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Transportation Spending Bill Clears Senate Panel

Today, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approved its FY2009 Transportation Appropriations bill. I am glad to report that the draft measure recommends funding for three of our projects. In the Small Starts category, the Wilshire Boulevard Bus Only Lane Project was funded at $10,952,330 and the Metro Rapid System Gap Closure Project is slated to receive $332,620. Both of these amounts match the Administration's budget request. Meanwhile, $74.6 million in New Starts funds was allocated for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension. This amount falls $7 million short of the Administration's $81.6 million request, and it appears that other New Starts projects were underfunded by the Senate as well. Senators Feinstein and Boxer have already pledged to work closely with us to ensure that the final conference agreement incorporates the Administration's full request for Eastside. It should also be noted that the House has yet to mark up its transportation spending bill, and behind the scenes efforts are underway to ensure that Eastside is fully funded when the House Appropriations Committee considers its measure.

Additionally, the Senate transportation spending bill addresses the looming shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund by transferring $8 billion from the general fund to the trust fund. The Office of Management and Budget, along with the Congressional Budget Office, have projected that the trust fund will face a $4 billion deficit in FY 2009, which would require significant reductions in transportation outlays unless congressional action is taken this year to address the funding crisis. We will keep you informed of new developments as they arise.

Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Council

Yesterday, I spoke at the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Council Meeting regarding transportation opportunities for Beverly Hills and the region. I explained the need for various mobility solutions and funding mechanisms to create greater mobility options, which included an overview of the half-cent sales tax ballot measure that could potentially generate billions of much needed transportation dollars for the county and other new funding initiatives, such as congestion pricing and public-private partnerships. I also provided an overview of the next steps for a future Westside Subway; discussed the Exposition LRT Phase 1 and 2; the Alternatives Analysis Study that is underway for the Westside Extension Transit Corridor; and talked about what is required for any new project to become a reality. .

Also present in the meeting were Director O'Connor, Beverly Hills Mayor Barry Brucker and City Council Member Frank Fenton, and Denny Zane from Move LA. Reporters from the Los Angeles Times and some Beverly Hills community papers were in the audience.

LA City Council Approves Funding an EIR for the Olympic West Pico East Initiative

Yesterday, the Los Angeles City Council approved a Councilmember Weiss, Rosendahl and Greuel motion transferring $500,000 in funds to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Olympic West Pico East Initiative. This proposed project would implement lane striping and signal timing changes to favor travel westbound on Olympic Blvd. and eastbound on Pico Blvd. According to the motion, analysis would include the entire corridor from Figueroa Street in downtown Los Angeles to Lincoln Blvd. in Santa Monica. The estimated time to complete the EIR is about one year.

Friday's Office Of Homeland Security Event Canceled

Tomorrow's press event regarding the release of Prop 1B funding for transit security has been canceled by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security (OHS). No new date for the event has been set but OHS is looking at possibly holding the event sometime next week. I will keep you apprised when a new date is selected.

Expo Light Rail Line Project Status Update Open House

On Wednesday, July 16, 2008, an Open House will be held to provide a Project

Status Update for the West End Corridor of the Expo Light Rail Line (see attached invitation). During the Open House, presentations will be made on Phase 1 Project Overview and a Construction Status Update. The update includes information on the construction of the Ballona Creek and La Cienega bridges, Expo right-of-way excavation and traffic advisories.

Open House Details:

When: Wednesday, July 16, 2008, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Where: Culver City Senior Center, 4095 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230

(On-site free parking is available)

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

Metro Rail System Service Alerts

Metro Green Line

Starting Sunday, July 13 through Thursday, July 17 trains will run every 18 minutes due to system maintenance (additional information regarding system changes is provided in the attached notification).

Metro Red/Purple Line

On Friday, July 11, 2008 after 9:00 p.m., Purple Line passengers traveling to or from Wilshire/Western or Wilshire/Normandie need to transfer at Wilshire/Vermont due to system maintenance: All trains will use the lower level. Shuttle trains will leave Wilshire/Western two minutes later than regular schedule.

Than starting Sunday through Thursday, July 13-17 at 9:00 p.m., all Purple Line passengers traveling to or from Wilshire/Western or Wilshire/Normandie need to transfer at Wilshire/Vermont due to system maintenance. At Wilshire/Vermont, Purple Line trains will use the lower level, Red Line trains to Union Station will be on the upper level and Red Line trains to North Hollywood will be on the lower level. Shuttle trains will leave Wilshire/Western two minutes later than regular schedule. Red Line trains will leave four minutes later than regular schedule.

Metro Blue Line

Starting Friday night through Sunday, July 11-13, repairs are scheduled at the Metro Blue Line 124th Street and 130th Street grade crossings. On Friday and Saturday

from 9:00 p.m. to the close of service and on Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., one track will be out of service between Imperial and Artesia Stations.

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