

October 30, 2006
Kim Upton/Rick Jager
Metro Media Relations
213.922.2703/213.922.2707
metro.net/pressroom
mediarelations@metro.net
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mobility 21 Summit Leaders Urge Regional Focus to Improve Traffic and Air Quality

U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer was joined today by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, California State Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata and other elected officials, transportation providers and business, labor and community leaders in urging a regional focus to improve Southern California traffic and air quality.

"Since our first summit in 2002, Mobility 21 has displayed a remarkable talent for selecting the critical traffic issues facing our region and determining the best ways to address them," said Metro CEO Roger Snoble. "But to accomplish our goals, we need to increase our political influence. In addition to a significant presence in the state legislature, Southern California has 32 members of Congress -- more than 7 percent of the House of Representatives. We need to harness that power."

Nearly 500 attended the fifth annual Mobility 21 Summit at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Universal City. Mobility 21 -- an organization dedicated to solving Southern California mobility challenges -- has secured nearly \$1 billion in federal and state funds for key transportation initiatives.

"We've learned through hard experience that under-investment in transportation results in decreased traffic safety, increased pollution and decreased quality of life," said Dan Beal, public policy managing director for the Automobile Club of Southern California. "Mobility 21 has helped bring this issue to the forefront of public concern and generate action to improve the financial outlook for transportation in our region."

During morning breakout sessions, attendees discussed opportunities for Southern California through state transportation infrastructure bonds, which will appear on the November ballot. Proposition 1B, the largest of the measures, would invest almost \$20 billion in transportation infrastructure and Proposition 1A would ensure that existing state gas taxes for transportation are protected.

Also discussed were federal monies available through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Los Angeles County alone will derive \$5.2 billion in transportation formula funding and earmarks from SAFETEA-LU through fiscal year 2009.

The Summit also focused on Public Private Partnerships, which can be particularly valuable when public funds are scarce and infrastructure needs are high.

Ideas from these sessions will be incorporated into the Mobility 21 plan of action for the coming year.

During the past four years, the Mobility 21 coalition has brought to national attention significant issues, including the growing goods movement through the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and its effect on freeway traffic and air pollution; the importance of housing and business construction along transportation corridors and the need to protect Proposition 42 state gas tax funds from being raided by the legislature to balance the state budget.

"It's essential to the intelligent growth of Southern California that we look forward and plan for the region of tomorrow," said Gary Toebben, President and CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. "Our goal at Mobility 21 is not just to discuss challenges, but to create solutions. And that's what we have laid groundwork for today."

The annual Mobility 21 Summit is 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.

For more information go to www.mobility21.com.

