1. **Welcome and Self Introductions**

2. **Briefing on 10 & 110 Metro ExpressLanes**  
   *Stephanie Wiggins, Executive Officer, ExpressLanes Demo Project, Metro*

   Metro ExpressLanes is a one-year pilot program that will introduce congestion pricing by converting HOV lanes into HOT lanes. The program is designed to improve mobility, reduce congestion and increase trip reliability. Customer service begins in Summer 2012 with tolls starting in October 2012 on the I-110 and February 2013 on the I-10.

3. **Discussion Items**  
   - Fasana Amendment to AB 1446

4. **Information Items**  
   - Transportation Reauthorization

**Upcoming Events:**

- Cap & Trade Forum w/ Assemblymembers Bonilla and Hall  
  - Friday, August 24th, Cal State Dominguez Hills

**Next Meeting:**  
September TBD  
Joel Szabat, Executive Director, U.S. Maritime Administration
How new express lanes are changing our commutes

BY MARIANNE KIM

Traffic in the Southland—as well as the condition of our roads and highways—is bad and getting worse. California’s roads used to be among the nation’s best; that’s no longer the case. Our cities have some of the worst traffic congestion in the country. The Los Angeles–Long Beach–Santa Ana region has consistently ranked No. 1 in amount of time and fuel wasted in traffic, according to the Texas Transportation Institute’s Annual Urban Mobility Report.

To make matters worse, our transportation-funding system isn’t keeping up with increased driving—due in part to the slowly improving economy—or with the work that is needed on our decades-old highways. Neither the nation nor most states invest enough money to build, improve, and maintain our roads and public transit systems. Fuel taxes, the mainstay of transportation finance since the 1920s, no longer bring in enough money, mostly because they haven’t been raised since the mid-1990s. State and local governments increasingly fill in the gap with money from sales taxes and bonds, but these aren’t complete solutions.

Express toll lanes are one approach to providing more money for transportation, as well as a new option for drivers to manage traffic. They already exist in parts of the Southland and more such projects are being planned. Here’s a snapshot of how this type of tolling—where the rules can change from place to place—is likely to impact your commute in the near future.
Some Like It Hot

Express lanes, also known as high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, are typically one or more lanes of a freeway where solo drivers who want to drive in specially designated, less-congested lanes are charged a toll via an electronic FasTrak transponder. Carpoolers can usually use these lanes for free or at a reduced rate.

Where You’ve Seen Them: In Orange County, for 10 miles along State Route 91, from the SR 55 junction to the Riverside County line, in San Diego County, for 20 miles along Interstate 15, between SR 78 in Escondido and SR 163.

How They Work: Solo drivers with a FasTrak account can pay a toll to use the faster-moving lanes (there will be no toll booths). Carpoolers, vanpools, and bus riders can use the lanes for free or at a reduced cost. The money collected from tolls usually pays for construction and operation of the lanes (and sometimes transit services on them) and improvements on regular lanes. Even those who don’t use express lanes indirectly benefit from them because they take some cars off the regular lanes. Carpoolers who now use the I-110 and I-10 carpool lanes in Los Angeles County will soon need to purchase a transponder, even if they never plan to incur toll charges.

Enforcement: Transportation agencies and the CHP currently don’t have the technology to electronically distinguish between solo drivers and carpoolers, leaving it up to drivers to correctly use the transponders. For example, carpoolers in San Diego must remove their transponders to ride for free, and L.A. carpoolers must leave the device in place but flip a switch to avoid the tolls.

Tolls: The primary goal of express lanes is to keep traffic moving. To accomplish this, varying toll rates are charged based on congestion levels or time of day—higher rates during rush hour, lower when there’s light traffic. For the 91 Express Lanes in Orange County, a one-way toll ranges from $1.30 to $9.75, depending on the time of day and day of the week. Cars with three or more people can travel in the lanes for free or at a reduced rate. For the I-15 Express Lanes in San Diego County, toll rates are based on the per-mile rate at the time a car enters the lane and the total distance it travels.

Penalties: Toll-road penalties start at $25 but vary by county. Solo drivers who claim to be carpoolers may also get hit with a minimum carpool lane fine of $370.

Results: 90 percent of the 91 Express Lanes users polled say they’re happy with the toll lanes; in San Diego, the average rush-hour commute from Escondido to Miramar in the nonexpress lanes has decreased by five minutes because of them.

Los Angeles County

Transportation officials are converting existing carpool lanes into what will be known as the Metro Express Lanes on the I-10 San Bernardino Freeway east of downtown Los Angeles and the I-110 Harbor Freeway from downtown Los Angeles to the South Bay.

Two express lanes will be in place in each direction on I-110 by the end of 2012; lanes will open on I-10 in early 2013. Carpoolers can still ride in them for free, but they must purchase a $40 transponder ($32 for Auto Club members). Toll rates will depend on the distance driven and the congestion level. Travel along the 14 miles of I-10 Express Lanes and the 11-mile stretch of I-110 will cost between 25 cents and $1.40 per mile, depending on the level of congestion. For more information, go to metroexpresslanes.net.

Orange County

Officials are looking at ways to widen I-405 from SR 73 to the Los Angeles County line, with plans that may include express lanes to help pay for construction. This project is in the formative stages, but construction could start in three to six years. For more information, go to octa.net/i-405/ipo.aspx.

South County

Orange County officials began engineering work in 2012 on the SR 241 Tesoro Extension, which will extend the 241 Toll Road 5 miles from where it now ends at Oso Parkway to just north of Ortega Highway. The projects will provide an alternative to congested highways in South County. For more information, visit thetollroads.com/whats happening/tesoro_extension.php.

Riverside County

The SR 91 Corridor Improvement Project will extend Orange County’s express lanes into Riverside County, widening the existing SR 91 by adding two express lanes and a regular lane from the Orange County line through Corona, as well as making improvements to the I-15/SR 91 interchange. Planners expect the new lanes to open by 2017. For more information, go to sr91project.info.

The I-15 Corridor Improvement Project covers an ambitious 44 miles, widening the highway from Murrieta to Ontario. Plans are still being discussed, but the project may add two new toll express lanes and one regular lane in each direction from Ontario to Lake Elsinore. Ontario to Lake Elsinore and then continue south with a new carpool lane in each direction toward the I-15/I-215 interchange near Murrieta by 2020. For more information, go to i15project.info.
Using express lanes to address congestion and funding deficits can work, but it’s not a cure-all for our mobility problems. Transportation officials need to ensure that express lanes benefit all motorists and that toll rates remain reasonable and fair. The agencies that operate these lanes also need to simplify and standardize rules for all such facilities across the state. And efforts need to be redoubled to better maintain and improve regular travel lanes, as well as surface streets and public transit.

Charging drivers tolls to bypass congestion is still relatively uncommon in the United States. The Auto Club strongly believes that express lanes should be implemented only if they improve travel time for drivers who choose to pay, without increasing congestion for those who don’t use them. Tolling should not be imposed on existing regular lanes.

Toll revenues should be used first to pay for the cost of constructing, maintaining, and operating the new roads and lanes. Excess revenue should be used to relieve congestion along the express-lane corridor by making other road improvements, enhancing effective public transit services, and providing carpool and vanpool incentives.

HOT lane or express lane tolls can be costly, but they offer motorists a choice for a faster, more predictable commute. Tell us what you think, and find out more about express lanes and other transportation issues at AAA.com/roadahead.

Marianne Kim is an Auto Club transportation policy analyst.
Gold Line Foothill Extension funding still up in the air following Metro's Measure R vote
By Brenda Gazzar, SGVN twitter.com/bgazzar Pasadena Star-News
Posted: PasadenaStarNews.com

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority board has OK'd asking county voters to extend the Measure R half-cent sales tax for 30 years beyond its expiration date - without a strategy to fund the Gold Line Foothill Extension to Claremont.

The Metro board, in a 10-3 vote, approved the item Thursday despite a push by federal, state and city officials to include the Azusa-to-Claremont phase in the financial plan for a potential Measure R extension. The Gold Line's 11.5-mile Pasadena-to-Azusa segment is already funded and scheduled to be completed in 2015.

"We are disappointed but not surprised," said Habib Balian, CEO of the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority. "We're not the priority we were hoping to be within the Metro expenditure plan. That's unfortunate but we have to find a way" to fund that phase.

The Metro board hopes to put the Measure R issue to voters in November but the state Legislature must first approve Assembly Bill 1446. If the bill is signed by Gov. Jerry Brown, it would allow the measure's extension on the ballot.

The Azusa-to-Claremont extension still has about four more years of design, engineering and preparation before construction could start, which gives the Construction Authority time to assemble the funding from other sources if needed, Balian said.

San Gabriel Valley legislators worked hard in 2008, when the half-cent sales tax first went to voters, to define the project to Claremont, he said. Metro staff helped sell Measure R to voters at the time by specifying the "Gold Line Foothill Extension to Claremont" in their voting materials.

While there may not be funding for the Gold Line extension to Claremont before 2055 from this specific funding source, Metro intends to seek other funds for the project much earlier than that, according to David Yale, Metro's executive officer for county-wide planning and development.

Many Measure R-funded projects are "underfunded" and thus broken up into segments, he said. While the strategic plan Metro approved would accelerate those funded project phases, "what it does not do is add additional funding to project phases around the county," Yale said.

Metro is also trying to leverage the area's own local taxes to get its fair share of state and federal taxes, which could also be used to extend the Gold Line past Azusa, he said.

It's also possible that the Azusa-to-Claremont leg of the foothill extension may still benefit
from Measure R extension funds, Metro officials said.

Metro Board Member and Duarte Mayor John Fasana introduced an amendment Thursday, which the Metro board preliminarily approved, that would allow highway funds within a potential Measure R extension to be used for transit projects such as the Gold Line extension and vice versa.

The extension of Measure R would result in about $820 million in revenue to fund highway projects in the San Gabriel Valley area, he said. The amendment could potentially result in about $200 million for the Alameda Corridor East and about $600 million for the Gold Line Foothill Extension to Claremont, which would help bridge the funding gap, Fasana said.

The amendment will likely be considered for final Metro approval, which requires a two-thirds vote of the board, in late July. It would still have be approved by the voters as part of the November measure.

"For advocates of the Gold Line, which I am, it isn't what we wanted but it is superior to what we had," he said. "It brings us closer to the funding number we needed to get to Claremont."

Balian said such an amendment, if ultimately approved, could offer "a great opportunity" to fund the bulk of the $764 million still required to fund the foothill extension to Claremont.

The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments would also be expected to weigh in on the amendment.

Fasana said he voted in favor of placing a half-cent sales tax extension on the ballot - despite the lack of funding for the Foothill Extension to Claremont - because it would accelerate completing important projects in the San Gabriel Valley, he said.

The approval of a Measure R extension by the voters would accelerate extending the Gold Line from East Los Angeles to the areas of either South El Monte or Whittier by about 13 years, he said. It would also help fund the shortfall for the Alameda Corridor East rail Project, which includes 20 grade separations and will increase mobility in connection with the movement of goods from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach through the San Gabriel Valley. It also includes an extension of funding for the 710 Freeway project.

"I would have loved if it had enough funding to finish all these projects but I think it's a substantial benefit to the Valley and I support it," Fasana said.

Staff Writer Steve Scauzillo contributed to this report.

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Congress set to OK bill that would help fund L.A. transit projects

The proposed measure includes Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's 'America Fast Forward' initiative to speed expansion of the region's transit system.

By Richard Simon and Ari Bloomekatz, Los Angeles Times

7:28 PM PDT, June 28, 2012

As he seeks to build a legacy as a big-project transportation mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa on Thursday made gains at home and in Washington in his efforts to speed expansion of the Los Angeles region's transit system.

Congress is expected as early as Friday to approve a long-awaited transportation bill that includes a measure sought by Villaraigosa during at least two years of lobbying federal officials.

The bill would expand a federal loan program that could provide the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority with at least $350 million over the next two years and $3.3 billion more in the future for transit projects.

A report by House-Senate negotiators said the expanded loan program would help communities "leveraged their transportation resources and stretch federal dollars further than they have been stretched before."

During a Metro Board of Directors meeting Thursday, Villaraigosa celebrated the inclusion of his "America Fast Forward" initiative in the proposed bill.

"We went together and we knocked on those doors, we got more than 200 mayors behind America Fast Forward," he said. "When we double the size of this rail system, we're going to transform this county."

If the measure becomes law, Metro is expected to be among the first to apply to the U.S. Transportation secretary for a chunk of nearly $17 billion in loans expected to be made available nationally under an expansion of the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program.

"The staff is prepared to move with dispatch," said Raffi Hamparian, Metro director of federal affairs, predicting movement "within a matter of months."

But the loans, which Metro proposes to repay from a half-cent sales tax approved by county voters in 2008, won't be enough for the mayor to deliver on his goal of building a dozen transit lines in 10 years
instead of 30.

So on Thursday, Villaraigosa was back to lobbying, this time at the Metro board to place on the November ballot a measure to indefinitely extend the half-cent sales tax beyond its current 2039 expiration.

The board passed the measure 10 to 3, but limited the proposed extension to 30 years.

It must also be approved by the Board of Supervisors and the Legislature before it can be placed on the ballot.

If that happens and voters approve it, officials plan to borrow against those future revenues to help expedite construction of the transit projects.

The rare bipartisan congressional support for Villaraigosa's initiative — the name America Fast Forward appears in the 599-page bill — is likely to burnish the mayor's national image as he contemplates his future once his City Hall tenure ends next year.

When he first proposed expanding a federal loan program, in the midst of a determined congressional drive to reduce Washington's red ink, "everybody laughed us out of their offices," he said in 2010.

But Villaraigosa built support for his initiative by portraying it as creative financing that could serve as a national model for creating jobs and reducing traffic congestion and emissions.

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Simon reported from Washington and Bloomekatz reported from Los Angeles.

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The Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement Project

Built in 1932, the 3,500 foot long Sixth Street Viaduct connects the Boyle Heights community with the Arts District and Downtown. Over the past 80 years, the Viaduct’s concrete has cracked and deteriorated, making it vulnerable to failure in the event of a major earthquake.

The City of Los Angeles, in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), plans to replace the Sixth Street Viaduct with a modern, iconic viaduct. The new viaduct will feature a signature, cable-stayed bridge over the Los Angeles River.

Purpose of the Design Aesthetic Advisory Committee

Mayor Villaraigosa and Councilmember Huizar appointed nine community leaders and professionals to the Design Aesthetic Advisory Committee (DAAC) to provide input during the design of the new structure. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce 6th St. Viaduct Replacement Project to the DAAC, to introduce the DAAC to the community, and to solicit public input for the DAAC's consideration.

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