



South Bay Watch

Spring 2009

A quarterly bulletin to inform local leaders of subregional progress and alert them to emerging issues

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“FUNDING CITY SERVICES IN THE FUTURE – HOUSE OF CARDS?” 10TH SBCCOG ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The South Bay Cities Council of Governments continued its tradition of hosting another successful General Assembly for elected officials, city commissioners, city staff and the community. On February 27, 2009, approximately 260 people were present to hear speakers discuss “Funding City Services in the Future – House of Cards?”

The event was held at the Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center (formerly the Carson Community Center). Steve Diels, SBCCOG Chair and Redondo Beach Councilmember was the Master of Ceremonies introducing all of the day’s speakers beginning with a Welcome from Carson Mayor, Jim Dear. Expert speakers included scholars, elected officials, and government representatives. They discussed the current financial crisis and its future implications to local cities.

The timing of this year’s topic could not have come at a better time. The current financial crisis in the U.S. is likely to be judged in retrospect as the most wrenching since the end of the Second World War. Even today, many are confused about how our economy went from boom to gloom in the blink of an eye. Providing some perspective on how we got here was Dr. Demos Vardiabasis, Pepperdine University Professor of Economics, who was the Kick-off Speaker and was able to shed some light on our economic history and current state. Dr. Vardiabasis noted that the U.S. is the largest debtor in the world, with \$5 trillion in debt. We finance debt in this country by asking the Federal Reserve to print more money, and by borrowing money from foreign countries, such as China. In regards to the \$800 billion Stimulus package, he noted that the success of it will depend on consumer spending behavior.

State Senator Roderick D. Wright spoke about the California economy, the need to be more “business friendly,” and the need to rethink California’s economy in terms of principal exports. Chris McKenzie, Executive Director of the League of California Cities, emphasized that local governments need to take advantage of the economic recovery package. He urged cities to look at the League funding book which can be found @ www.cacities.org.

Next to speak on fiscal reform and what might work was Dr. Richard G. Little from the Keston Institute for Public Finance and Infrastructure Policy at USC. Dr. Little focused on infrastructure as a part of the Stimulus Package. He spoke about revitalizing and rebuilding infrastructure to update it adhere to



current times/strategies, and he advocated instituting infrastructure fees. Max Neiman from the Public Policy Institute of California added that cities are not getting funds from the State the way they used to under Proposition 13. Mr. Neiman explained that California has no credit available to absorb the housing market decline, and that we need to be producing something besides real estate. He urged cities to be creative in finding ways to generate income.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe spoke about a State deferral of \$1.4 billion to the County, and the services that impacted when the State pulls these funds. LA County will still be expected to provide the services. Supervisor Knabe reminded the attendees that Proposition 1A is supposed to protect local government revenue.

California State Controller John Chiang spoke at lunch and commented on the state’s current \$15 billion debt. He said that the worst case scenario is that the State defaults and loses access to credit. California could be downgraded to a lower credit status, which is below the investment grade. Currently, money is borrowed from special funds such as the oil spill prevention.

Congresswoman Laura Richardson emphasized that budget reform is needed – that we must stop relying on income tax. She urged local governments to read the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and try to dedicate a staff person to prepare, organize, and apply for funds.

Other key highlights came from State Senator Jenny Oropeza, Assemblymembers Bonnie Lowenthal, Ted Lieu, and Warren T. Furutani.

This free event is made possible every year by our sponsors who were recognized for their contributions, both cash and in kind throughout the day. For a list of our Sponsors, please look at the General Assembly’s Picture Collage page. (p 3)

OPERATION LAMP EXCHANGE – A WIN FOR EVERYONE!



A



B



C

A. Rosemary Vullo, volunteer at SBESC.

B. L-R, Mayor of Redondo Beach, Mike Gin and Assemblymember, Ted Lieu.

C. Steve Diels, Chair of SBCCOG Council member, City of Redondo Beach.

The 2009 South Bay Operation Lamp Exchange was a HUGE success. Southern California Edison (SCE), in partnership with the South Bay Environmental Services Center (SBESC), sponsored this energy efficiency program that allowed residential customers of SCE to exchange up to ten (10) old incandescent and halogen light fixtures for new, more efficient Energy Star-labeled lamps. The old fixtures are real energy-guzzlers compared to the newer models. Each new lamp also came with a compact fluorescent light bulb of various shapes and sizes.

Steven Diels, Redondo Beach City Council Member and Chairperson of the South Bay Cities Council of Governments, noted that “This year, a total of 8,873 lamps were exchanged which resulted in a savings of over three quarters of a million kilowatt hours (kWh). We can only assume that so many people taking advantage of this opportunity is directly related to more and more individuals developing a greater awareness of ways to save energy and the environment. We are delighted to have made such a large kWh savings possible.”

Over 900 people stopped by the SBESC table to sign up for the Gas Company’s free energy efficiency kit while attending the Operation Lamp Exchange. The EE Kit includes one low-flow showerhead and two faucet aerators. Low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators allow air to enter into the water stream, maintaining a high-pressure flow while reducing water usage. The showerheads can save up to 40% in water and energy; the bathroom faucet aerator can save up to 55% in water and energy, while the kitchen faucet aerator can save up to 32% in water and energy.

The event took place Saturday and Sunday, February 21st and 22nd in the parking lot of the South Bay Galleria. The cities within the South Bay were well represented, with over 85% of those customers exchanging lamps hailing from Carson, El Segundo, Gardena, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lomita, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates and Torrance.

Assembly Member Ted Lieu, Redondo Beach Mayor Mike Gin, Redondo Beach City Council Member Steven Diels, Rolling Hills Estates Mayor Judy Mitchell, Mayor Pro Tem John Addleman and Rolling Hills Estates City Council Member Suzy Seamans were some of the state and local dignitaries on hand to greet residents and thank them for participating in such a worthwhile energy and money saving event. Joining our elected officials were SBESC staff members and volunteers handing out information about SBESC and our programs.

Visitors to the SBESC booth were able to gather information about ways to save water, energy, money and the environment. Materials and literature were available on programs and rebates offered through SCE, Southern California Gas Company (SCG), West Basin Municipal Water District, and the Sanitation District of Los Angeles County.

The SBESC is the South Bay’s local clearinghouse for energy and water efficiency training, materials and other environmental information. SBESC provides resources and tools to assist residents, public agencies, and businesses in better understanding the potential for energy and water efficiency in their homes and businesses. SBESC is located at 15901 Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 400, Lawndale, CA 90260. The telephone number 310-371-7222. Call and find out about our volunteer program!!

MORE ABOUT CFL’S

According to the SCE website, “switching from traditional incandescent light bulbs to CFLs is an effective, accessible change every American can make right now to reduce energy use at home and prevent greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change. Lighting accounts for almost 20 percent of the average home’s electric bill.” With CFLs, there is typically a 50-65% savings in energy and they last 4 to 8 times longer, give off significantly less heat, have a reduced fire risk, and provide a quick return on investment. If every California household replaced five incandescent light bulbs with CFLs, it would reduce enough CO₂ – the greenhouse gas that causes global warming – to be the equivalent of taking more than 400,000 cars off the road!

CFLs are lighting more homes than ever before, and the EPA is encouraging Americans to use and recycle them safely. Carefully recycling CFLs prevents the release of mercury into the environment and allows for the reuse of glass, metals and other materials that make up fluorescent lights. Spent or used CFLs must be disposed of as Household Hazard Waste. There are HHW events held throughout the South Bay. Call the SBESC (310-371-7222) for up-to-date information on HHW events.

If a CFL is broken, please follow these steps:

- Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes or more
- Using rubber gloves, carefully scoop up the fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard and place in a sealed plastic bag
- Wipe the area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place all cleanup materials in a second sealed plastic bag
- If a CFL bulb breaks on a rug or carpet, remove as much material as possible without using a vacuum cleaner, scooping up the fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard
- Sticky tape, such as duct tape, can be used to pick up small pieces and powder; place used tape and fragments in plastic bag
- Dispose of plastic bags at a local hazardous waste center

10TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 27, 2009



South Bay Cities Council of Governments thanks the Sponsors of this event:

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The City of Lomita has demonstrated through recent efforts that water conservation is a top priority. Recently, the City has adopted a water conservation ordinance, plans to install a drought tolerant garden and is participating in a number of public outreach programs.

Water Conservation Ordinance

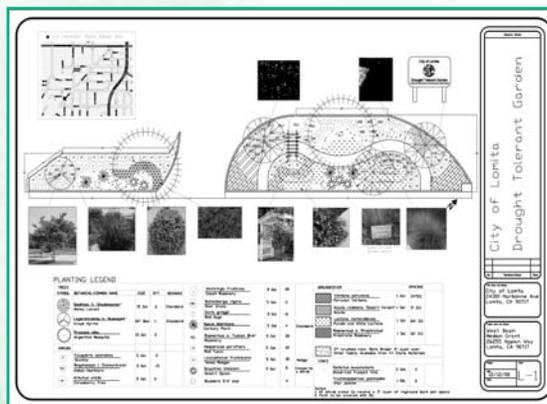
Lomita's new water conservation ordinance has two parts, the Water Conservation and Drought Management Plan and the Conservation Retrofit Program. The Water Conservation and Drought Management Plan includes permanent conservation measures such as limiting watering of lawns between the hours of 8 pm and 10 am. It also includes restrictions for certain businesses. For example, restaurants may only serve water upon request and motels must offer the option to not have linens laundered daily to guests staying more than 1 day. Three drought response levels may also be implemented, employing further water restrictions.

The Conservation Retrofit Program is one of only a few of its kind in the area. The program requires that old plumbing fixtures, such as toilets, urinals, showerheads, and faucets be replaced with new, water efficient fixtures when a property is sold. Retrofit of fixtures is also required for residential additions over 250 square feet and commercial improvements with a valuation over \$20,000. The conservation measures in both parts of the new water conservation ordinance will have a significant cumulative reduction in water use and water waste.

Lomita Drought Tolerant Garden

The installation of the Lomita Drought Tolerant Garden will be Lomita's most visible representation of its commitment to water conservation. The City was awarded a \$9,000 grant from West Basin Municipal Water District for redesigning the landscaping of a median in a manner that would reduce water usage by 50% and completely eliminate runoff from the site. The City chose the Lomita Water Pumping Station on Appian Way for the project.

This area currently contains landscaping consisting primarily of grass. The grass will be replaced with drought tolerant and native plants with the goals of conserving water, providing an educational opportunity for the community, and creating a landscape that fits in with the surrounding residential area. The project will feature a pathway through the garden with signs indicating plant species. Species within the garden are readily available and affordable at local nurseries so that residents could easily transfer ideas into their own yard. With the installation of an irrigation controller and new, efficient sprinkler heads, along with plants that require less water, the site is expected to use 90% less water than is currently being consumed and completely eliminate water runoff.



Public Outreach

Through West Basin Municipal Water District, the City is participating in two public outreach programs, a landscaping workshop and the high-efficiency toilet exchange to help raise awareness about water conservation. In addition to these activities, the City plans an extensive public outreach to

educate its residents, property owners and business owners on the provisions of the new water ordinance.

Lomita hopes that the new ordinance and the upcoming installation of the drought tolerant garden will show its residents that we have a strong commitment to water conservation. As water conservation continues to grow in importance, the City of Lomita will continue to seek creative ways to save water and help its residents and businesses do the same.

For more information, please contact Alicia Heideman at a.heideman@lomitacity.com

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES – INGLEWOOD ENJOYS ITS HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION

Renowned California artist Helen Lundeberg's mural, "The History of Transportation" that was installed in 1940 is an awe-inspiring eight-feet high and 240-feet long mural that tells the story of transportation in Southern California's Centinela Valley from Native American walkers, to settlers in wagons, to passengers boarding a propeller airplane which was the latest mode of transportation.



It resides at, Grevillea Art Park, across Manchester Boulevard from City Hall in the heart of downtown Inglewood. Lundeberg and WPA-employed workers and artisans originally completed the sixty-panel petrachrome mural under Franklin D. Roosevelt's Federal Arts Project (FAP) as part of the Works Progress Administration, which later became the Works Projects Administration (WPA). Established in May 1935 as an independent agency funded by Congress, the WPA was an ambitious endeavor designed to provide employment for the jobless. The WPA funded public buildings and

helped improve highways and other public facilities.

The History of Transportation was unique in that it was a freestanding work of art not connected to any public building. At the time it was created, The History of Transportation was the largest artwork produced under the FAP. Today, it is the largest remaining example of a petrachrome mural and one of only a few remaining examples of the thousands of WPA-

sponsored artworks that once were scattered across the nation.

The mural reminds us that Inglewood, like every city in California, has a story to tell. The public is invited to bring family members and friends to visit this landmark mural that captures an important part of California's history. For more information about the History of Transportation mural contact Skip Halloran at (310) 412-8750 or at shalloran@cityofinglewood.org

ALL WE NEED IS LUV!

SBCCOG & AQMD's "LUV" Initiative

To all the naysayers who have said helplessly that there is no way to make a difference in today's world – THINK AGAIN! The world is slowly creeping into oil starvation and irreparable environmental destruction. Can one person, one community, one state, or one country really make a difference under such difficult odds? YES WE CAN! And we can do it with a lot of LUV (Local Use Vehicles)! LUVs are 100% electric; they represent the most environmentally friendly car fuel, as they have absolutely no emissions. Electric cars are the cleanest, most efficient, and most cost-effective form of transportation around.

So it is with great pride and anticipation that the South Bay Cities Council of Governments announces its LUV Pilot Project to the South Bay Community. This joint-venture is being funded by the AQMD's Technology Advancement Office. The objective of this project is to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of using 100% electric, zero-emission, local-use vehicles for the existing short trips regularly taken in South Bay neighborhoods. Currently, many trips taken by South Bay residents and businesses are shorter than 3 miles. That's a lot of carbon emissions from cars for such small distances traveled. The LUV initiative will introduce an all-electric vehicle that is appropriate for those trips: small, 25 mph, and light weight. The goal is to establish a multi-year process that will result in widespread use of LUVs by residents and businesses throughout the South Bay.

LUV Initiative: The Nuts and Bolts

- Purchase or lease of 4 to 6 vehicles for placement in various settings for a limited period of free use. Candidates are senior housing projects, local businesses that offer delivery service (such as pizza), and residents with a short commute to work.

- Establish a Web site for all LUV drivers in the South Bay
- Monitor usage with GPS devices attached to the vehicles
- Advance the LUV initiative through the outreach and educational functions of the Environmental Services Center (SBESC).
- Apply for additional funding to expand the demonstration, provide community education, and sponsor drive events as a way to stimulate the market place.
- Use the demonstration project and its relationship with member cities to stimulate the addition of LUVs to municipal fleets.



One of the main program goals of the LUV initiative is to change our *car culture*. The way we as individuals and as communities *think* about cars. How we *use* our cars. The future is no longer on the horizon, it is NOW! Petroleum deposits are dwindling, automobile populations are continuing to soar, and cities are choking from combustion by-products. With the carbon reduction mandates quickly approaching, cities need options and strategies for reducing emissions. Replacing the 2nd or 3rd vehicle in a

household with a LUV is one such option.

Special thanks to the AQMD for giving us this opportunity to showcase the South Bay's commitment to a greener and more efficient future. If you are interested in following the development of the LUV initiative, or would like to participate in the project, please contact SBESC @ 310-371-7222 and tell them you are calling about the LUV. For more information about the SBCCOG, please visit www.southbaycities.org. For more information about the South Coast Air Quality District, please visit www.aqmd.gov.

PROPOSITION 13: 30 YEARS LATER

PROPOSITION 13 PASSED AT A TIME OF ESCALATING HOUSING VALUES AND PROPERTY TAXES.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Proposition 13, the citizens' initiative that limits the property tax rate to 1% of the assessed value of a home at the time of purchase and holds annual tax increases to no more than 2% until the property is sold. In addition, Proposition 13 requires that all state tax increases be approved by a two thirds vote of the legislature and that local special taxes be approved by a two thirds majority of voters. In June 1978, California voters overwhelmingly supported Proposition 13 (65% yes, 35% no) in a statewide primary that saw a 69% turnout.

IT FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED PROPERTY TAX RATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE SOURCES.

Proposition 13 is a constitutional amendment. When it passed, property owners benefited from an immediate reduction in their tax bills and from the promise of long term stability in their property tax increases. At the same time, it resulted in a dramatic reduction in the amount of local property tax revenue available for cities, counties, and schools. Property taxes had been one of the largest revenue sources for local and state governments – but after Proposition 13, local governments could no longer provide the same level of services using their own revenue. Today, much of their revenue comes through the state government, and they must rely less on property taxes and more on other taxes and fees. In addition, state and local governments have become more dependent on voters' support for taxes to provide services to residents.

AND IT RESULTED IN A PROFOUND SHIFT OF POWER FROM THE LEGISLATURE TO THE VOTERS.

State ballots have grown longer and more complicated since Proposition 13 passed. In this decade, a record number of 95 state propositions have already appeared on the ballot. In recent Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys, 74% of likely voters say it is a good thing that voters can make laws and change public policy by passing initiatives, 60% say that the public policy decisions made by the voters through the initiative process are probably better than those made by the governor and legislature, and 71% are satisfied with the way the initiative process is currently working in California.

SUPPORT FOR PROPOSITION 13 HAS REMAINED CONSISTENTLY HIGH.

Recent PPIC Statewide Surveys have found a solid majority of residents (59%) saying that passing Proposition 13 has been mostly a good thing for California. At the 25th anniversary in 2003, 57% of residents held this view. Today, support is high across parties, but homeowners are more likely than renters to say it has been mostly a good thing (67% to 47%).

BUT RESIDENTS ARE DIVIDED OVER SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROPOSITION 13.

Opinion is currently split over the effect that Proposition 13's property tax limitations has had on local government services (27% good effect, 28% bad effect, 29% no effect). In 1998, at the 20th anniversary, 38% of residents said good effect and 23% said bad effect. Today, residents are also divided over Proposition 13's effect on the supermajority vote requirement for local special taxes (32% good effect, 28% bad effect, 25% no

effect). Still, residents (34% favor, 59% oppose) and voter groups oppose reducing the two thirds requirement to a 55% supermajority to pass local special taxes.

For more information, please visit the Public Policy Institute of California at www.ppic.org

This article was edited from "The Facts at a Glance" on the PPIC website: www.ppic.org

CALENDAR

All meetings are open to the public

April

- 8 GIS Working Group
- 13 Steering Committee
- 14 Legislative Committee
- 15 Livable Communities
- 22 Infrastructure Working Group
- 23 Board of Directors**
- 23 Transportation Committee

May

- 11 Steering Committee
- 12 Legislative Committee
- 13 GIS Working Group
- 20 Livable Communities
- 26 Transportation Committee
- 27 Infrastructure Working Group
- 28 Board of Directors**
- 28 Green Task Force

June

- 8 Steering Committee
- 9 Legislative Committee
- 10 GIS Working Group
- 17 Livable Communities
- 24 Infrastructure Working Group
- 25 Transportation Committee
- 25 Board of Directors**
- 30 Green Task Force

For further information, contact jacki@southbaycities.org