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Briefing on Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative for Congressional Staff

Today, Congressional aides for members of Los Angeles County’s Congressional Delegation attended a briefing on the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative we have submitted to the United States Department of Transportation in partnership with Caltrans. The briefing began with introductory remarks provided by Director John Fasana, Caltrans Director Doug Failing and myself. The formal presentation on our congestion initiative was delivered by Chief Planning Officer Carol Inge, Project Manager Ashad Hamideh and Deputy District Director for Operations for Caltrans District 7 Frank Quon. The meeting included a number of questions from attendees on all aspects of our congestion initiative. Congressional aides for the following public officials were present at today’s briefing: U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, U.S. Representatives Gary Miller (R-CA), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Hilda Solis (D-CA) and Henry Waxman (D-CA).

AB 2321 (Feuer) Sales Tax Authority – Approved by the State Assembly

Today, the State Assembly passed AB 2321 on a 46-20 vote. This measure modifies our authority to place a half-cent sales tax on the ballot. The measure proceeded largely on a party-line vote, however, some Republican members did vote for the measure.

Sustainability Summit Recap

Yesterday, over 100 participants from Los Angeles County cities and agencies attended our Sustainability Summit, which provided an understanding of the region's need to move towards a sustainable future; raised awareness of the techniques and tools that can be used in complying with recently adopted statutes, rules, and regulations relating to climate change management; and provided an opportunity for jurisdictions to learn from each other on how to initiate their own sustainability programs, improve existing programs, or add to on-going activities related to air quality, energy, management systems, construction and design, and other sustainability related elements.

The results of a Countywide Survey, which identifies and measures sustainability awareness and practices in the region, were also presented during the Summit. Survey elements included questions on water conservation & management, energy & resource conservation, waste management, sustainable fleets, green buildings, smart growth policies, and social equity programs/ordinances. The results of the survey are intended to be used as a baseline to the region's sustainability progress, information for public outreach, and an outline of the region's best management practices. It was also evident from the survey the need to increase partnership opportunities among agencies and special jurisdictions and the private sector, develop regional economies of scale, and expand existing sustainability programs.

I provided welcoming remarks at the Summit and discussed our current efforts and our role in leading us towards a sustainable region without compromising our core function of regional mobility. Chair Pam O'Connor framed the need for a coordinated regional effort and reiterated this message in her closing remarks. Overall, the Summit was a great success and the first step in coordinating a sustainable future for our region.

FTA New Starts Projects Quarterly Review Meeting

Yesterday, the FTA New Starts Projects Quarterly Review Meeting began with opening statements from Ed Carranza, FTA Deputy Regional Administrator, Region IX. He noted our participation in the recent New Starts/Small Starts Workshop in Phoenix. He also thanked us for hosting the NTI – ITS class.

I presented the recent accomplishments of the Eastside Project and stated that it is "the Best Federally Funded Project" in the Country and recognized Dennis Mori and the Eastside Team for reaching 3 million person-hours without a lost time incident.

Staff provided an update on:

- The agency's financial status – overall operating costs are below budget and fare revenues are ahead of the budget.
- The 2550 Rail Vehicle Program – five vehicles are currently in testing on the Metro Gold Line and two cars will be accepted in the near future.
- Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension – continues to be on-time and within budget; construction is 80% complete without a lost time incident; Phases 1 and 2 have been completed; and Phase 3 activities have been postponed for one month.

The next FTA New Start Projects Quarterly Review Meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 27, 2008.

Public Private Partnership Workshop

Today, we held a pre-response workshop for the Public Private Partnership Request for Information that is due July 14th. The purpose of the workshop is to exchange information with potential responders on our draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), existing fixed guideway system and highway and transit projects in the unfunded element of the draft LRTP. The workshop was well attended by nearly 50 representatives of the construction, finance and consulting industry. Potential responders were able to obtain clarification necessary to put together their responses. We will report to the Board in September on the responses received and next steps.

“Dump the Pump” Day Media Event set for June 19, 2008

On Thursday, June 19, 2008, we, along with Metrolink, will urge commuters and others to end their relationship with their gas guzzling cars and switch to public transit. During the event, which will take place in the Amtrak Parking Lot E, agencies will demonstrate how to “Dump Guz for Us” by towing away a large gas guzzling vehicle to make way for a driver's new love, a Metro Bus; we will also showcase train service from the press event area. The event, part of the Third Annual National “Dump the Pump” Campaign, will raise awareness of the financial and environmental benefits of public transportation and other ridesharing options.

Board Members who wish to attend can contact my office for more information so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

Expo Light Rail Project – Removal of Hazardous Soil

Starting June 3, 2008, hazardous soil in the West End corridor along the Expo Light Rail alignment will be removed, as detailed in the attached [construction notice](#):

When: Tuesday, June 3, 2008 through Friday, June 6, 2008, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Where: The Exposition right-of-way along National Boulevard, between Jefferson Boulevard and Washington Boulevard in Culver City.

What: Identified soil will be loaded into covered trucks to be hauled away.

Construction Notice for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension

Media Relations issued a [news release](#) today noting that construction workers will begin removing concrete decks and street renovation work on First and Soto streets in Boyle Heights beginning Friday, June 6th above one of the light rail underground stations at the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension. Work will last approximately four consecutive weeks and will be done on a 24-hour basis to complete the job as soon as possible. The full street closure on First Street, between Breed and Matthews Streets 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.

The release notes that the community should expect detours on First Street. Eastbound traffic will be detoured to southbound Chicago Street, to eastbound Fourth Street, to northbound Evergreen Avenue and then back to First Street. Westbound traffic on First Street will be detoured to northbound Evergreen Avenue to westbound Cesar Chavez, to southbound Chicago Street, to westbound First Street.

On Soto Street, the northbound and southbound traffic lanes will be open during the deck removal with exception of the weekend of Friday, June 13th throughout Monday, June 16th. The closure will be in effect beginning Friday at 6 p.m. until Monday 6 a.m. The rest of the weekends there will be one lane open in each direction along Soto Street. Access to residences and pedestrians will be maintained at all times. Businesses will be open during construction; however, vehicle access will not be permitted during the construction.

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