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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

L.A. County Leaders Unite to Battle Region's Traffic Congestion at Fourth Annual Mobility 21 Transportation Summit

- *Mayor Villaraigosa calls for more funding, options, to address transportation challenges*

Long Beach – Transportation, business and community leaders from Los Angeles County wrapped up the Fourth Annual Mobility 21 Transportation Summit held Nov. 14 at the Long Beach Convention Center by highlighting the need for more funding and innovative ideas to overcome the region's crushing traffic congestion.

Sponsored by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Automobile Club of Southern California, *Mobility 21: LA County Moving Together* brings together elected officials, transportation providers, business and the community to develop solutions to the region's traffic challenges.

"Los Angeles is the gridlock capitol of the world," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who also chairs the Metro Board. "Sacramento and Washington have a vested interest in helping us improve our highways, rail lines, airports and public transportation because mobility is the linchpin of the economy, and our economy powers California and the nation.

"But, we also need to help ourselves by finding creative local financing, working together as a region to secure financing, and we must stress to our legislators and Congress, the Governor and the President, that Los Angeles is critical to the nation's economy and that they must invest more in transportation."

Over the past year, members of the Mobility 21 Coalition have traveled extensively to Sacramento and Washington D.C. to advocate for securing additional state and federal dollars for transportation projects in Los Angeles County.

At the federal level, Mobility 21 was instrumental in helping to secure an estimated \$4.5 billion in funding for highway and transit programs and projects. This will allow the area to move forward with projects including carpool lanes, traffic upgrades, rail line extensions, and other highway

and street improvements. However, there still remains a significant gap between what Los Angeles taxpayers contribute to the state and federal governments and what the county gets back in transportation funding resources.

“With 43 percent of imports entering the U.S. through the Los Angeles area, our roads are literally driving the nation’s economy,” said Rusty Hammer, president and CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. “But for every tax dollar we send to Washington, less than 92 cents comes back to us to invest in our transportation infrastructure. That just doesn’t add up. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we get our fair share of transportation dollars. That’s why the Chamber helped create Mobility 21 – we are committed to building consensus and securing funds for our transportation priorities.”

At the state level, members of the Mobility 21 lobbying coalition this year helped to preserve Proposition 42 transportation funds from being used to offset the state debt, but it is anticipated that the legislature will consider using the funds again next year to balance the budget.

“We know that major challenges are still ahead on the mobility front,” said Metro CEO Roger Snoble, “and that we will continue to compete for state and federal funding. But, as demonstrated by the successes of the Mobility 21 coalition, we need to maintain a unified effort if we are to reach our goal of eliminating traffic congestion.”

Even with the preservation of state transportation funds this year, the region is already facing new challenges, according to Dan Beal, director of public policy for the Automobile Club of Southern California.

“Transportation finance received a needed boost with the state’s one-year restoration of Proposition 42 funds in this budget, but the bad news is that skyrocketing construction costs are eroding much of the benefit from Proposition 42,” said Beal. “We need to permanently protect Proposition 42 funds, and we will need creative solutions to ensure that vital transportation projects are not further delayed by these cost increases.”

The focus of the summit’s morning session included a panel discussion on creative financing options to improve congestion with panelists including Nicholas Hann, managing director, Macquarie North America Ltd., and Tim Ransdell, executive director, California Institute for Federal Policy Research.

Also included in the morning session were concurrent breakout sessions on topics including transportation and its role in the global economy, transportation and quality of life in Los Angeles, and homeland security (see list of session recommendations below).

In addition to Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa, a number of officials spoke during the afternoon including U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Maria Cino, and Leon Panetta, former chief of staff to President Clinton and a former U.S. Congress member who will give the keynote speech.

Below are the recommendations presented from each breakout session:

Transportation and the economy

Broaden the bi-partisan Mobility 21 coalition to increase awareness about economic importance of goods movement throughout the region, and critical role transportation plays in the regional economy and quality of life. Focus the coalition on the next generation of jobs and transportation infrastructure needed to grow a more sustainable, vibrant economy.

Develop new state and federal transportation legislation so public-private partnerships can build, fund and secure transportation system. Focus public-private transportation infrastructure partnerships to facilitate timely movement of goods and people to increase region's opportunities, economic competitiveness and overall quality of life.

Quality of Life

Develop a Quality of Life Index that reflects a contextual shift in the paradigm of decision-making for major transportation corridor studies and infrastructure investments. Minimum indicators would include Environment, Equity and Economy as key indicators for determining the value of proposed improvements/investments.

Develop indicators that measure the quality of participation, process and education in public outreach and education programs associated with major transportation corridor studies. Use these indicators to establish a threshold for community based support.

Homeland Security

Allocation of funds must be based on strategic needs and not fixed allocations to states

Risk assessment of transportation projects justifies use of homeland security funds for major infrastructure projects (i.e. 710 and port improvements)

Reduce red tape within Department of Homeland Security so that small companies can effectively complete for funding and/or DHS needs to incorporate strong incentives in procurement language that encourages big companies to partner with smaller enterprises.

-Mobility21-

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