

REGIONAL BUDGET REPRESENTATIVES' MEETING
With Mayor Villaraigosa
2/25/06

NOTES

Mayor's Opening Statement

Sidewalk Repair is very important. In the survey, it served as a proxy for overall infrastructure issues.

- So far, we have completed 80,000 [pothole repairs.]
- There are 280,000 [pothole repairs] budgeted for.

Harbor Area Representatives' Statement

- 1) Public Safety/Homeland Security: Priority 1 for the Harbor area because of:
 - Port security and its potential effect on surrounding area
 - We support the ½ cent tax increase for increased public safety
 - We have in our area a positive example of a program to reduce crime and gangs (*missed the name of the program.*)
- 2) Priority 2—Transportation /Sidewalks
 - Developers need to pay their fair share of streets and repairs
 - Need better coordination between street trees and sidewalk repairs/maintenance
 - Concerns about sidewalks, especially around schools
- 3) Priority 3—Trash Disposal
 - Concerned about the disposal of large appliances
- 4) Priority 4—Economic Development
 - We think that addressing all the above concerns will help attract more businesses/employers to the area

Mayoral Response to Harbor Statements

- We would like to do more sidewalk repair partnerships.
- We would like to look at trying the “Utah Model” re: dealing with the impact of street trees on sidewalks
- Report your potholes
- Education: 17 new after-school programs this and next year
- Prioritizing safety at schools fits into the Safe Passages
- ½ cent tax increase is a challenge to get support
- We are having problems recruiting additional LAPD officers despite the availability of money to pay for them. This extra money should go to the general fund to help us pay for crime prevention/intervention programs.

West Area Representatives' Statements Re: Budget Priorities

1) TRAFFIC IS THE MAJOR ISSUE

- Traffic in West LA is a cancer
- We are very angry about the lack of progress in this area
- Traffic exacts economic, social, and health costs on all of us (e.g. stress)

- We want a Task Force and an Action Plan on Traffic
- We want this process to be transparent
- We want immediate mitigation
- We want the City to coordinate with State, County, and Federal governments
- We want DOT fully funded
- We want to explore special assessments to raise money for mitigation
- Developers need to be accountable

2) Overdevelopment

- Leads to traffic
- Businesses are leaving the area
- Congestion within the community
- We want the City to focus on what it can do about the problem; one of those things is that we can no longer put off infrastructure improvements

Mayoral Response to West Area

- Smart growth requires infrastructure and geographic focus. For example we need cross town and downtown transportation corridors.

- I just hired new nationally recognized leadership to help with this process. The new leaders are the heads of both the Planning Department and the Department of Transportation.

- Looking at using the London model to assess congestion pricing, e.g. the Homeowner Association opposition we encountered to the construction on the 101.
(Not clear on the meaning of this statement.)

Other things we are doing:

- 50 new traffic officers citywide
- Stopped rush hour construction (although the actual effect on traffic was minimal)
- Got \$130 million from federal government for High Occupancy Vehicle lanes
- Put \$350 million in the state's proposed infrastructure bond for Los Angeles

- The Red Line will be the most cost-effective transit project

It will cost \$248 million to synchronize traffic lights. It should lead to about a 7-10% improvement in traffic.

- We got some money for it.
- Will do it over 4 years.
- We are requesting \$150 million from the state of California for this.

- We have 160 new left-turn signals planned
- We want a “lock box” on Prop.42 Transportation money
- We got \$80 million in federal money for the Gold Line
- Got Orange Line Busway

We still need:

- Greater density in the areas where it makes sense, such as downtown and along transit corridors.
- To convince people to get out of their cars and use public transit!

Central Area Representatives' Statements

1) Transportation

- Our area is both a corridor and a destination
- We want to improve the utilization of the DASH, including better synchronization and linkage to the transit lines, and help get people out of their cars.
- We need parking sites around transit
- We need to synchronize the traffic lights
- We need our streets resurfaced
- Traffic should not be going through residential streets
 - Especially when carrying industrial materials
 - Venice/Olympic are nightmares

2) Education & Joint Use

We would like to see more joint use sites, such as the L.A.C.E.S. (LA Center for Enriched Studies, public high school) in our area.

Mayoral Response to Central Area

- Expanding use of traffic cops. They help traffic flow, but are costly.
- Will follow up with the stalled L.A.C.E.S. project
- Need more street resurfacing
- We are addressing the City's deficit as we negotiate City of Los Angeles employees' contracts. We want to be fair, but live within our means.
- People want services and are fair when feel they are being addressed.
- Central and South LA have 1/10 the park space of other areas in the City of Los Angeles

North Valley Budget Representatives' Statements

(North Valley includes: Sun Valley, Sylmar, Foothill Ranch)

Planning

- We have open space, but still need improved planning.
- The community plan needs to be updated and consistently implemented.
- We are willing to allow for greater density, affordable, housing, and improved transportation.

We know where density should be.

Park Land/Green Space

- Look at special benefit assessment areas to pay for more trees and green space
- Mitigation money does not seem to be impacted by community's input.

Trash

- How much money is going to the waste haulers
- People are willing to pay more for the need to address trash disposal and recycling

Mayoral Response to North Valley Area

- Community plans need to be updated across the City of Los Angeles. And specific plans need to be improved. I am setting this as a goal.
- Stakeholders need to understand that it is really City Council members that drive land use. Their plans are often veto-proof. If you think your input is not being listened to, you must understand that these decisions are truly council-driven.
- Re: Sunshine Canyon, I am willing to spend more money to remove the City's trash and take it somewhere else. The challenge is from the City Council re: the increased price. I am working to engage Council.
- By 2007 multi-family unit housing recycling program will begin
- By 2010 all commercial recycling
- Also working on plans with county, state, federal and LAUSD, as well as surrounding cities that use Sunshine to greatly increase recycling.

East Area Budget Representatives' Statements

- 1) We need improved street lighting in our area
 - To improve safety
 - Especially around schools, parks, recreation centers
- 2) We need BUSES & COPS!
 - Need better transportation
 - More DASH lines
 - We are even willing to pay higher fees for DASH
 - We need visible cops
- 3) We need Affordable housing projects
- 4) We need joint use projects
- 5) Homeland security is not the concern for us that everyday crime is.
- 6) Education—we want more funding for parent involvement programs
- 7) We need opportunity for the youth—they are the silent community
 - We have low-income housing without recreational or educational opportunities for the youth. This is poor planning.
 - We would like better involvement from Council Member Reyes
- 8) Planning—We want our specific community plan enforced
- 9) We want to consider amending the 3/12 cop schedule to put more cops on the street.

Mayoral Response to East Area

- Re: the 3/12 cop schedule, studies have shown that it has not reduced cop coverage. It may have some negative effect on community policing/community connection to the police force.
- Chief Bratton has been very effective.
- We need to spend more money on cops AND on prevention programs.
- Most money for lights comes from special assessments which is the challenge.

South Area Budget Representatives' Statements

1) Priority number one is economic development!

- The differences in priorities reflected in the citywide budget survey points out the differences between the haves and the have-nots in LA.
- Our area is the have-nots.
- We are overwhelmed with absentee owners and blight
- Businesses contribute to the blight, but do little to contribute to the community. We need more partnerships with businesses.
- Job training—we need summer youth program
- We don't feel we get a fair share of the City's resources.

2) Public Safety/Homeland Security

- We disagree with homeland security being a part of the public safety category.
- Our focus is violent crime.
- We want more LAPD money for intervention—not prevention—programs for at-risk youth, for example partnerships with charter schools, who deal with the majority of kids ejected from the LAUSD system.
- We support the ½ cent tax increase, as long as the money goes to these types of programs.
- We need new, less-restrictive criteria for cops that can attract recruits that are from the community and that represent the community.

3) Sidewalk Repairs

- This is important, but it's just as important to preserve the trees!

Mayoral Response to South Area

- Some parts of the City of Los Angeles have turned to dumping grounds. In some cases, it's because the people there are vulnerable and can't defend themselves [politically.]
- Regarding the ½ cent tax increase, there is definitely a disconnect here between the leadership and the grassroots. The ½ cent vote failed in South LA, unlike the majority of the rest of the City of Los Angeles.
- Denise Fairchild is the new leader I have hired to focus on South LA's economic development plan. She really understands.
- South LA does have a concentration of things like liquor stores, sober living facilities, etc. We have experience with addressing these situations. As Council Member, 6 of the 10 liquor stores that were shut down were closed in my district.
- We need to work with City Council Districts 10, 1, 13, 8, 9, and 14 to expand the program to close liquor stores and bars [that are harmful to the community.]

South Valley Budget Representatives' Statements

- 1) The bottom line is planning.
- 2) Look at the cost-benefit of budget items
 - Generate more money
 - Increase efficiency
- 3) Sanitation/ Water
- 4) Traffic
 - e.g. one-way streets
- 5) Use NC'S as a resource, on civil commissions, task forces, etc. We will feed the information back to other people.
- 6) Two reasons why people don't respond to budget survey:
 - One, they don't care
 - Two, they don't like the questions. Want our questions included on the budget survey.

Mayoral Response to South Valley Area

- People do need the opportunity to shape the budget survey.
- Open-ended questions on budget survey

MAYOR'S GENERAL WRAP UP

Homeland Security vs. Crime

- Homeland security is an often unacknowledged responsibility of the City, but it is a huge role for the City of Los Angeles/Mayor, as we saw in Katrina and 9/11.
- I am focused on being pro-active re: emergency preparation and homeland security.
- Still, I understand that people see these categories as separate.

- I WILL MAKE THE DECISIONS, but I am listening and taking into account **ALL** of what's being said.

- People want more services
- Greater efficiency, even in the LAPD.
- We will find at least \$50 million in efficiencies

- Although we are in a tight situation, we will increase money in some areas that are not getting their fair share (e.g. parks and green space.)

- More cops

- Study: DWP, pension funds, incentives to put developments in underserved areas for economic development

EDUCATION

- I come from the teacher's union, but I believe UTLA is wrong to support the status quo.
- Three things causing middle-class flight: schools, safety, housing costs
- Need mayoral accountability in the LAUSD
- Will do whatever it takes to get more money for our city.
- E-mail additional budget information/priorities to the Mayor's office.
- Bud Ovrum in the Mayor's office is working on the film industry preservation. The film industry is a major economic engine for our city.

POST-MEETING EVALUATION

Participants enjoyed the time with the Mayor.

Participants felt that:

- They should spend more time problem-solving with the Mayor so they can know how to help.
- The 14 regional reps should spend time together to develop pro-active joint solutions before the Mayor arrives.
- Would like to prepare on another day for all to be together and for each region to develop a joint paper to present.
- Need this meeting to actually focus on budget priorities, not individual community's political/parochial problems.

Overall Process

Need greater communication amongst ourselves and with the Mayor's staff
We want greater involvement in every stage of the process, including CAO hearings with Departments.

- ✓ City staff will help regional reps contact each other ahead of time.
- ✓ Dan Wiseman will set up a Yahoo group for the 14 regional budget representatives

NEXT STEPS

Address the conflict between too specific of input limiting options for Mayor and departments.

Hated the survey

Have departments contribute questions to the survey

Let NC's design their own budget survey

Have department representatives meet with NC reps re: our input

14 reps help develop the budget input process for next year

Consider how to build on the experience of the current group of 14 regional reps.

- ✓ City Will bring this group together again to help design process for next year

NC's need to do broader outreach for the survey, not just to board members
Budget Day should be in July and the survey should be ready in July

- ✓ Saturday 3/25 10 AM, regional budget reps will meet again.