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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – October 2004

The Fall of Presidential election years are very challenging to League of Women Voters members because there is a combined National, State and Local Election. League members are busy with preparing and presenting pros and cons on ballot measures, conducting candidate forums (that don't conflict with the Presidential debates), registering voters, and trying to increase the number of people who actually vote.

At this same time, at the end of a two-year California Legislative cycle, we've been anxiously awaiting the outcome of the Governor's approval or veto of the bills that passed this session. Several bill of interest to LWVBA have been signed:

SB 1568 (Sher) – increases the penalties for violation of BCDC regulations, allowing more funds for enforcement, and provides for additional notification in real estate transactions of BCDC rules. LWVBA sent a letter urging the Governor to sign the bill.

SB 849 (Torlakson) – provides that the Bay Area Air Quality Management District shall become a member of the Joint Policy Committee, currently composed of 8 members from MTC and 8 members from ABAG, with an equal number of members from BAAQMD. Among its duties, the JPC is to prepare a report for the Legislature by January 1, 2006 regarding the feasibility of consolidating functions being separately provided by MTC and ABAG. The Governor announced he will sponsor legislation next session to add a member from the office of Secretary of Business and Transportation, to represent the State's interests in "this important task force."

SB 1266 (Torlakson) – amends the Local Agency Formation Commission regulations regarding annexations. LWVBA had been following this bill because of our interest in LAFCOs.

AB 2158 (Lowenthal) and AB 2348 (Mullin) – revising procedures for determining shares of regional housing need for cities, counties, and sub-regions at all income levels, and revises criteria for inventory of sites to meet the need to require that they can be developed within the time frame of the plan. These bills, recommended by an HCD Housing Element Working Group, were designed to provide clarity and transparency to current requirements, including a requirement of a diligent effort to achieve public participation.

LWVBA will be monitoring the implementation of these new laws.

Linda Craig, LWVBA President (president@lwvba-ca.org)

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REPORT ON LWVBA ACTION: May – September, 2004 (revised)**Transportation**

Sent letter re: scoping for the EIS/EIR on the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor – BART Extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara asking that alternatives to the Preferred Investment Strategy be evaluated and include standard rail, commuter rail, light rail and express bus service

Sent letter on EIS/EIR for BART Warm Springs Extension

Joined protest against State cutbacks in property tax revenue for AC Transit District (LWVC permission)

Statement to SF Board of Supervisors to support certification of the EIR for the Transbay Terminal/Caltrain Downtown Extension/ Redevelopment Project.

Letter to California High-Speed Rail Authority requesting a thorough consideration of all major alternatives, including the Altamont Pass route in the EIR. (with permission of LWVC)

Letter to the Editors of SJ Mercury News, SF Chronicle and Oakland Tribune supporting the use of Regional Measure 2 \$1 bridge toll increase for the projects identified in the measure, and opposing the Governor's proposal to redirect the funds with a new measure on the November ballot (with permission of LWVC). Lobbied in Sacramento on August 23 with Transportation and Land Use Coalition.

Endorsed and signed ballot argument in favor of Measure BB, AC Transit District parcel tax extension and increase.

Endorsed Measure AA, BART general obligation bonds for seismic safety improvements.

Statement to MTC Planning and Operations Committee in support of the Transit Connectivity Report, which reinforces the findings of an LWVBA white paper on the need for Transit Hubs

Land Use/Regional Planning

Letter to UC Berkeley with comments on the Long Range Development Plan and EIR, (with LWV Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville) regarding the need for mitigation implementation standards, the scope of the project should include Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. and comments on the need for additional information on aesthetics, geology/seismic, transportation and traffic, and a more thorough review of alternatives that provide a transit-pedestrian focus.

Statement to MTC Planning and Operations Committee regarding the substantially changed format of the Transportation and Land Use Platform adopted by MTC in December 2003, and urging the restoration of the development of an open space strategy, which has been deleted. Also follow up letter to MTC Executive Director with specific suggestions.

E-mail supporting the concept of Goals proposed by the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) for higher density and other standards near Transit Stations, but declining to support specific standards to be applied region-wide.

Endorsed and signed argument in favor of Measure CC, East Bay Regional Park District parcel tax in Zone 1.

Environment

Sent letter urging Gov. to sign SB 1568, that would raise penalties and otherwise improve notification and enforcement of BCDC regulations. (with permission of LWVC).

Linda Craig
President

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New LWVBA Boardmember on Board: Martha Goralka, Regional Planning/Land Use

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A victory for the Transbay Terminal

At a marathon meeting on Sept. 28, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted unanimously for condemnation of the property that stood in the path of the proposed rail lines to the Transbay Terminal! The engineering solution, even if it would work, that would have allowed the developer to construct his tower before the tunneling for the rail lines, would have cost more than acquisition of the property. This decision removes a major obstacle to the realization of the regional transportation hub. As the project moves forward, Transbay Joint Powers Authority can sell the air rights over the site to another developer that is willing to work with them on a joint engineering solution.

-Joyce Roy

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BALLOT MEASURES ENDORSED BY LWVBA

Measure AA: BART general obligation bond measure for seismic retrofitting

Measure BB: AC Transit Parcel Tax increase and extension

Measure CC East Bay Regional Park District Parcel Tax in Area 1

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LWVBA will be the co-sponsor of the following Forum:**BUS RAPID TRANSIT – A BAY AREA PERSPECTIVE**
(Working Title)Forum Details:

Date: Friday, November 12, 2004

Time: 1:-00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Place: Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
Lawrence D. Dahms auditorium
101 Eighth Street, OaklandContacts: James Swofford, Project Manager
(jim@jswofford.com; 510-468-5871)
Trixie Johnson, Mineta Transportation Institute
(johnson@mti.sjsu.edu; 408-924-7562)Co-sponsors: Alameda County Congestion Management Agency; AC Transit;
Metropolitan Transportation Commission; California Department of Transportation, District 4;
Mineta Transportation Institute
Invited: Commonwealth Club of California, Bay Area League of Women Voters, Alameda
County Leagues of Women Voters,
KTVU Channel 2, AG Newspaper GroupBackground:

Transit agencies in the Bay Area are considering or planning to institute Bus Rapid Transit service on as many as five corridors. This forum will discuss the I-880 Corridor in Alameda County, a route in active planning for deployment next year. Alameda County also has the only operating route in the area, a BRT “mini” along San Pablo Boulevard, the initial project in the East Bay SMART Corridors Program. The I-880 Corridor is the second portion of the program, stretching along International Boulevard, East 14th Street, Hesperian Boulevard and Union City Boulevard through San Leandro.

Regular bus service is characterized by frequent stops and a long schedule that can even span 24 hours. Express buses often have a few stops at large park-and-ride facilities and may run only during commute hours. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) operates more like a light rail service on wheels. The stops are many blocks apart. The bus pulls into the fast lane of traffic between stops and has the ability to override traffic signals. Length of daily service varies. Some BRT systems operate on fixed guideways, just like rail systems, though the Alameda County projects to date are all on surface streets.

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Agency (LA-MTA) is operating a BRT line along Wilshire Boulevard and is developing a fixed guideway BRT, called the Gold Line. One purpose of this forum will be to discuss lessons learned in the LA experience.

The event begins with welcoming remarks, the introduction of co-sponsors, and then a moderator will introduce the panel. The first speaker will likely be Cyrus Minoofar, the lead staff member for the lead agency on the project (Alameda County Congestion Management Agency). His role is to explain the project and get the basics on the table. The panel (TBD) will include a representative from AC Transit discussing operational issues, challenges, and possible

responses. We hope to have a local mayor provide a community perspective. Even though this system is run by transportation agencies, local cities will have a maintenance and operational role as the owners of the streets and signals. Other potential panel perspectives include a transit customer and the business community. Most of the route is through commercial districts. Following the panel there will an audience Q and A opportunity.

After a short break, we will reconvene for a presentation by Rex Gephart from LA MTA. He is the lead staff for the system there (nicknamed "Rapid Rex" by the local press). In addition to discussing the LA experience and lessons learned, he will be asked to comment on what he has heard from the panel. Mr. Gephart and the panel will have a short dialogue, followed by a final opportunity for audience Q and A.

The outline of the program:

- 1:00 p.m. Opening remarks (Welcome, introduction of Sponsors and Moderator) – Rod Diridon (MTI)
(Trixie Johnson, alternate)
- 1:05 p.m. Optional remarks by local State Senator (Liz Figueroa or Don Perata)
- 1:15 p.m. Moderator introduces panel (Randy Shandobil, Political Editor of KTVU, to be invited)
- 1:20 p.m. Panel comments (opening 15 minutes, others 10 minutes)
Cyrus Minoofar, (Alameda County Congestion Management Agency) – project presentation

AC Transit representative to discuss operations issues, challenges, responses

Mayor Sheila Young, San Leandro (to be invited) – community response

Rider representative (TBD) – concerns, questions, comments

Business representative (TBD) – impact of the service on the commercial activity along the route
- 2:15 p.m. Audience Q and A, moderated by Shandobil
- 2:35 p.m. Refreshment break
- 2:50 p.m. Keynote Commentator Rex Gephart, LA MTA
- 3:10 p.m. Dialogue – Gephart and Panel
- 3:25 p.m. Audience Q and A, moderated by Shandobil
- 3:45 p.m. Program concludes

MTI records the session and produces an edited summary of the proceedings that is published on the Institute website (<http://transweb.sjsu.edu>) and in hardcopy.

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Dates to Note:

IN (**Inter-League Network**) Committee/North will meet in the LWVBAE office, 1414 University Ave., Suite D, Berkeley at 12:15 on Wed. Oct.13. (510) 843-8824

And be sure to mark your calendar for **Bay Area League Day:** Saturday, Jan. 29, 2005.

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Web Sites:

Bay Area Monitor: <http://www.bayareamonitor.org>

LWVC: <http://www.ca.lwv.org>

LWVBA: <http://www.lwvba-ca.org>

LWVUS: <http://www.lwv.org>

Smart Voter: <http://www.smartvoter.org>

Barbara Boxer: <http://boxer.senate.gov/>

Dianne Feinstein: <http://feinstein.senate.gov/>

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