs of metropolitan areas. He specifically cited the federal government's lack of overarching goals or vision on goods movement policy. Puentes called for systemic change in the design of transportation policies and recommended, among other things, that transportation dollars flow directly to metropolitan areas as a means of empowering urban areas.

In his testimony, King County (Washington) Executive Ron Sims provided an overview of Seattle's variable tolling and congestion pricing project. Seattle was one of five urban partners selected last year by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Sims addressed social equity concerns over congestion pricing and made the case that tolling is less burdensome to low income families than sales, property, gas or car taxes. He indicated that Seattle's congestion pricing project has played a major role in providing greater commuter choices and also stated that low income bus riders benefit greatly from faster bus trips. Sims also referenced a study on race and equity issues pertaining to tolling which concluded that low income individuals in Seattle were among the strongest supporters of congestion pricing. The primary reason for this outcome, according to Sims, is that tolling revenues are utilized to finance transit

investments. When tolling is coupled with expansion of transit services, public acceptance of tolling grows significantly.

In response to Sims' testimony, Representative Grace Napolitano (D-Norwalk) commented that tolling is not likely to work in Los Angeles County because of Angelenos' love affair with cars. Additionally, Subcommittee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) reiterated his longstanding concern over the viability of tolling and congestion pricing and questioned the fairness of such a system. Sims responded by saying that tolling is a bold approach and that metropolitan regions across the country are becoming increasingly receptive to the idea.

Exposition Light Rail Line Open House

The Exposition Construction Authority is holding a Project Status Update [Open House](#) for the West End Corridor of the Expo Light Rail Line. The event is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, April 29, 2008, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Culver City Senior Center, 4095 Overland Avenue, Culver City, California, 90230.

Board members who wish to attend, please contact my office so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

Go Metro Campaign Continues to Win Awards

The Communications department has garnered four Compass Awards in an annual competition sponsored by the Transportation Marketing & Communications Association. The overall "Go Metro" campaign was honored for the second year in a row, while two of its key elements -- a series of television commercials featuring testimonials from riders and the "Gas Prices Leaving You Speechless?" advertisements -- were recognized in the TV and Outdoor categories, respectively. The sleek Metro Art Guide also was honored in the Communications Collateral category. The actual award presentations will take place in June.

Media Inquiry into Art Program

As a follow up to its article regarding our art program earlier this week, La Opinion interviewed Creative Services staff again on Tuesday regarding our free docent guided tours and expects to do a follow up piece. During yesterday's interview, the reporter requested images to be used in the piece, which is expected to run within the next few days.

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