

NORTHRIDGE SOUTH TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS

COMMITTEE CHAIR: MATT ZEBRO

California Court Rules Holding Cellphone While Driving Is Illegal



The California Court of Appeal clarified that holding a cellphone while driving under any circumstance, including the use of navigation apps, is illegal under the state's hands-free law. This ruling reinforces efforts to combat distracted driving by requiring drivers to use hands-free technology at all times. The court emphasized that any manual handling of a phone behind the wheel poses a safety risk to yourself, other drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. Violations can result in fines and/or other penalties and drivers are urged to fully comply by relying on voice commands, integrated features, and/or dashboard mounts to keep their focus on the road. **LA Times¹**

California High-Speed Rail Unveils Plan to Rescue Project Amid Trump Criticism

California High-Speed Rail has unveiled a new strategy to save the embattled project by combining \$1 billion annually from the state's climate fund with private capital. The plan aims to create a stable public funding base to attract investors and accelerate progress on the Central Valley segment of the project. President Trump has repeatedly criticized the rail as a "waste" and "disaster," and federal skepticism remains high. Despite the challenges, officials say construction continues and the project is moving into its track-laying phase. **Newsweek²**

One Year After HLA Approval, LA Streets Still Perilous for Cyclists and Pedestrians



Protected bike lanes on Reseda Blvd in Northridge South

On March 5, 2024, Los Angeles voters approved Measure HLA (Healthy Streets LA) with 65.5% support, a clear mandate to improve street safety across the city. The ordinance requires the city to implement safety upgrades from the 2015 Mobility Plan whenever repaving or significant street work occurs on designated roadways, including protected and unprotected bike lanes, bus lanes, safer crosswalks, curb extensions, and sidewalk enhancements. It also established a public dashboard to track progress and allows residents to take legal action if the city fails to comply.

Despite strong voter backing, Measure HLA has faced political opposition, notably from City Councilmembers John Lee (CD12) and Traci Park (CD11). Lee has a well-documented history of opposing bike and bus lanes (Reseda protected Bike Lanes and Nordhoff Rapid Bus), often arguing such projects harm traffic flow and local businesses. Their concerns reflect broader debates in the city over prioritizing car travel versus investing in multimodal transportation options.

Since Measure HLA took effect on April 11, 2024, more than 260 people have died in Los Angeles traffic collisions, underscoring the urgent need for change. While some progress has been made, only a small percentage of planned safety improvements have been completed. Advocates say the law is essential for holding the city accountable and ensuring that safety upgrades are integrated with routine roadwork, helping to create safer, more accessible streets **for all Angelenos.**

UCLA-led Study Reveals a Powerful Connection between Gentrification and Public Transit Decline

A new UCLA study reveals that rising housing costs in transit-rich neighborhoods are a major factor behind declining public transit ridership in SoCal. Analyzing data from Los Angeles and Orange Counties between 2008–2017, researchers found that a small number of neighborhoods—those undergoing rapid rent increases, income shifts, and demographic changes—accounted for a large share of both boardings and ridership losses. In these areas, a one standard deviation increase in rent correlated with a 22% drop in transit boardings, suggesting that as lower-income, transit-reliant residents are displaced, they're replaced by higher-income individuals more likely to forgo public transit and drive or use rideshare services like Uber & Lyft.

The findings highlight a troubling disconnect between transportation investments and housing affordability. Even in areas with strong transit infrastructure, ridership declines when people who rely on it are pushed out. The study urges policymakers to align housing and transit strategies, warning that without protections for affordable housing near transit, California risks undermining its goals for equity, climate, and mobility. [**UCLA**](#)³

California's Housing-Transit Disconnect

Millions of Californians face a tough choice every day: either endure long, costly commutes or spend a disproportionate share of their income on housing near jobs and transit. Despite billions invested in expanding public transit, most new housing in California is built far from transit stations, limiting access for those who rely on these services. With a shortage of over 3 million homes, this disconnect between transit investments and restrictive housing policies is driving up living costs, pushing workers out, and weakening the state's economic and environmental goals.

The solution is clear: California must allow more housing near transit to make life more affordable, to reduce traffic, pollution, and transportation costs, as well as to boost economic growth. By aligning housing and transit policies, California can create more sustainable, equitable communities where families thrive. Lawmakers have introduced reforms like reducing parking mandates and tying federal transit funding to housing production, but more coordinated efforts are urgently needed to prevent further displacement and ensure that public investments deliver real benefits for **all Californians**.

[**OC Register**](#)⁴

Metro Reports Large Drop in Crime Across System Amid Safety Overhaul

Metro officials announced a more than 66% decrease in assaults across buses and trains compared to the previous year, crediting new safety measures and increased law enforcement presence. CEO Stephanie Wiggins shared the update at the agency's "State of the Agency" event, highlighting key partnerships with LAPD and crisis response teams. Despite past concerns over rider safety, Metro says the changes are restoring public confidence in LA's transit system. [**ABC7**](#)⁵

Metro Ridership Plummets 6% in June Amid Construction, Protests, and Immigration Fears

Metro ridership declined by approximately 1.5 million rides in June 2025, representing a 6% drop year-over-year and a more than 13% fall from May. This decline broke several months of steady ridership growth. Transit officials cite multiple causes, including ongoing D Line construction, schedule changes, and service disruptions linked to anti-ICE protests. Community advocates say a recent surge in federal immigration raids and sightings of agents near stations and bus stops have instilled fear, discouraging many undocumented and immigrant riders from using public transit. While Metro says it has no evidence of immigration agents boarding buses or trains, the agency is updating protocols to protect vulnerable passengers. [**LAist**](#)⁶

LA Approves 5-Year FilmLA Deal Amid Calls for Permit Reform

The LA Board of Public Works has voted to renew FilmLA's contract for five more years, despite calls from advocacy groups and some lawmakers to delay the decision and negotiate reforms to the city's costly and complex permitting system. Critics, including the group Stay in LA, pushed for amendments such as reducing fees, streamlining processes, and making public spaces more accessible for filming, arguing the current system contributes to runaway production. While the contract was approved without changes, FilmLA and city leaders, including Councilmember Adrin Nazarian (CD2), are committed to pursuing reforms to support the struggling film and TV industry. Sacramento recently improved an increase to the state tax incentive program for film & TV production, increasing the annual credit pool from \$330M to \$750M in an effort helping the state compete with other states and countries that have been able to attract production out of California. **Deadline**⁷

Olympics Transit-First Push Hinges on Massive Bus Fleet Expansion

Metro plans to double its current bus fleet—adding approximately 2,700 to 6,000 buses—by the 2028 Olympics to support a “transit-first” Games and reduce car traffic, though securing the buses, hiring operators, and establishing dedicated bus lanes pose significant logistical hurdles. So far, Metro has leased about 650 buses and obtained \$17.6 million in state funding, but the overall project may cost up to \$1 billion, with a looming \$2.3 billion Metro deficit threatening progress. Officials remain cautiously optimistic, citing successes from the 1984 Olympics and a stronger transit infrastructure today, but warn that time and funding remain tight to meet critical milestones. **LA Times**⁸

Metrolink SCORE Faces Funding, Timeline Hurdles Before 2028 Olympics



California's Metrolink SCORE program aims to provide 30-minute, all-day train service across its network by 2028, in preparation for a car-free Olympics and a more sustainable regional transit future. However, progress has fallen far behind schedule, with only 1 of 21 planned projects completed, with several canceled and most still lacking funding needed to move forward. One obstacle is the absence of a dedicated funding stream, forcing SCORE to compete with other transportation projects and priorities. Without stable financial support, the future of many planned critical upgrades (track improvements, station enhancements, and modern train equipment) remains unclear.

To address this uncertainty, advocates are pushing for the consolidation of Metrolink under a single transit authority and for funding mechanisms to be linked to the State Rail Plan. Fare integration is also a central focus, with proposed changes to align Metrolink fares with those of county transit agencies (e.g., Tap Cards) and introduce fare caps on cross-county trips to create a more seamless and affordable rider experience. These reforms could help drive ridership, but the scale of the infrastructure upgrades—including double-tracking, new tunnels, and fleet modernization—comes with a staggering cost estimated at \$40 to \$50 billion.

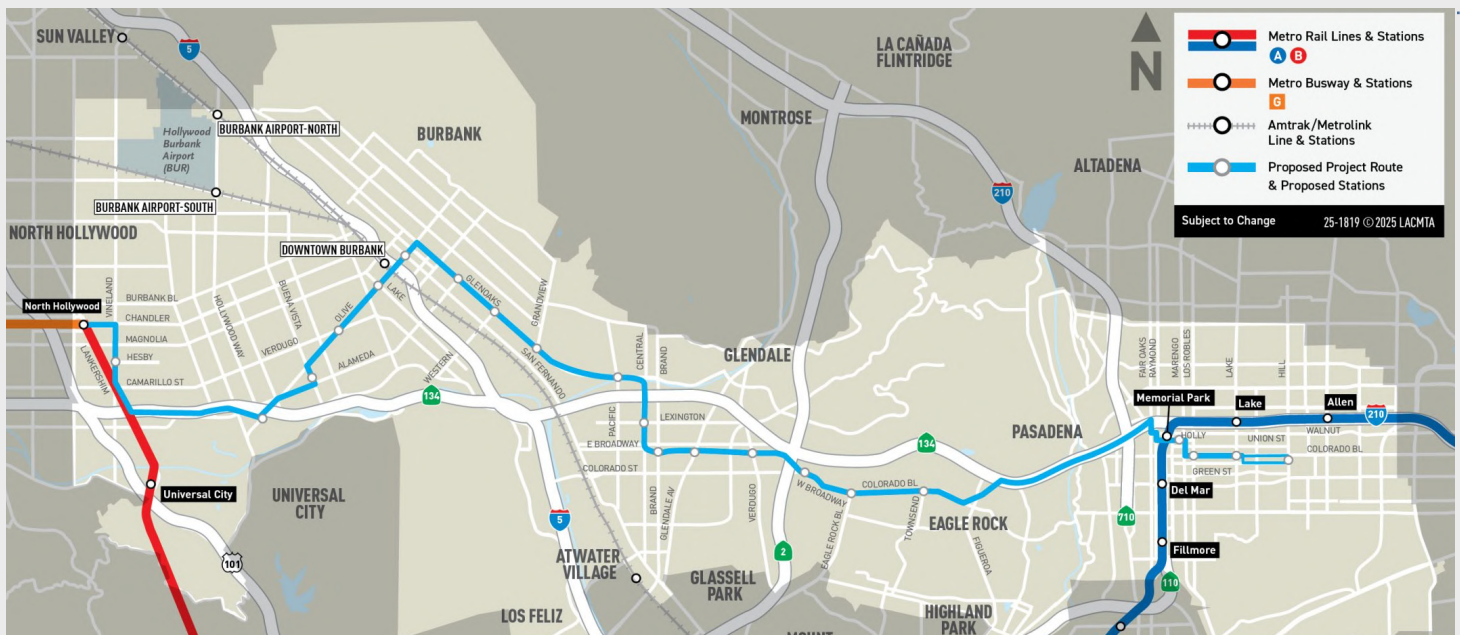
Meanwhile, Metro is moving forward with the launch of several new electric bus routes this summer, expanding access to clean transportation in underserved neighborhoods across Los Angeles. These efforts aim to boost public confidence in the region's transit system and demonstrate tangible progress ahead of global events like the Super Bowl, World Cup, and Olympics. To further engage the public, the **Regional Transit Planning Workshop will be held on August 15**, offering community members a chance to hear updates on SCORE, ask questions, and provide feedback. Registration for the event is now open online. **Metrolink**⁹

Proposed Solids Resources Fee Increase

The City is proposing adjustments to the Solid Resources Fee and the Multi-Family Bulky Item Fee, which have remained unchanged since 2008, to fully cover the costs of refuse-related services. Informational webinars will be held on **August 27th and September 13th** to provide details about these proposed changes. Financial assistance programs are available for low-income customers. Residents are encouraged to participate in the webinars and stay informed through the LASAN website for updates. **LA Sanitation¹⁰**

DWELLING TYPE	CURRENT	FALL 2025	JULY 2026	JULY 2027	JULY 2028	JULY 2029
Single Family Solid Resources Fee (per dwelling unit)	\$36.32	\$55.95	\$59.53	\$60.44	\$63.27	\$65.93
Duplex Solid Resources Fee (per dwelling unit)	\$36.32	\$55.95	\$59.53	\$60.44	\$63.27	\$65.93
Multi-Family (3-4 units*) Solid Resources Fee (per dwelling unit)	\$24.33	\$55.95	\$59.53	\$60.44	\$63.27	\$65.93

North Hollywood to Pasadena Bus Rapid Transit Project



The **Pasadena Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** project is a planned 18-mile rapid bus line connecting North Hollywood, Burbank, Glendale, Eagle Rock, and Pasadena, with 22 stations and dedicated bus lanes along much of the route. Designed to reduce travel times by up to 44%, it will use zero-emission electric buses and include pedestrian and bike improvements. Funding is through Measure M and state grants, with construction set to begin in 2025 and service expected in 2027. It supports Metro's "28 by 28" initiative to expand transit before the 2028 Olympics. **Metro¹¹**

LA Public Library Survey

LAPL has launched a community survey to help shape its strategic plan and ensure its services reflect the needs and values of the communities it serves. Your feedback will play an important role in guiding the Library's future. **LAPL¹²**



Public Comment on Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project

The 90-day comment for the project ends on **August 30, 2025**

- Comment form - tinyurl.com/3hm99v4p
- Email: sepulvedatransit@metro.net
- Project information line: 213.922.7375
- U.S. Mail: Peter Carter, Metro, One Gateway Plaza, MS 99-22-6, Los Angeles, CA 90012



Monthly Trash Cleanup!

Volunteers Cleaning Communities is hosting their next Northridge cleanup on **Sunday August 10th from 8:30-10:30AM at Tampa/Nordhoff**. Cleanups are led by NSNC member and VCC leader **Matt Zebro**.

Email cleanup818@gmail.com or sign up here for more information: tinyurl.com/y955nevp





Keep Los Angeles Beautiful 7th Annual
**BEAUTIFICATION
CONFERENCE 2025**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 2025 | 10 AM
LINCOLN HEIGHTS SENIOR CENTER | 2323 Workman St., LA, 90031



KAREN BASS
MAYOR OF LOS ANGELES



**EUNISSES
HERNANDEZ**
L.A. City Councilmember | District 1





State Legislation & Other Updates from Sacramento

Transportation Bills (for reference only, listing doesn't constitute an endorsement)

SB71 California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: transit projects.

Makes permanent and expands existing exemptions under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for sustainable public transit projects.

Introduced 4/16/25 by Sen. Wiener, **Passed Senate 36-0 6/3/25**, sent to Assembly 6/4/25, **Passed Com. on Natural Resources 12-0-2 7/17/25, Referred to Com. on Appropriations 7/17/25**

SB79 Local government land: public transit: housing development: transit-oriented development.

Legalizes and streamlines the construction of multi-family housing within a half-mile of major public transit stops, such as rail stations and rapid bus lines.

Introduced 1/15/25 by Sen. Wiener, **Passed Senate 21-13 6/3/25**, sent to Assembly 6/4/25, **Passed Com. on Housing and Community Development 9-2-1 7/25/25, Passed Com. on Housing and Community Development 9-2 7/2/25, Passed Com. on Local Government 6-1 7/16/25, Referred to Com. on Appropriations 7/17/25, Referred to Com. on Appropriations 7/17/25**

SB445 Transportation: planning: complete streets facilities: sustainable transportation projects

Amends Section 671.5 of the Streets and Highways Code to streamline permitting approval process for transit projects including street projects that enhance pedestrian, cyclist, and public transit access.

Introduced 4/10/25 by Sen. Wiener, **Passed Senate 34-1 5/28/25**, sent to Assembly 5/28/25, Assembly Rule 56 suspended 7/8/25, **Passed Com. on Transportation 10-3 7/14/25, Passed Com. on Local Government 8-2 7/16/25, Passed Com. on Utilities & Energy 10-4 7/16/25, Referred to Com. on Appropriations 7/17/25**

SB720 Automated traffic enforcement system programs.

Authorizes local jurisdictions to implement automated traffic enforcement systems—commonly known as red light cameras—to detect traffic signal violations.

Introduced 4/9/25 by Sen. Ashby, **Passed Senate 31-3 6/3/25**, sent to Assembly 6/4/25, **Passed Com. on Transportation 15-0 7/14/25, Passed Com. on Privacy & Consumer Protection 13-2 7/16/25, Referred to Com. on Appropriations 7/17/25**

SB545 High-speed rail: economic opportunities.

Directs the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to assess how the California high-speed rail can spur economic growth and local benefits along its route.

Introduced 2/20/25 by Sen. Cortese, **Passed Senate 27-9 6/2/25**, sent to Assembly 6/3/25, **Passed Com. on Transportation 10-3 7/7/25, Passed Com. on Local Government 8-1 7/16/25, Referred to Com. on Appropriations 7/17/25**

AB394 Public transportation providers.

Bolsters safety for public transit workers and riders by strengthening legal protections and expanding enforcement tools across transit systems

Introduced 2/20/25 by Asm. Wilson, **Passed Assembly 76-0 6/2/25**, sent to Senate 6/2/25, **Passed Com. on Public Safety 6-0 7/1/25, Passed Com. on Judiciary 13-0 7/15/25, Referred to Com. on Appropriations 7/17/25**

AB1085 License plates: obstruction or alteration.

Increases penalties for buying and selling license plate covers. Would increase the fine from \$250 to \$2,500 per item sold or manufactured and would impose new state-mandated local programs.

Introduced 4/9/25 by Asm. Stefani, **Passed Assembly 69-0 5/15/25, Passed Senate 35-0 7/17/25, sent back to Assembly with Senate Amendments 7/17/25**

Public Works Bills (for reference only, listing doesn't constitute an endorsement)**AB942** Net energy metering: eligible customer-generators: tariffs.

Requires new homeowners who purchase a property with rooftop solar to switch to the current Net Billing Tariff, ending their eligibility for older, more generous solar compensation rates. Solar customers would also no longer receive the California Climate Credit, the yearly rebate funded by cap-and-trade.

Introduced 2/19/25 by Asm. Calderon, **Passed Assembly 46-14 6/3/25, sent to Senate 6/3/25, Passed Com. on Utilities & Energy 9-4 7/15/25, Referred to Com. on Appropriations 7/17/25**

Assembly-40th
Pilar Schiavo

SB71	SB545
SB79	AB394 ✓
SB445	AB1045 ✓
SB720	AB942 —
SB273	

Senate-20th
Caroline Menjivar

SB71 ✓	SB545 ✓
SB79 ✗	AB394
SB445 ✓	AB1045 ✓
SB720 ✓	AB942
SB273	

California Drops \$15 Broadband Plan Under Federal Pressure

Lawmakers have backed down from a proposed bill, **AB 353**, that would have required internet providers to offer \$15/month broadband plans to low-income households.

Lawmakers dropped the plan after the Trump administration issued new rules threatening to withhold almost \$2 billion in federal broadband expansion funding if states set specific price requirements for subsidized service. Critics slammed the move as a capitulation to telecom lobbyists and a setback for digital equity, while state legislators now say they'll explore less aggressive alternatives, such as a voluntary \$30/month plan modeled after the federal Affordable Connectivity Program that expired in June 2024. **Ars Technica**¹³



Links for Further Reading and More Info

¹California Court Rules Holding Cellphone While Driving Is Illegal
- tinyurl.com/3cemkzm8



⁸Olympics Transit-First Push Hinges on Massive Bus Fleet Expansion - tinyurl.com/3x33ndpx



²California High-Speed Rail Unveils Plan to Rescue Project - tinyurl.com/hnzaxpr6



⁹MetroLink SCORE Faces Hurdles Before 2028 Olympics - tinyurl.com/3txtyew4



³UCLA-led Study Gentrification and Public Transit Decline - tinyurl.com/ymswvwxz



¹⁰Proposed Solids Resources Fee Increase - tinyurl.com/4z6c5b5f



⁴California's Housing-Transit Disconnect - tinyurl.com/2s35s6kt



¹¹North Hollywood to Pasadena Bus Rapid Transit Project - tinyurl.com/n7pup8v2



⁵Metro Reports Large Drop in Crime - tinyurl.com/5br2scux



¹²LA Public Library Survey - tinyurl.com/3hf33u7x



⁶Metro Ridership Plummets 6% in June - tinyurl.com/2u8m5ta2



¹³California Drops \$15 Broadband Plan Under Federal Pressure - tinyurl.com/57h7xvcp



⁷LA Approves 5-Year FilmLA Deal - tinyurl.com/599n6e5f



Look up Legislation by Bill

tinyurl.com/4awahpsr



Northridge Monthly Trash Cleanup Signup

Google Signup: tinyurl.com/y955nevp
Email cleanup818@gmail.com



California

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

Thank you for reading! For any questions, concerns, or comments, please email mzebro.nsncc@gmail.com