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Unprecedented Public Interest in Improving Mobility in LA County

Media Relations has identified in a [media release](#) that there is unprecedented public interest in figuring out how to handle our current and future mobility needs. More than 40,000 people have gone to our web site and several thousand have attended community meetings to learn more about our draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and share their vision for a traffic-free future for Los Angeles County.

While demanding traffic relief, many have told us that they are willing to pay, by means of a new half cent sales tax, for an array of projects from filling potholes and widening streets to highway improvements and constructing new busways and rail lines. The Board will be considering, at its June 26, 2008 meeting, a request to the LA County Board of Supervisors to put measure on the November ballot for a new half cent sales tax for transportation projects and operations. This request will coincide with the Board's consideration of the draft LRTP, which prioritizes dozens of new highway, street and public transit projects in virtually every corner of Los Angeles County.

If the LRTP is fully implemented, coupled with changes in commuting behavior where more people opt for public transit, carpools and vanpools, or take more trips during off peak hours, traffic congestion would be greatly reduced

Art Docent Council Recognized by California Transportation Foundation

Our Communications staff was recently informed by the California Transportation Foundation that our Art Docent Council is a top finalist for a Tranny Award, which recognizes excellence in transportation. Our Art Docent Council tours introduce riders to the city's transportation resources and develop an appreciation for the

contribution of art to the public transit environment in Los Angeles. These popular tours are “dedicated to the promotion and recognition of excellence in California Transportation.” Not only are these tours extremely well received and popular, but over 80% of the participants are first time transit users—so the tours provide an inviting and positive introduction to the Los Angeles transit system.

Media Inquiry into Gas Prices Steering Commuter to Public Transit

This morning, a film crew from Reuters New Service, an international news organization, interviewed Media Relations staff about how soaring gas prices are steering more commuters to public transit in the car capital of the world. With crowded subway trains in the background, staff noted that Metro Rail ridership is up year over year (4.48 percent in April), and bus ridership is bouncing back after lagging following last summer’s fare changes. The subway and Metro Gold Line, in particular, are experiencing higher ridership. The reporter and producer were told to encourage visitors to check out metro.net to learn more about rideshare options. Staff also noted there is greater public interest in our Communications Department’s successful vanpool and carpool programs, and more people are opting to live and work in new developments being built around Metro Rail stations. Bicycling and Bike to Work Day were also promoted.

Media Inquiry Regarding the Governor’s Revised State Budget

Today, the Los Angeles Times and Daily News inquired about reaction to the Governor’s Revised State budget and possible cuts in transportation funding levels. I explained to the reporters that we are concerned about the prospects of state transportation funding cuts and will continue to work with the Governor’s office as well as the Legislature this spring to protect local transportation projects and programs. The reporters were told that it is still too early to tell what the exact impacts might be to Los Angeles County and any cuts made would not only impact us but also the municipal operators as well. Stories are expected to run tomorrow on the Governor’s Revised State Budget.

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