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VOTER REGISTRATION SKYROCKETS WITHIN DOWNTOWN STREETCAR VOTING DISTRICT

Registered voters within the Downtown Streetcar Community Facilities District jump 37 percent, more than double the new registration rate for the rest of Downtown and five times more than Los Angeles County

LOS ANGELES (November 20, 2012) – The Downtown Los Angeles Streetcar project released results today of its education and voter registration efforts in anticipation of the special mail-only streetcar election for the proposed Streetcar Community Facilities District in Downtown Los Angeles.

Within the boundaries of the proposed Streetcar Community Facilities District (CFD), which extends approximately three blocks around the proposed Downtown Streetcar route, the number of registered voters increased from 7,497 on May 21, 2012 to 10,283 on November 1, 2012, a 37.2% increase. During the same time period, the number of new voters throughout the rest of Downtown, not included in the streetcar CFD, increased just 14.7 percent (148,767 to 170,660).

Vote-by-Mail ballots were mailed by the City Clerk to registered voters within the streetcar voting district on November 13, 2012. Returned ballots will be counted on December 3, 2012.

“We are pleasantly surprised that the increase in registered voters within the Streetcar area is more than two and a half times the increase for the rest of Downtown and five times that of the county at-large,” said Shiraz Tangri, of Los Angeles Streetcar Inc. “The Streetcar team has worked hard to ensure as many people as possible within the CFD are registered to vote and can participate in the special mail-only election. Now that the official ballots have been mailed out, we hope that those who are registered will vote and return their streetcar ballots as soon as possible, so our voter turnout can be just as outstanding.”

Voters are strongly encouraged to vote and return their ballots this week before the Thanksgiving holiday. At the very latest, voters should make sure their ballots are in the mail by November 28 so there is ample time for delivery to the City Clerk before December 3, when they will be counted. If a registered voter within the CFD has not received their ballot, they should call the Los Angeles City Clerk immediately at (213) 978-0444.

“This increase in voter registration shows what we have known all along – that people are very interested in the Streetcar and what it can do for Downtown,” said Councilmember José Huizar, who champions the Streetcar effort within the City of Los Angeles through his Bringing Back Broadway initiative. “Downtown L.A. is the heart of our city. The streetcar will help create a better connected, pedestrian-oriented downtown, bringing jobs, services, economic development and revitalization all around the route while helping downtown function as a complete, cohesive neighborhood.”

For a broader perspective, on May 21, 2012, Los Angeles County had 4,459,268 registered voters. As of October 22, that number increased to 4,758,437, representing just a 6.7% jump in registered voters.

Streetcar Voter Registration Skyrockets

Discussion about the streetcar has been going on for several years. Numerous workshops, meetings and events have been held to solicit public input on the proposed line and overall project, including the environmental studies.

Outreach and voter registration efforts undertaken by L.A. Streetcar in the past few months have been focused on educating Downtowners on the overall streetcar project and proposed CFD. L.A. Streetcar has conducted more than a dozen meetings and presentations with the residents of the buildings within the CFD. These included large-scale public events, such as a “Taste of Streetcar” event in September at the Cooper Design Space in the Fashion District, which drew more than 1,000 Downtowners who enjoyed samples of food and drink from dozens of Downtown establishments. The League of Women Voters assisted in helping attendees register to vote.

The October Movie Night in Grand Park served as the inaugural film screening in the newly opened 12-acre Grand Park in the heart of Downtown, directly adjacent to the proposed route of the Downtown Streetcar. More than 600 people enjoyed fall festivities while receiving streetcar information and registering to vote before a screening of “Goonies.”

“As a property owner who has been involved with this project from the beginning and who feels the streetcar will really help move Downtown into the next phase of revitalization, it’s been very rewarding to see this all come together,” said Steve Needleman, Executive Committee member of L.A. Streetcar Inc., and owner of ANJAC Fashion Buildings and the Orpheum Theatre. “I’m proud of the process and the incredible efforts to get people involved – from the support we have earned over the years from so many property owners who will pay the tax, to the response from Downtown residents who want to vote and have their voices heard.”

The vast majority of Downtown condominium units would be charged \$100 or less per year, with a median cost of \$60 annually – less than dinner out once a year. California state law dictates that when 12 or more registered voters reside within an area to be taxed as a Community Facilities District, the vote must be of registered voters.

The Los Angeles City Council voted this summer to form a CFD for the project, which calls for a special mail-in-ballot election of registered voters in Downtown to approve funding \$62.5 million of the project’s \$125-million budget through a not-to-exceed \$85 million bond, which includes the necessary construction capital, plus 2 years of capitalized interest, bond issuance costs, reserve fund, and other miscellaneous costs. The CFD will place a special tax on land owned by all Downtown private property owners, including condominium owners.

The CFD includes taxpayer protections that mandate that no tax will be levied and no bonds will be drawn until the streetcar (1) clears its environmental review process, (2) secures the remainder of construction funds from governmental/non-CFD sources, and (3) has an approved 30-year operational plan to match the expected 30-year timeline of the bond. Once drawn, the bond amounts will be fixed for the duration of the bond. They will not increase or require renewal.

A yes vote by a 2/3 supermajority of ballots returned is required to pass the CFD.

Learn more about the Downtown L.A. Streetcar project at www.streetcar.la.

TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL & BACKGROUND INFORMATION NEXT PAGE

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550 S. Hope Street, No. 2300, Los Angeles, CA 90071.
Additional Information is available at ethics.lacity.org**

TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Downtown Los Angeles Streetcar

www.streetcar.la

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Downtown L.A. Streetcar is planned as a modern, fixed-rail streetcar system to link with regional transit using Broadway, 11th, Figueroa, 7th & Hill Streets to serve the Civic Center, Broadway and the Historic Core, the Fashion District, South Park, L.A. Live and the Convention Center, the Financial District, and restaurant row through the Jewelry District. A potential design alternative, which will be achieved if funding is identified would run up onto Grand Avenue to serve the city's prized cultural institutions.

The streetcar would run 7-days a week, approximately 18-hours a day. Modern streetcars are curb running and travel at the same speed and in the same lane of traffic as other vehicles. Streetcars are carbon emissions free and fully accessible for people with disabilities, parents with strollers, or cyclists with their bikes.

TRANSIT BENEFITS

Streetcars provide an essential "last mile" solution which complements regional rail and bus service. For Downtown, the Streetcar will allow riders to come into Downtown however they wish – by rail, bus or car, and circulate around Downtown via Streetcar. This helps make regional rail more effective, by providing last mile access to the destinations within Downtown once riders arrive, and will help reduce traffic congestion by reducing the need for automobile users to park more than once to reach multiple destinations Downtown.

In the last decade, Downtown L.A. has experienced tremendous revitalization – from a quadrupled residential population and urban neighborhood growth, to major office and commercial developments, and the incredible success of entertainment and cultural destinations. However, despite the availability of the commuter train, subway, light rail, and bus service, our current system's ability to connect the dots between regional transit and Downtown destinations so that residents, workers and visitors can easily access them remains a challenge. The proposed route for the Downtown L.A. Streetcar will connect with the Metro Red Line, Purple Line, Blue Line, Expo Line, future Regional Connector, and dozens of local and regional bus lines to provide urban circulator service to dozens of the areas most popular destinations 7-days a week, 18-hours a day.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Streetcars encourage walking, rather than driving, to destinations. Pedestrian circulation is proven to drive urban revitalization, redevelopment, and economic growth around the world. A dependable streetcar system will assure investors that their investments have permanent access to public transit and a steady flow of patrons and tenants. AECOM estimates that the Downtown L.A. Streetcar will bring additive value to Downtown in the form of \$1.1 Billion in additional development, \$24.5 Million in additional annual tourism spending, \$47 Million in additional revenues to the City of Los Angeles over 25 years, and more than 9,000 jobs – above and beyond what will happen Downtown without a streetcar.

PROJECTED RIDERSHIP

Fehr & Peers estimates the Downtown L.A. Streetcar will attract more than 6,000 riders per day. The Fehr & Peers study was conducted as part of the project's FTA-required Alternatives Analysis process. This analysis means the Downtown L.A. Streetcar will outpace the opening month per mile ridership of METRO's Orange Line, Gold Line, Green Line and Blue Line, and will double or triple current ridership on four of the five best performing existing LADOT Dash lines in Downtown L.A. It would also outperform actual opening month ridership of streetcar systems in Portland, Seattle and Tacoma, as well as those projected for other top cities planning modern streetcar systems, including Charlotte, Salt Lake City, Tucson and Atlanta.

BUDGET & FUNDING

On July 31, 2012 the Los Angeles City Council voted to form a Community Facilities District (CFD) which calls for a special mail-ballot election of registered voters in Downtown to consider funding \$62.5-million of the project's \$125-million construction budget. Ballots for a not-to-exceed \$85M bond (which includes \$62.5M in streetcar capital, plus bond issuance, 2-years capitalized interest, reserve fund, etc.) Ballots were mailed to registered voters in the CFD area Nov. 13, 2012. It is a special mail-only election run by the L.A. City Clerk. Ballots will be counted Dec. 3. Support of a 2/3 supermajority of ballots returned is required to pass the CFD.

This important local funding will complement an existing \$10-million funded from the previous Community Redevelopment Agency and \$1-million in Measure R Local Return funding by the City of Los Angeles. The remainder of funding for the \$125-million project will be sought from the federal government through its Small Starts program and / or other public programs. No bonds will be drawn and no tax will be placed on any property owner until the project has cleared its environmental review, has the remainder of project funding secured through public / federal sources, and a 30-year operational plan has been finalized.

TAX METHODOLOGY & THE BOND

CFD charges would be based on a property's land area, dependent on its proximity to the proposed streetcar line. For non-residential property, it is estimated that the annual maximum special tax per 1,000 of land square footage will range from a minimum of \$4 to a maximum of \$242. For residential units, it is estimated that the majority of units will pay an annual maximum special tax of no more than \$86 in Zone 1, \$72 in Zone 2, and \$61 in Zone 3 – less than dinner out once a year, or one parking ticket which can be avoided by using the streetcar.

California state law dictates that when 12 or more registered voters reside within an area to be taxed as a Community Facilities District, the vote must be of registered voters. The CFD includes taxpayer protections which mandate that no tax will be levied and no bonds will be drawn until the streetcar (1) clears its environmental review (2) secures the remainder of construction funds from governmental / non-CFD sources and (3) has an approved 30-year operational plan to match the expected 30-year timeline of the bond. Once drawn the bond amounts will be fixed for the duration of the bond. They will not increase or require renewal.

PROGRESS & STATUS

The streetcar project has completed feasibility studies and its Alternatives Analysis study required by the Federal Transportation Authority, which resulted in the locally preferred alternative, or route, for the streetcar. The environmental review process is underway with formal scoping meetings expected in early 2013. This process will be followed by preliminary and formal engineering, design and procurement of vehicles. If the CFD is approved, it is anticipated that the project will be under construction by the end of 2014 and operating by 2016.

SUPPORT

Project supporters include AEG, owner of L.A. Live and the Staples Center, LBA Realty, IDS Real Estate, EVOQ Properties, Brookfield Properties, Williams & Dame, Jade Enterprises, ANJAC Fashion Buildings, Delson Investments, Korean Air / Wilshire Grand, Ace Hotel, Shomof Pacific Investments, the Yellin Company, Watermarke Properties, Forest City Development, Xyvest Holdings, Shy Properties, the Afshani family, the Hearst Corporation, Downtown Properties, and numerous others, whose combined support represents billions of dollars of investment in Downtown and tens of millions in expected CFD fees. The Historic Downtown Business Improvement District, Downtown L.A. Neighborhood Council and the Los Angeles Conservancy also have voiced support along with dozens of local restaurants, hotels, retail stores and service providers.

DOWNTOWN STREETCAR INFO: <streetcar.la>

"SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN DOWNTOWN CONNECTS:" <www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5C65fZLwg8>

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