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Update: CNG Tax Credit

Last week, I shared that the House and Senate had adopted legislation that included language to extend the alternative fuel tax credit for an additional year. Unfortunately, this provision was struck by conferees just before the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (H.R. 2419) was adopted. Apparently, all energy tax provisions previously incorporated into the farm bill, including the alternative fuels tax credit, were stripped at the 11th hour due to difficulties in identifying sufficient budget offsets. We remain committed to working to extend the CNG tax credit before it expires on September 30, 2009.

Mobility 21 Meeting in the San Fernando Valley

The Mobility 21 Coalition held its Los Angeles County Coalition Meeting in Woodland Hills today. I joined L.A. County Supervisor and Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky, L.A. City Council President Pro Tempore Wendy Greuel, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce President Gary Toebben and other public and private officials in discussing how to bring transportation dollars to the San Fernando Valley. A panel discussion explored how regional leaders can attract funding for vital infrastructure projects and how critical land use and transportation decisions can improve mobility. Several news outlets, including the Los Angeles Times, Daily News, Metro Investment Report and San Fernando Valley Business Journal covered the meetings.

Executive Seminar on Transportation Innovations – Managing Travel Demand in European Cities

Yesterday, Caltrans District 7 and the Los Angeles Federal Transit Administration/Federal Highway Administration hosted an Executive Seminar on Transportation Innovations at our headquarters. The seminar was attended by senior management staff from a cross-section of key agencies across Southern California. The seminar focused on new perspectives, innovative strategies, and integrated approaches from Europe and the United States for managing travel demand to mitigate congestion, such as congestion pricing, active traffic management, public transportation improvements, and advanced traveler information. The participants emphasized the importance of an integrated approach for managing traffic congestion and the need to increase public awareness and coordination among agencies.

Downtown Regional Connector Project

Yesterday, the Central Area Planning Team briefed the Little Tokyo Community Council on the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Study. Planning staff is conducting an Alternatives Analysis (AA) study for the project, which will be finalized this summer. A project report will be released for public review in late summer and public meetings will be held at that time.

The Alternatives Analysis report, which includes 33 alternatives for connecting transit service between 7th Street/Metro Center Station and the Eastside Gold Line at Alameda Street, is expected to be presented to the Board in September. The analysis includes light rail alternatives, which would enable the Metro Blue, Metro Gold Line, Eastside Extension, and Exposition Light Rail lines to operate through downtown Los Angeles with transfer-free service between these light rail lines.

Based on stakeholder input and technical analysis, staff has identified two conceptual light rail alternatives that appear most promising. One is partially at-grade (street level) and the other is a full underground alternative except for an at-grade crossing at Alameda Street. Both alternatives follow the vertical profile of Flower Street between 7th/Metro Center Station and the vicinity of Disney Concert Hall and Second Street between Disney Hall and Los Angeles Street. The at-grade alternative features stations on Main and Los Angeles Streets near City Hall. Both alignments feature possible grade separations of Alameda Street through traffic lanes where the alignments cross Alameda. The Downtown News is expected to run a story on the study's progress next Monday.

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