



JOSE HUIZAR  
COUNCILMEMBER, 14TH DISTRICT

**\* \* \* PRESS RELEASE \* \* \***

**CONTACT:** **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Rick Coca (213) 200-9974 cell [rick.coca@lacity.org](mailto:rick.coca@lacity.org)

## **Councilmember Huizar Returns from Successful D.C. Trip Rallying Streetcar Support**

*Councilmember Huizar's tour to Washington D.C. includes high-level meetings with leading transportation authorities – Councilmember also lobbies for changes in federal homeless distribution funds*

**LOS ANGELES (March 15, 2013)** – Councilmember José Huizar returned Friday from Washington D.C. where he attended a national forum on Streetcars, and met with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff, Congressional leaders and others to rally support for federal funding for the Downtown Los Angeles Streetcar.

During his time in Washington D.C., Councilmember Huizar participated in the National Streetcar Coalition's Streetcar Summit and joined forces with the Los Angeles Chamber/Los Angeles Business Council Access Washington delegations.

"My goal on this trip was to meet face-to-face with as many leading transportation authorities as possible in order to personally relay the City of Los Angeles' solid commitment to bringing a streetcar back to Downtown Los Angeles," said Councilmember Huizar. "After this trip, I believe Washington D.C. knows that Los Angeles is fully committed to our streetcar project. Our significant local financial commitment - including secured funds for a 30-year operational plan and one-half of our construction costs - makes us one of the best candidates in the nation to receive federal funding."

Councilmember Huizar met and discussed the Downtown L.A. Streetcar directly with: FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff and high level FTA staff; Secretary of Transportation Ray Lahood; Congressmember Bill Shuster (Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure); Congressmember Tom Latham (Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing & Urban Development); Congressmember Adam Schiff (member of the House Appropriations Committee) and Congressmember Lucille Roybal-Allard (member of the House Appropriations Committee and longtime L.A. Streetcar champion).

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Huizar also met with senior staff members to Congressman Grace Napolitano (member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure), and Senator Susan Collins (ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Related Agencies.)

Councilmember Huizar attended a streetcar dinner discussion along with Congressman Earl Blumenauer of Portland (a major complete streets and bicycling advocate known as the Godfather of the streetcar movement and member of the House Committee on the Budget and the House Committee on Ways and Means); Congressman Peter DeFazio (senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and ranking member of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee), and Congressman Suzanne Bonamici.

He also met with Mark Johnston, Acting Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, to discuss Huizar's City of Los Angeles resolution asking the Federal government to update its antiquated homeless service funding formulas so that the City of Los Angeles can get its fair share of much-need dollars.

For the Streetcar, after Downtown voters supported \$62.5 million in construction funds in December and the City Council's March vote to support Huizar's motion calling for a 30-year operational plan, which amounts to an allocation of \$294 million over 30 years via Measure R, the City of Los Angeles' Downtown L.A. Streetcar project is as well-positioned as any City seeking federal streetcar dollars in the nation.

An AECOM study stated that the Downtown Streetcar will bring \$1 billion in economic development Downtown, create 9,000 jobs, and generate nearly \$25 million in annual tourism spending, all above and beyond what would occur without the streetcar.

Given the recent federal sequester, programmatic federal funding for this year and subsequent years is not solidified at the moment. Still, Councilmember Huizar and Streetcar advocates were strongly encouraged to apply for the Federal Small Starts program and work through the process of funding with the FTA.

Councilmember Huizar and the Los Angeles Streetcar Inc. (LASI) will be submitting the streetcar Small Starts Federal funding application within the next two months, and expect the process of project development to take approximately one year to 18 months.

During that time, the Downtown Los Angeles Streetcar will finalize its environmental review and proceed towards design, engineering and procurement activities. The goal will be to be ready to issue contracts to purchase vehicles and begin building the streetcar system within as short a time possible after receiving a federal grant - hopefully sometime in 2014 with the Streetcar launch in 2016.

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