

**Accepted by LWVSM Board - Updated June 1-06 Proposed Position Included**  
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# **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA MONICA**

## **TRAFFIC STUDY REPORT 2003 – 2006**

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## INTRODUCTION

On May 10, 2005, L.A. Times reporter, Sharon Bernstein reported that residents of Los Angeles and Orange counties wasted 93 hours in rush-hour commuter traffic in 2003.

In considering solutions to parking and to circulation (flow) of traffic there are some peripheral issues. Some questions we need to keep in the back of our mind as we examine the situation here in Santa Monica:

Where are these people going? Wherever it is they will need a place to park.

What is causing this delay in the commuter's daily trip to – and from their destination?

Is there a “domino” effect – i.e. does a solution to one person's problem create a new problem for others?

Are there “hot spots” in certain areas that require more attention and facilitation?

For example, in Santa Monica, the mall area, the City College area, the high school area, Main street, the beach?

How do we balance the issue for the variety of needs our city has? To please the residents we should build more parks – to please businesses we should build more parking, and increase the flow.

Cost is a strong factor, location is a factor, and development plans are certainly a factor. We may not address all of these in this report; however, they suggest a future “re-look” and perhaps updating, in the future.

Our City Council is presently conducting Land Use and Traffic/Transportation studies, and we do not know the outcome, or how it will affect this subject.

## Present Traffic Position

### 9. **TRAFFIC PLANNING: Support of synchronization of traffic lights, and plans to move traffic more smoothly.**

The above is the position listed under Traffic in our Local Program. However there are two positions under Land Use Planning which are related to the Study, though they will not be rewritten at this time. The two positions are:

- D. *Support of zoning, which would encourage PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION in the Central business district.*
  
- G. *Support of planning and implementation for PROPER, ADEQUATE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.*

A third position, which relates to traffic is:

- E. *Support of LIMITED GROWTH in Santa Monica by more stringent zoning regulations, without eliminating the opportunity for low and moderate-income housing.*

#### ***Update on synchronization:***

According to City Traffic Engineer, Mr. Tom, the present system is being replaced. Today the signals work on clocks that sometimes get out of synch and have to be manually corrected at the signal itself. Also some streets have different synchronization plans for daytime and nighttime.

The new "Advanced Traffic Management System" will be installed in phases: It will begin in late August of 2005 in downtown area (Wilshire, Pico, Lincoln, California and Olympic.

The second phase will be implemented next summer (2006). The third phase (Santa Monica Blvd & Wilshire Corridors in 2007). The Office District will be done in 2008. This plan is costly, and they are hoping for some funding from MTA.

**The Scope and Focus of this study is as follows:**

*An investigation into the traffic factors affecting Santa Monica, including:*

**PARKING**

**CONGESTION (FLOW)**

**ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION  
(INCLUDING LIGHT RAIL, SHUTTLES, ETC.)**

## History of Santa Monica

Santa Monica, considered by many as one of the most beautiful and popular resort cities in the United States, was largely disregarded by early explorers. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo discovered California in 1452, and chose to settle farther south.

In 1769, a group of Spanish soldiers, who were celebrating the feast day of Santa Monica in this area decided to name their settlement Santa Monica. Fifty-three years later (1822), the land passed from Spanish rule to the Mexico Republic. Titles to large parcels of land were allotted to many families. In the 1870's, cattleman Robert S. Baker pooled his resources with millionaire gold and silver miner Senator John P. Jones to create and officially record the town site of Santa Monica on July 10, 1875.

The Los Angeles county Recorder's office issued the official record and five days later Jones and Baker auctioned off parcels for the price of \$75.00 - \$150.00 each to many families. Within a year of becoming a town site, Santa Monica had 1,000 residents, a school district, church, library, bathhouse, hotel, and a newspaper.

In 1886 Santa Monica was incorporated. During the late 1800's the Southern Pacific Railroad extended its tracks up the coast to Portero Canyon, where it built the Port of Los Angeles in 1892. The Federal government overlooked Santa Monica as the site of a new deep water harbor, actually preserving it's beauty and ambience.

By 1900, the town had 5,526 residents. In 1906, a city government was established with a seven member common council and seven wards. In 1914, a commission was voted in. The State of California granted the tidelands to the city in 1917, paving the way for waterfront activities, including a breakwater and yacht harbor.

In the 1920's the Donald Douglas military manufacturing company built planes that flew around the world. They took off from Clover Field (now the Santa Monica Airport). By the fall of 1965, the Santa Monica Mall was completed, and one year later the freeway was officially opened to traffic.

Santa Monica is now 129 years old and still considered one of the most beautiful and prized cities to live in on the entire west coast. Among it's attractions are the pier (first built in the 1900's and dedicated as an Historical Landmark in 1975. It was rebuilt in 1981 after severe storm damage.) Many computer companies, luxury hotels and The Rand Corporation. As headquarters for many aerospace corporations it has become a global market place. Located about 16 miles west of downtown Los Angeles at the cross roads of Pacific Coast Highway and the Interstate Highway #10.

## Demographics:

\* Santa Monica has a generally mild Mediterranean climate – usually in the 68 to 80 degree range.

\*Access: Santa Monica Freeway (Route 10) – San Diego Freeway (Route 405)

\*Major thoroughfares: Santa Monica Blvd. – Olympic Blvd – Wilshire Blvd – Pico Blvd.

\* It is six miles from Los Angeles International Airport

\*Bus Line systems carry more than 20 million passengers on 140 buses each year.

\*Population is approximately 87,000

\*Size is 8 square miles.

*Age Groups: - up to 17 yrs. – 14%	
18-29	17.5%
30-59	48%
60-64	4%
65-85	16%

*Marital Status –Single	38%
Married	37%
Divorced	13%

*Occupations: Professional	27%
Management	18%
Administration	14%
Sales	12%
Service	8%
Production	5%
Machine Operators	3%
Technicians	3%
Transportation	17%
Armed Services	.5%
Farm and Fishing	1%
Labor	2%
Unemployed	5%

*Education completed – Elementary	6%
High School	23%
College (2 yr)	28%
College (4 yr)	24%
Graduate/Professional	18%



# THE CIRCULATION (FLOW) ELEMENT

The study of circulation or flow of traffic is an important element in deciding how to prevent congestion. It is of particular importance in the “downtown” area. It has varied over time, and the data below comes mainly from the circulation element of the Cities General Plan. (1984 last updated in '98.)

## Factors include:

- I The amount of vehicular traffic on commercial and residential streets
- II The level of service and the volume and capacity of impacted intersections
- III Transportation Systems Management Goals

## I The Amount of Vehicular Traffic

A Santa Monica has more people and automobiles within its borders during a year than any city of its size in the state. With a population of 85,000 +, the city can swell to 150,000 on a weekday. During the summer, especially on weekends, it can go to 500,000. Santa Monica has no traffic access from the west due to the ocean, and limited access from the north because of the mountains.

\* Currently, as of June 2004, more than 70,000 people are employed in Santa Monica.

\*70% of the jobs are held by people who do not live in Santa Monica

\* Thus over 51,000 workers must commute into Santa Monica each workday

\* About 40,000 Santa Monicans are employed; 68% of them work outside the City

*It should be noted that the imbalance of jobs in relation to residents exists all over the west side of Los Angeles*

B Santa Monica's traffic: changes over time

- The Circulation Element of the City's General Plan of 1984 states that prior to 1975, traffic volumes increased about 1% a year.
- Between 1975 and 1982 traffic volumes increased about 3% a year  
At the same time a drop in transit usage of 1% to 3% was reported

## C Ambient and Cumulative Traffic Projections

- \* A figure of .8% is being used in calculating the ambient traffic increase expected from the Civic Center Plan, rather than the 1.5% generally used
- \* Cumulative traffic can be and has been controlled by limiting development
- \* Santa Monica's Land Use Plan written in 1984 has restrained development (e.g., prior to its adoption Wilshire Boulevard had a 12-story height limit, After the Land Use Plan was adopted, the height limit was reduced to 2 stories with stepped heights allowable.)  
The Land Use Plan required new buildings east of the downtown on Wilshire Boulevard to have an appropriate transition to adjacent housing, by means of a height limit that steps down to that of the abutting residential district.

**Cumulative traffic is projected by consultants who use varying methods of calculation. Currently city staff has promised to look at different methodologies before the new circulation element of the new Land Use and Circulation Element are completed (a process expected to take two years).**

## II Level of Service (LOS)

- A Environmental assessment figures taken from environment reviews which are done about every 5 years indicate the ambient traffic has increased less than 1% a year over the past 20 years
- B Current and future predictions related to vehicular traffic affecting city Intersections
  - a **Intersections** are charted based on
    - Volume /capacity ratios
    - Level of service
    - The delay expected at an intersection
  - b The **volume /capacity** ratio is determined by the volume of traffic divided by the capacity of the intersection
    - **Capacity** is based on factors such as number of lanes, and availability of street parking
    - Most city streets are assumed to have a capacity of 1500 cars per hour
    - Each intersection has its own capacity figure which doesn't change unless there is a physical or operational change in the intersection
    - The existing **volume** is measured by actually counting the cars on the street

- C An intersection's performance is based on an evaluation of driving conditions, with six performance ranges

A = Free Flow

C = Restricted flow

D = Approaching unstable flow > 80% of capacity

E = Capacity conditions, long delays > 90% of capacity is being used

F = Forced flow > 100% of capacity, intersection is jammed = gridlock

*Santa Monica has a goal of no intersections having more than a D performance*

#### D Delay

The average time, in seconds, a vehicle experiences at an intersection.

Intersections designated F indicate over saturation and the length of delay cannot be calculated

### **III Transportation Systems Management Goals**

(Taken from the Circulation of the General Plan as adopted in 1984)

- A Promote programs to increase average auto occupancy by 16% from 1.2 persons per car to 1.4 persons per car in the year 2000 by preferential treatment to ride sharers.
- B Freeway/highway  
Work cooperatively with Cal Trans to improve freeway access. Particular attention should be paid to problems at the Cloverfield Interchange. Add an eastbound on ramp to the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange
- C Arterial Streets  
Improve the capacity of 23<sup>d</sup> Street south of Ocean Park Boulevard within the existing street width to facilitate north-south access to the City
- D Local Streets
- Implement neighborhood control plans to discourage through traffic in residential neighborhoods. (traffic calming)
  - The safe and acceptable level of service shall be a "C" or better
- E Parking
- Modify off-street parking standards to require all new development to accommodate project-generated parking demand on site consistent with encouraging alternative transportation systems management.
  - Consider implementing preferential parking districts in areas with current parking problems and where residents request preferential parking.

- Encourage parking and service access from alleys. Encourage access from side streets and alleys as long as potential traffic intrusion into residential neighborhoods are minimized.

#### F Transit

- \* Increase transit ridership to 10% of total trips from the current 4.5%
- Identify Wilshire Boulevard as a major bus transit corridor and potential future mass transit corridor
- Implement a transit shuttle linking the Beach, Main Street, Downtown, and Oceanfront to peripheral parking structures.
- Consider implementing a transit shuttle between major employment centers, regional transit routes, and remote parking facilities.

#### G Bicycle and Pedestrian

- \* Improve the pedestrian environment in all commercial districts
- \* Encourage accessibility for the disabled.

#### H Neighborhood Traffic Control

Typical features of neighborhood traffic control plans:

- \* Diverters or semi-diverters to restrict access to certain streets
- \* Median islands to prohibit left turns
- \* Traffic circles or median islands to reduce the speed of traffic
- \* Extended pavement treatments at intersections designed to slow traffic and alert motorists to the fact they are entering residential areas speed bumps, similar to those in the Douglas Park area
- \* Narrowing the existing width of pavement devoted to through vehicular traffic by:
  1. installing a median island
  2. widening sidewalk or landscape areas
  3. converting curb parking to diagonal parking
  4. installing bicycle lanes
  5. or other measures

#### I Public Transportation

- \* Most areas of the city are currently within a quarter mile of a transit route.
  - \* The public transportation plan includes potential routes for mass transit (heavy or light rail)
  - \* The downtown is designated on the public transportation plan as a transit zone in the potential location for a future multi-modal transportation center
  - \* The circulation element only endorses the concept that rail transit serves Santa Monica and promotes locating a transit station in the downtown area.
- The Circulation Element recommends that the City consult with people for advice on ways to improve public transit.

J Parking:

\* Consider upon the request of residents, preferential parking programs in areas experiencing a critical shortage of on-street spaces as one method to mitigate the problem

\* Revise parking standards to require all new development to accommodate project generated parking in off-street facilities.

### *Circulation at a glance*

(Circulation Summary)

There are 85,000 residents in Santa Monica but the population swells to 150,000 every day (Before the tech crash there were 75,000 jobs in Santa Monica) all 75,000 were in buildings already built (Currently 71,047 work in Santa Monica) 68% of Santa Monicans who work, work outside the city. 70% of the jobs in the city are held by outsiders.

On summer days and weekends the population of Santa Monica swells to as much as 500,000 (See the city's website Santa-Monica.org look under Business for population numbers)

Santa Monica has more people and automobiles within its border during a year than any other city of its size in the state of California.

Intersections throughout the city are charted based on the volume/capacity ratio and level of service - and the delay expected at an intersection - using the Traffic Model for measuring levels of service.

The volume/capacity ratio of an intersection is based on the volume of cars using an intersection divided by the capacity of the intersection.

The capacity is based on factors such as: How many lanes? Is there parking on the street? Are there buses on the street? Is there a hill?

Most city streets are assumed to have a capacity of 1500 cars per hour per lane -about two cars per second at saturation flow.

Each street or intersection has its own capacity figure; it doesn't change unless there is a physical or operational change in the intersection or street.

The existing volume is measured by actually counting cars on the street

After an existing v/c (volume divided by capacity) is determined, the future v/c ratio can be projected based on additional development expected to affect each intersection.

#### Level of Service (LOS)

An indication of a road's performance based on an evaluation of driving conditions, with six performance ranges as follows:

A Free flow

B Stable Flow - 20% of capacity

C Restricted flow

D Approaching unstable flow - 80% of capacity

E Capacity Conditions, Long Delays - 90% of capacity is being used

F Forced flow - 100% of capacity intersection is jammed = gridlock

Our city's goal is that no intersection should be worse than a D

Future Levels of service can be determined by using two additional factors: ambient and cumulative traffic.

Without additional development the expected ambient traffic is calculated at a 1.5% increase per year. Added to that is the cumulative traffic from projects approved but not yet causing traffic

A problem arises from figuring out how the cumulative traffic is determined "Consultants do that" Currently city staff have promised to look at different methodologies before the draft of the new circulation element is completed (One method has been proposed by the U of California, Irvine traffic engineers and recommended for consideration by the planning commission)

One concern relates to the traffic being projected from the Civic Center Plan... the consultants are using a 0.8% increase per year for the ambient traffic rather than the standard 1.5% (it's noted, some places in LA use 2%)

If one intersection is over capacity, traffic goes elsewhere, and that impacts other intersections and frequently residential streets.

Existing traffic (will increase as ambient traffic increases each year). The future cumulative traffic can be controlled by limiting development beyond the amount that is already there, by changing development standards, and by observing limits set by the city's adopted goals. (The latter presents problems related to a property owner's perceived rights to develop a property as the owner would like).

Development standards could be changed to permit greater density. For example on Wilshire Blvd .if the standard should be changed back to the 12-story height limit in effect in 1980, the cumulative traffic on that street and neighboring streets would increase.

## SANTA MONICA - PARKING

The parking problem is getting worse in Santa Monica because the traffic problem is getting worse – not only in Santa Monica but in the entire Southern California region. The basic traffic problem is that the population is increasing through both birth and population inflow. Within the next generation, the regional population will increase from 18 million to 23 million. That is like adding two cities the size of Chicago (without their rapid transit system). 85 % of this growth is natural (new births) and only 15 % is from inflow of new residents.

We are building cars to move this increased population faster than we are building roads and parking places to service the cars; ergo traffic circulation and parking problems are growing even faster than the population as a whole. In Los Angeles over the past 25 years the number of driving trips has increased 50%, while road capacity has increased 7%.

Parking does influence traffic flow. And traffic flow influences parking.

The city has attempted to measure public sentiment as to how to allocate available resources with its fishbowl poll. Attendees at "Motion by the Ocean" meetings vote on their personal priorities with play money. Results to date, from the Santa Monica Circulation Element web site are listed below.

Public Transit	43.4
Parking	32.4
Bicycle lanes	30.05
Bottlenecks	26.90
Walking	26.90
Traffic Calming	14.40

If people cannot park, some percentage of them will not come, thus reducing traffic on the main arteries. Conversely, those who do come and cannot park will increase local congestion and impact parking in adjacent neighborhoods. At any rate, much of the effort of the City's Traffic Management organization relates to parking administration.

The basic traffic problem is to safely move occupants of vehicles (and necessarily their vehicle) to their desired ultimate destinations. This must be accomplished smoothly and efficiently in different directions without endangering or unduly restricting pedestrians.

Vehicle drivers in Santa Monica are generally “task orientated” that is, they are going to a specific

place for a specific reason. Often there is a sole occupant – the driver.

Economically providing enough spaces at convenient locations without unduly burdening the local residents is the essence of Santa Monica's parking problem. On the other hand, solving the parking problem negatively affects the traffic circulation problem. It may not be completely true that if you build the parking spaces the cars will come, but it is certainly true that lacking parking some percentage of the cars will not come. Some of the people in the cars may come by other means such as buses, walking, bicycling, or car-pooling, and some will just stay away.

The City provides parking on almost all of its streets and avenues with various kinds of restrictions, and off street parking in metered lots, parking attendant lots, and metered parking structures,

#### METERED LOTS

along the beach	2800 spaces.
adjacent to Main Street	340 spaces.
Mid-Wilshire	123 spaces

#### ATTENDANT LOTS

Pier	238 spaces
Santa Monica Place	1967 spaces
Civic Center	1030 spaces

DOWNTOWN METERED PARKING STRUCTURES 3823 spaces

## Street Parking

Street parking comes in many flavors; unrestricted, restricted, metered, and preferential. Restrictions vary with time and/or day of the week

### The approximate numbers of street spaces are:

Metered	6,000	
Preferential parking	12,000	
Unmetered Timed		No Record
Unmetered And Untimed		No Record

### **PREFERENTIAL PARKING:**

A subset of street parking is preferential parking. This is invoked in residential areas when a significant portion of the available street parking in residential neighborhoods is co-opted by non-residents for a significant portion of the time. Those unwanted and unloved parkers include day-workers, business employees, students, tourists, diners, event attendees, or shoppers. And, of course parkers who park for most of the day or evening are more onerous than short term parkers. Preferential parking districts may be established after two thirds of the residents of a neighborhood request it, and affected parties are heard from.

The establishment of preferential parking districts in residential areas adjacent to east-west commercial corridors has generated concern about the availability of parking to serve older commercial uses along these corridors like Wilshire, Santa Monica, and Pico Boulevards, Montana Ave. and Main Street.

Preferential parking restrictions can be invoked during the day only, during evening hours only, never on Sunday, weekends only, always, or never depending on the needs of residents and businesses. At this point, about 12,000 on-street spaces have preferential regulations. Each year for the past 4 years has seen an increase in the number of street parking spaces converted to preferential parking spaces. Following is a list of the number of preferential parking permits issued by year.

1999-00: 13,000  
 2000-01: 26,000  
 2001-02: 27,000  
 2002-03: 31,900  
 2004-05: 36,000. (est.).

The rate of preferential permits issued has increased by over 170% over a five-year period.

## **Downtown Public Parking**

The city council has approved a \$92.5 million dollar plan to upgrade the downtown public parking structures and to build a new one. The City proposes to construct a new 244,930-square foot public parking structure of five levels above grade with rooftop parking and one and one-half levels of below-grade parking, accommodating a maximum of 880 parking spaces with street-level lease (tenant) spaces, in the Civic Center area. This will replace the Civic Auditorium parking lot which currently provides the primary parking resources to meet the needs of public and community facilities within the Civic Center, including City Hall, the existing police headquarters, County Courthouse, and Civic Auditorium.

The existing Civic Center Specific Plan (adopted in 1993, amended in 2000) provides for the redevelopment of the Civic Auditorium parking lot as a public park with associated community facilities. The plan prescribes the development of a parking structure of up to 1,000 spaces on the proposed project site and an additional parking structure of up to 725 spaces along Fourth Street, immediately south of Civic Center Drive. These two parking structures would replace the parking within the Civic Auditorium lot while meeting parking demands of new community facilities, including the public park, Public Safety Facility, and the cultural, community and child care facilities. While the Specific Plan allows for up to 1,000 parking spaces to be developed on the site, 880 spaces represents the amount of parking that can be fit within the Specific Plan's development standards, while still providing for street-level tenant spaces and a majority of parking stalls that are full size. This may be subject to revision due to the results and or adoption of a new specific plan from the City Council when they complete their Study.

The Civic Center Parking Structure is an important public project that represents a critical step in the revitalization of the Civic Center, as well as a new approach to creating visually interesting and physically integrated public parking structures in Santa Monica. The project creates opportunities for reclamation of surface parking in the Civic Center for community-oriented uses.

Existing downtown public parking structures will be retrofitted for earthquake protection and redeveloped.

The above projects will be financed with a combination of federal earthquake redevelopment funds, property assessments and parking fees that can be increased without voter approval.

## **PARKING ECONOMICS**

Parking meters can be self-liquidating and are flexible as to placement  
Structures are not self-liquidating and once installed they are not flexible as to place.

### **Parking Meter Income from the City budget:**

96-97: \$3,296,411  
97-98: \$3,590,553  
98-99: \$3,756,237  
99-00: \$4,028,273  
00-01: \$4,265,540  
01-02: \$4,116,734  
02-03: \$4,247,378

On average, a meter will pay for the costs of its installation (about \$750) in the first year. However meters don't collect "average" revenue. Downtown meters, for example, generate about 25% of all metered revenue.

Parking structure spaces can cost \$30,000 each. Costs vary considerably based on the efficiency of the structure. Currently, our net revenue will not amortize the construction costs over the lifetime of the facilities. This is why you do not see the private sector building parking for money.

## **Light Rail**

A promising long-term partial solution to our traffic flow and parking problems is the construction of the Exposition Light Rail System east to downtown. This should reduce the number of cars coming into Santa Monica looking for all day parking, thus improving traffic flow on local streets and existing parking most everywhere. On the other hand, the rail system is a two-way system. Many cars that formerly drove out of town will remain in town, some on the streets and some in parking lots and structures convenient to train stops. This will undoubtedly require new parking facilities convenient to the train stations, new preferential parking zones to placate the nearby residents, and/or the placement of train stations near existing parking facilities. The flow of North-South traffic, by no means swift, may be further impeded, and grade level crossings might raise safety issues

Optimistically, the proposed light rail system might encourage some drivers to get rid of one or more of their cars thus improving traffic flow, traffic safety, parking and the environment



## **Parking At A Glance**

- 1 Regionally – over the past 25 years the number of driving trips has increased by 50% while roads have increased only 7%
- 2 Regional population will increase from 18 million to 23 million over the next generation (that is the equivalent of two new cities the size of Chicago)
- 3 The city has issued an ever increasing number of preferential parking places
- 4 The City has approved several million dollars for upgrading parking structures (some of it will go to replace existing spaces).
- 5 Meters are self-sufficient in that they bring in the cost of a meter in one year. (\$750 per meter to install) There are 6000 meters citywide bringing in \$4 million per year. Meters are also flexible as to placement and charge.
- 6 In recent City surveys, public transportation is the top priority by the citizens taking part, with parking the second on the list.
- 7 Employee parking is of great concern for places such as the Bayside District
- 8 Zoning affects both the congestion and the parking spaces.

## **SANTA MONICA - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

An October '04, L.A. Times article by Joel Kotkin entitled "Up from Ultimate Urban Dystopia" discussed Southern California and its fast growth. One quote included the following: "As the economy has grown and as people from elsewhere in the United States have reacquainted themselves with the original reasons for flocking to California, annual domestic out-migration has dropped precipitously to roughly 36,000 today. That represents less than a quarter of 1% of the area's approximately 17 million people. In comparison, the rate of out-migration for our chief West coast rival, the Bay Area, is seven times higher, and New York is four times higher."

So, who's moving in? "A close analysis of the 2000 census finds that the area continues to attract large numbers of well-educated, younger residents. Even Los Angeles has surprisingly outperformed such cities as San Francisco and San Jose in the years between 1995 and 2004."

How does this affect Santa Monica? It's a highly sought-after residential city within the Los Angeles area. Growth is a given. So how does population growth affect transportation?

The 2004 population of Santa Monica is 86,000. Sixty-eight percent of Santa Monica residents work outside of the City. Seventy percent of jobs within the City are held by non-residents. There are 70,000 or more jobs within the City of Santa Monica. This figure does not include contractors or self-employed. Before the techno crash, 75,000 people worked within Santa Monica. 4,000 lost their jobs. In such an expensive area, most young families have little chance of buying here. Residential traffic is troublesome, since unlike other surrounding areas, residences are not single-family dwellings, but single individual dwellings (apartments/hotels). Three million cars are parked downtown per year.. Congestion is massive:

On any given day there may be a million miles of travel within Santa Monica. On any given summer weekend, parking structures and lots are filled with over 8,000 cars. The Santa Monica Pier, Third Street Promenade, and Santa Monica beach are the busiest in California with 400,000 visitors on any peak day.

Though Santa Monica Transportation Manager Lucy Dyke has discussed a most important solution to some of Santa Monica's traffic woes, through TRAFFIX, (the government body which has caused the downtown one-way streets to become two-way; placed palm-tree planted islands down Wilshire Boulevard; and monitors our own version of Automated Traffic Surveillance and control (TRAFFIX), with cameras and inductive loops); says that a future without a light-rail/bus system is not conducive to healthy traffic and commercial growth.

## **Light Rail/Busses**

### **Light Rail**

The MTA estimated 70,000 daily riders for the Expo Line (43,000 Downtown LA to Culver City plus 27,000 Culver City to Santa Monica) in the 'Fixed Guideway System Plan and Priorities' staff report to the Planning and Programming Committee, October 15, 2003.

This promising long term partial solution to our traffic flow and parking problem could reduce the numbers of cars coming in and out of Santa Monica; lower the utilization of all-day parking; improve traffic flow on local streets and existing parking everywhere. As stated above, about the same number of cars entering Santa Monica daily, leave Santa Monica for jobs elsewhere. Anyone standing at any of the major Santa Monica off-ramps (4<sup>th</sup>, Lincoln, 26<sup>th</sup> (Cloverdale) in the early morning rush hour or evening return, would be impressed with the voluminous numbers traveling into and out of Santa Monica.

A light rail system will undoubtedly require new parking facilities convenient to train stations, new preferential parking zones, and/or the placement of train stations near existing parking facilities. It will also require a specialty bus service to connect people to areas beyond the Expo.

The Rail Line to Santa Monica is projected to be ready by 2013.

### **Big Blue Bus**

The Big Blue Bus transports about 70,000 people per day,. The highest rider ship is the Pico Boulevard group. Line 3 Montana line goes from UCLA to LAX and to the green line) and is the fastest growing and next busiest line.

The Big Blue Bus has a fleet of 200 busses. Total vehicle hours are 503,500/year. Total unlinked passengers are 20,043,400 (Each boarding is an unlinked number).

On the weekends, 250,000 enter with cars etc. to enjoy the summer beach time. An offshoot of the Big Blue Bus, the 'Tide' was developed to transport people from centralized areas to the beach and back. To date, it transports, at most, 15,000 or less, or 16 passengers/hour around town. The shuttle, though mainly supported by the tourism industry, has not yet proven to be cost effective.

**Funding:**

Proposition A – 1980 established funds for the seventeen L.A. transit systems, predominantly dedicated to rail development.

Proposition C – 1990 established funds for the 17 L.A. transit systems' operational costs.

**In The Future**

Environmentally friendly fuels (100% liquefied natural gas) available within the next five years.

High tech – Automated fleet management systems; GPS locators...replacing the radio systems, which will count more accurately the rider ship counts; and offer easier information access by prospective passengers.

## High Cost of Free Parking

Donald Shoup

The following is taken from the conclusions of “The High Cost of Free Parking” by Donald Shoup” For more information we invite you to explore these ideas in depth.

### Curb Parking:

Is a Commons problem

Requires “cruising”

“cruising for parking in a 15 block commercial district in Los Angeles created 945,000 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) a year – equivalent to driving around the earth 38 times”

Requires off street parking to satisfy the peak demand for parking (costly)

### Subsidies:

Free parking is a charity for cars

In 2002 off street parking cost was between \$127 billion and \$374 billion a year

It is not a “transparent” cost

Parking is the single biggest land use in cities, and manages to dominate cities

People have failed to think critically about parking, and have mistaken it as a right rather than a privilege

### Unintended Consequences:

Ignorance – Error – Immediacy of Interest – Basic values – Self-fulfilling Prophecies

### Enclosing the Commons:

Cities should charge market value for curb parking

Revenue would pay for city services

Drivers will find spaces more quickly and evenly

### Public – Not Private Property

Open access is the problem

Benefits are small

### Commons, Anticommons, and the Liberal Commons

Commons – property held in common by the populace

Anticommons – “Multiple owners are each endowed with the right to exclude others from a scarce resource, and none has an effective privilege of use.”

(Michael Heller: The Tragedy of the Anticommons)

Liberal Commons – a participatory commons that allows members the freedom to come and go.

### Public Property, without Open Access

Provides revenue for other improvements

Allows more local decision making

### Three Reforms

Charge fair-market prices for curb parking

Return the revenue to neighborhoods to pay for public improvements,

Remove the requirements for off-street parking

## **“America’s great headache”**

### **The Economist looks at traffic.**

The following is taken from the June 2, 2005 issue of the Economist And contains suggestions for dealing with traffic and parking.

One suggestion that comes up frequently is public transport – namely light rails, but although the San Francisco system (Bart) has been successful, light rail is very expensive. The cost for light rail has been estimated at \$20million a mile, while underground can cost \$200 million a mile. The Los Angeles subway system has cost \$4.5 billion (\$258 million a mile). The light rail has cost over \$35 million a mile.

Almost all solutions require drivers to pay. More realistic fuel prices would make a difference. Californians pay app \$ 2.50 compared to \$5.90 in Britain

California has few toll roads, and most drivers oppose them. An alternative is a “toll lane” which allows a single driver to pay a fee to travel in the diamond lanes. Fees are collected electronically

Another suggestion is a congestion charge used in London on drivers who enter the central area of the city. Proponents say it relieves congestion, lessens pollution and provides money for public transport.

Parking is another factor in congestion. Underground parking is extremely costly, and building of underground parking structures available only to specified buildings or businesses is even worse. For example Disney Hall as a six-level, 2,188 space underground garage that cost \$110 million. It now has to guarantee at least 128 concerts each winter to generate enough parking revenue to service the debt. However, note that when the concert is over, the cars go away, and the structure sits empty until the next event.

Job related parking is related to land-use laws.. For every job in the central business district of Los Angeles there is 0.52 of a parking space, San Francisco has 0.14.

## **ROAD PRICING**

From the Economist of Dec. 4, 1997

*No room, no room.*

Several types of road pricing have been tried around the world.

For example, a toll is levied every time a car enters a particular zone or area.

Cars must carry “smart cards” which also contains cash credits which can be used for other purchases.

Also suggested was variable pricing – with high use times costing more than low times.

*(One factor not included in this LWVSM report includes environmental issues. There is no question that congestion affects the environment)*

Road construction has become increasingly unpopular with drivers and homeowners near the construction sites. Even more important is that economic growth in the 1980’s has shown that new roads only briefly relieve congestion.

Politics, not technology will most likely dictate the pace of change, but road pricing may be in our future.

## Transit Plan

Jon Sarche

From the June 15, 2005 edition of the Santa Monica Daily Press

Denver Colorado voters approved a \$4.7 billion tax increase to pay for 119 miles of train and bus service in and around the Denver area. This “FasTracks” proposal is being offered as an example of ways to boost mass transit nation wide.

Maria Garcia Berry ( FasTrack campaign manager) says “There is no magic bullet anymore to congestion and growth. You have to have a combination of things. You have to have enhanced roads but you also have to have transit”

“You have to have multiple solutions”

## California Dreamin’

From The Economist September 3, 1998

While congestion is one of the most talked about problems concerning traffic, this article points out that “it is only one of the social costs attributable to motoring, and not even the most important one.” Other things to consider are “costs arising from road transport, injury and death caused by accidents, environmental harm, and infrastructure costs.”

“The impact of charges will depend not just on the amount, but also on the method by which they are raised. The one finding which repeated behavioral studies confirm is that individuals respond much more strongly to costs that confront them direct than to hidden charges”

The article also points out that some combinations of charges may improve traffic volume, but the benefits must be weighed against the economic costs.

Discouraging vehicle ownership is a way that several Asian countries have tried But this is a life-style decision, and while limiting volume in downtown areas or using alternative methods of transportation may seem simple enough, it is “social planning of a very intrusive sort”.



## Consensus Questions for Traffic Study

June 21, 2005

### *Flow of Traffic*

Should LWVSM support/oppose

Increase number of North/South arteries

Traffic calming devices such as speed bumps, circular intersections

Encourage alley entrance to properties

Creating more pedestrian friendly areas, bike paths, Island crossings, lighted crossing areas, etc

“Pay to enter” fees

### *Parking*

Should LWVSM support/oppose

More parking garages – above/underground

Increased fees for parking and violations

Require developers to provide parking spaces for buildings

Preferential Parking

Metered Parking

Encourage residents to park in their driveways or garages

### *Transit*

Should LWVSM support/oppose alternative transit systems including

Light Rail,

Busses

Citywide shuttles

# Pros and Cons

## **Flow or Circulation:**

### Calming Pros

Protects pedestrians and slows traffic

### Calming Cons

More difficult for emergency vehicles  
Slows traffic and annoys some drivers

### Alley Entrance Pros

Provides more curb space  
No backing out onto the street  
Safer for bikers and pedestrians

### Alley Entrance Cons

Garbage cans can interfere with access  
Maintenance of alley areas

### Pedestrian Friendly Pros

Encourages people to get out of their cars and walk or bike  
Would be safer for both cars and pedestrians

### Pedestrian Friendly Cons

Slow traffic

### Pay to Enter Pros

Raises money for the city  
Lessens the amount of traffic (and people coming into the area)

### Pay to Enter Cons

Could cause a decrease in customers, tourists, guests

**Parking:**Parking Pros

Convenience to local shoppers  
Good for businesses

Parking Cons

Underground is very expensive  
Encourages more cars to come

Fees Pros

Provides income for the City  
Allows higher turnover, good for business

Fees Cons

Can also discourage drivers – particularly around popular areas  
Can be bad for business

Developers Pros

Limits development activities  
Gets the cars off the streets

Developers Cons

Encourage new traffic  
More expensive for builders  
Higher rents

Preferential Pros

Convenient for residents and visitors

Preferential Cons

Makes it difficult for smaller business and employees

Metered Parking Pros

Generates income for city

Metered Parking Cons

Makes it inconvenient for residents/visitors to park on city streets

## **Transit:**

### Light Rail Pros

- It would take more cars off the street
- Provide interconnections with other areas of town,
- Provides for moving more people in a given period of time

### Light Rail Cons

- Cost – both to build and maintain
- Impacts neighborhoods
- Requires parking at all stations areas
- Intersection with city streets can be dangerous
- Routes are inflexible

### Busses Pros

- Provides transportation other than cars
- Lines/lanes are flexible
- Cheaper than the train

### Busses Cons

- Cost to the city
- They clog up the streets
- They have an impact on the street
- Constant pulling into the curb and out again can be hazardous

### Shuttles Pros

- Flexible
- Fill a 'niche' need

### Shuttles Cons

- Cost
- Clutter up traffic

## TRAFFIC CONSENSUS NEW POSITION

### 9. TRAFFIC

The League of Women Voters of Santa Monica supports:

- a Synchronization of traffic lights, and plans to move traffic more smoothly.”
- b Traffic calming devices which increase safety for both pedestrians and motorists.
- c Encouragement of enforcement of existing laws for alley exits. (i.e. stopping at sidewalks, and again at street entries.)
- d Creation of more bicycle paths, “pedestrian friendly” areas, island crossings, lighted crossings etc..
- e New parking structures – either above or below ground- which are in connection or tied to mass transit systems and sustainable development.
- f Increased fees for parking and violations to more closely reflect the true public cost.
- g Encouraging residents to park in their own driveways or garages.
- h A rich mix of mass transit development, including light rail, buses, shuttles, and future consideration of subways.
- i Discourage the creation of more surface parking lots
- j Oppose subsidized public parking for private use

No position was taken on the increase of north-south arteries, pay to enter fees, preferential parking, and metered parking.

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The Traffic Study Committee strongly urges the League to look at Traffic in Santa Monica on a periodic basis, and to explore closely related issues such as land development, and to carefully study the impending Development of Circulation and Land Use Elements in the City’s General Plan.

