



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS TO HOST FORUM SOLICITING PUBLIC INPUT ON SECURING FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDS FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

New Ideas for New Starts: Equity Considerations and Federal Transit Funding

LOS ANGELES – Emphasizing that L.A. County receives far less federal matching funds for transportation than other jurisdictions due to the Federal Transportation Agency’s (FTA) narrowly-defined measure for prioritizing federal investments, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and PolicyLink will host a community forum on **Friday, July 16** to solicit ideas for new funding criteria for urban transportation systems.

The forum, entitled “New Ideas for New Starts: Equity Considerations and Federal Transit Funding,” will take place from **9 a.m. to noon in the Muses Room** [located in the Wallis Annenberg Building at the California Science Center, 700 Exposition Park Drive, Los Angeles CA 90037.] Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Guest speakers will include:

- Congresswomen Judy Chu (tentative)
- State Senator Alan Lowenthal, Chair, California Senate Transportation and Housing Committee;
- Thomas Jenkins, P.E., Principal Consultant, InfraCounsel, LLC;
- Paul Taylor, Metro Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- Denny Zane, Executive Director, Move LA.
- Damien Goodmon, Community Activist
- Efren Martinez, Empowerment Congress
- Michelle Banks-Ordone, Project Manager, Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles

The FTA is currently reviewing its criteria for funding public rail transit projects, by considering economic development and environmental criteria, as well as cost-effectiveness in its transportation funding decisions. Billions of dollars are distributed thought the largest discretionary funding opportunities in the federal budget.

The Los Angeles region has lagged far behind other jurisdictions, due in part to the FTA's historical focus on cost-effectiveness and a lack of alternative measures for prioritizing federal investments," the Supervisor said.

When he was sworn in on December 1, 2008 to serve the residents of the Second District, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas promised to take civic engagement to a new level of activism by expanding the boundaries of participatory democracy in order to transform and empower the District.

The Supervisor noted that while the FTA has scheduled meetings to solicit public comments in San Francisco and in Vancouver, Canada, none were initially scheduled in Los Angeles, the largest county in the country. He stressed that this is an opportunity for the public to be heard on the issue as the transit funding future of Los Angeles is at stake.

"We enthusiastically welcome the FTA's reopening of discussions and we hope to offer material suggestions for improving the transit funding process. Los Angeles County is one of the most significant testing markets for new transportation methods over the last century and we must have a voice in the FTA review process," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

For more information, visit: <http://ridleythomas.lacounty.gov/Pages/issues/newstarts.htm>

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