

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Bob Engler, Councilmember

**DATE:** October 8, 2024

**SUBJECT: Update on Mobility 21 Annual Summit, September 20, 2024**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Receive report.
2. Find that this action is not a project as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act.

**LEVINE ACT ITEM: No**

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

**No Additional Funding Requested.** Cost for City Council attendance and administrative tasks are included in the Adopted FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget.

**BACKGROUND:**

Mobility 21 was created in 2002 to bring together elected officials, transportation providers, businesses, local municipalities, labor, and community leaders to develop solutions to the transportation issues facing Los Angeles County. The coalition expanded to pursue regional solutions to the transportation challenges facing Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

The coalition's goals are to:

- Support practical solutions to Southern California's transportation challenges.
- Mobilize regional support for transportation funding and legislative priorities at the federal and State levels.

- Unite political leaders around common priorities for transportation.
- Bring together residents, civic leaders, business groups and industry experts to educate them on effective actions they could take to support regional transportation needs.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

Each year, Mobility 21 hosts an annual summit. The purpose of the summit is to bring coalition members together to hear updates from elected officials, transportation agencies, and the transportation industry on current issues and also participate in educational sessions. This year the summit was held at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim on Friday, September 20, 2024. This year's theme was "Authors of Innovation." Councilmember Bob Engler, representing the City on the Ventura County Transportation Commission, and Legislative Affairs Manager Mina Layba attended the summit.

#### **1. Opening General Session**

##### **A. Welcome Remarks:**

Delegates were welcomed by Master of Ceremonies Doug Shupe from the Auto Club of Southern California. He discussed the purpose of Mobility 21, the importance in leading transportation as a region, and reviewed the conference schedule. Transportation commissioners from each county were introduced including Councilmember Engler.

##### **Video Shorts presented by:**

- Auto Club of Southern CA - Slow Down Move Over Campaign.
- Mobility 21- 2024 Year in Review highlighting meetings and events.
- Titanium Sponsor HDR Corporation- Orange County Transportation Commission (OCTA) and HDR joint project to stabilize the eroding 7-mile OCTA LOSSAN (Los Angeles-San Diego) railroad track.

Paul Granillo, President & CEO, Inland Empire Economic Partnership, and Chair, Mobility 21: Welcomed delegates on behalf of the Board of Directors. He shared the board's work in advocacy and encouraged members to lead with challenge and change.

Tam T. Nguyen, Chair, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), public member of the commission: The Chair welcomed delegates to the county, recognized mobility staff and volunteers, and stressed how transportation promotes economic development. He announced the O.C. Streetcar is nearing completion and that the county has transitioned to an all-electric fleet.

**B. Transportation Updates by Federal and State Representatives:**

Charlene Lee Lorenzo, Senior Director, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA): Senior Director announced the region received \$1.9 billion from the bipartisan infrastructure bill (BIL). The grant awarded supported light rails, ferries, and new construction materials. The upcoming Fiscal Year 2024-25 White House budget features \$21 billion in new transportation programs. The budget will support programs to create more equity in rural and tribal areas, operating assistance funding, real property purchases, micro-mobility programs, and standardizing bus purchases.

Lori Wilson, Chair, California State Assembly Transportation Committee: The Assemblymember shared her transportation priorities for the 2025 legislative year: safe transportation egress during emergencies; funding for vulnerable populations to travel for work, health, and recreation; and stabilizing State Transportation funding. She emphasized the need to address the housing crisis by investing in transportation to support the growing population.

Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA): The Secretary shared the Governor's directive to implement artificial intelligence and has directed Caltrans to develop a blueprint to implement the technology. New regulations and guidance have been released on autonomous vehicles. They are also conducting pilot programs on driving under the influence or DUI prevention technology, tap and pay technology for mobile drivers' licenses, and converting ferries and trains to electric technology. CalSTA is still invested in a high-speed rail to connect Los Angeles to San Francisco in 3 hours.

**2. Panel on Goods Movement**

Panelists representing the Port of Los Angeles, Volvo North America, and Prologis discussed the current state of local ports and current and future innovations in goods movement. Employment and online sales have impacted goods movement. One specific change is in logistics and delivery. Deliveries are being made to warehouse centers rather than individual stores. Ports are integrating energy and electrification into their operations and infrastructure. Innovation and change are incremental and expensive. New ships will require methanol fueling stations, so there is concern about travel range with clean fuel and obstacles with permitting. Cooperation in supporting innovation in goods movement is critical.

3. Breakout Session 1- Federal and State Opportunities: Finding Innovation in Uncertainty

Panelists from the Port of Los Angeles, Ventura and Riverside Transportation Commissions, and Metrolink shared their perspectives on what is needed to support funding in transportation. The BIL helped to accelerate transportation projects, support workforce training, and build regional partnerships. BIL was successful by improving both goods movement and passenger funding. Unfortunately, for true success the panelist opined that it cannot be once-in-a-generation funding. Funding needs to be continuous. Federal funding should also offer formula funding so counties can address their needs. The 2028 Olympics requires federal investment to support the number of international visitors coming to the State.

The State anticipates a 30 percent reduction in transportation funding. There is also a need for more capital to meet the State's climate goals. Taxpayers should not be responsible for addressing greenhouse gas reduction. SB 1 cannot be the only source of transportation tax funding. Transit agencies and commissions must include residents in developing needs assessments and planning processes to demonstrate how transit funding is used and illustrate the deficiencies in meeting projects and goals.

4. Lunch General Session

A. Video remarks and presentations:

Hon. Janice Hahn, Supervisor, County of Los Angeles, and Chair, LA Metro Supervisor: shared the number of expansions in Los Angeles County including new metro lines in the San Fernando Valley and Mid-City Corridors.

Hon. Karen Bass, Mayor, City of Los Angeles: Mayor shared her commitment to work with the region to strengthen the transportation system.

Hon. Alex Padilla, US Senator: Senator shared his participation in the Paris Olympics. The Los Angeles Olympics is a reminder of the region's responsibility to make investments to prepare for the 2028 games. Federal investments have been made to update airport infrastructure, electric charging stations, and light rail transit projects.

Joseph Tavaglione, Mobility 21: produced a memorial tribute to the former California Transit Commission board member.

**B. 2024 Mobility 21 Awards**

Lifetime Achievement Awards: Hon. Grace Napolitano, U.S. House of Representatives, and Anne Mayer, Executive Director (Retired), Riverside County Transportation Authority.

Leadership in Equity Awards: Metro's Long Beach-East LA Corridor Mobility Investment Plan Task Force that helped develop the 710 freeway.

Private Sector Leader of the Year: Jack and Laura Dangermond, Founders, Environmental Systems Research Institute.

C. Keynote Speaker: Lanny Smoot, Disney Research Fellow, Walt Disney Imagineering Research & Development. The speaker spent 47 years as a theatrical technology creator, inventor, electrical engineer, scientist, and researcher—with 25 of those years at The Walt Disney Company. The speaker shared a few of his inventions while employed at Bell Lab Industries such as fiber optics and the first movie-streaming interface. These innovations led to his recruitment to Disney Imagineering. He went on to develop multi-panel lighting effects including the lightsaber that helped modernize Disneyland theme parks and create new rides. In 2024 he was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

**5. Breakout Session 2- California VMT Metrics and Mobility Solutions**

Panelists from the California Transportation Commission, Contra Costa, and San Bernardino County Transportation Authorities, the Economic Advisor to the Orange County Business Council, and the Sustainability Advisor to Caltrans discussed the intricacies of using VMT (vehicle miles traveled) as an environmental measurement. In 2020, SB 743 required Caltrans to switch from measuring congestion based on demand to VMT to capture the environmental effects of traffic. Panelists agreed that VMT needs greater analysis of its benefits. Reduction of VMT is difficult. It fails to consider the growing population of the State and the housing crisis that is propelling sprawl and longer commutes. These longer commutes add greater wear and tear on highways. Infill development, carpool enhancement, and express bus lanes may reduce VMT, air pollution, and noise but it does not address the need for more housing by job centers. VMT does not address the labor demand model which requires a skilled workforce to commute long distances for better jobs or advancement opportunities. Panelists agree that VMT needs greater study and should include the effects of more work-from-home options and electric vehicle use.

6. Closing General Session

The closing session featured the “CEO Gameshow: Wheel of Transportation.” Executive directors of each transportation authority were broken into two teams to determine who knew more about transportation terminology, communities, and trivia.

**COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:**

Meets the following City Council goal:

B. Provide municipal government leadership which is open and responsive to residents, and is characterized by ethical behavior, stability, promoting public trust, transparency, confidence in the future, and cooperative interaction among civic leaders, residents, business representatives, and staff, while recognizing and respecting legitimate differences of opinion on critical issues facing the City.

**PREPARED BY:** Mina Layba, Legislative Affairs Manager