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*Photos by Luis Inzunza*

Board Chair and Glendale Mayor Ara Najarian leads news conference Monday to launch Bike Week LA activities. Most of the major media and community news outlets attended to cover increasing interest and participation in bicycle commuting.

## Free-wheeling News Conference ramps up start of Bike Week LA

- Share the Road: Metro, LAPD encourage participation, safety
- Go to [www.metro.net/biketowork](http://www.metro.net/biketowork) for routes, pit stop locations, and how-to advice. Be in on the count: Register online or at a pit stop near you.



### Triumph on Wheels

Downtown Bike to Work Ride event, organized by the Metro Bike Club, was a demonstration of how commuters can access major work centers in downtown Los Angeles by bicycling and/or using Metro Rail. Organizer Dave Sotero, at left, posts the thrill of it all on The Source at metro.net:

[Get on Your Bikes and Ride: 2nd Annual Downtown L.A. Ride Rolls through Downtown](#)

(May 18, 2010) Bicycling commuters took center stage on Monday to begin Bike Week LA as transit officials led the way with a successful press conference attended by most of the major media outlets in the region.



Board Chair Ara Najarian and LAPD Chief Charlie Beck reminds everyone to 'share the road' and keep cyclists safe.



Board Chair Ara Najarian and Director Rita Robinson and CEO Art Leahy joined Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck, Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC) members and others to highlight bike safety.

Narajarian set the tone with advocacy in support of cycling as transit and a strong plea for participation and safety on the road.

"Along with walking, bicycling is the cleanest form of transportation," he said. "If more people bicycle, even if they let MTA carry their bicycles for part of the ride, there'd be fewer cars on the road and then maybe Los Angeles could shed its dubious distinction of having the smoggiest skies in the nation."

LAPD Chief Charlie Beck made a plea for safety: "Share the road. Bicyclists are an important part of the commuting public but they are the most vulnerable. Give them the extra room - motorists have to pay attention to make it safe for cyclists," he said.

Najarian said Metro is working on a variety of fronts to encourage cycling, which is gaining popularity as the public worries more and more about global warming. "Commuting by bike instead of a car can reduce your individual carbon footprint by at least 20 pounds a day, and for a whole year, that's 2 tons," he

said.

Metro has funded 100 bikeway projects and other facilities and programs in Los Angeles County to encourage bicycling, Najarian noted. Seeking to increase the cycling form of transportation, he called on the commuting public to double or triple the amount of commuting trips made by cyclists, which currently amount to one percent of total trips countywide.



The right to bike: Joining forces for Bike Week LA are, from left, LAPD officer on bike detail at Central Traffic, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck, LACBC Outreach Coordinator Aurisha Smolarski, Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge, Good Samaritan Hospital CEO Andy Leeka, Board Chair Ara Najarian, LADOT General Manager Rita Robinson, LACBC Executive Director Jennifer Klausner and CEO Art Leahy.

On Bike to Work Day, Metro is co-hosting more than 60 bike pit stops with local organizations, inviting bicyclists to stop by for refreshments and free giveaways from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. only. For exact locations, go to [www.metro.net/biketowork](http://www.metro.net/biketowork).

On Thursday, the official bike to work day, bicyclists can ride Metro buses and many other municipal bus lines, for free if their bicycle and helmet are along for the ride.

Cyclists also can bring their bikes on Metro Rail trains and ride free. Since Metro Rail trains may be full during weekday rush hours, Metro reserves the right to ask bicyclists to wait for the next train from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. unless trains are moving in a direction opposite the peak hour flow of commuter traffic on the Metro Blue, Green and Gold Lines.

On the Metro Red and Purple Line subway trains, bikes are not allowed in either direction during rush hours from Union Station to Wilshire/Vermont only. No other restrictions apply.

"For thousands of cyclists, every week is bike week, said LA Bicycle Coalition Executive Director Jennifer Kosner. "But this is the week when we invite the entire L.A. community to be a part of this program. More people on bikes means better public health and less congestion."





Coordinator Paula Carvajal, Community Relations Planning Manager, engages cyclists with a pit stop preview and hands out Metro's new updated Bike Map that covers routes throughout Los Angeles County.

"It seems there a lot more bicyclists participating and we expect probably 70 to 100 cyclists per pit stop on Thursday," said coordinator Paula Carvajal, Community Relations Planning Manager. There's also a significant increase in sponsors, who have upped participation from 44 goody-laden booths last year to a record 60 booths placed at strategic locations throughout Los Angeles County.

Go to [www.metro.net/biketowork](http://www.metro.net/biketowork) for details on the various events. Metro will be offering a chance to win several prizes, including a two-night stay for two at the Red Mountain Resort & Spa in St. George, Utah, a folding bike from REI, and more prizes, to those who pledge to bike to work on Bike to Work Day Thursday, May 20.

*--from Gayle Anderson*