

## Our "Lunch on the Edge" Technical Series Needs You in 2015



*Nancy Michali (AECOM), Photos © John Livzey, 2015*

If you believe that learning and sandwiches go well together, you can help WTS-Los Angeles Chapter continue its successful "Lunch on the Edge" programs.

Do you know of a subject worthy of exploration? Do you have a venue where experts and transportation professionals can share their knowledge in a casual atmosphere? Do you know of a skilled presenter? If so, Lisa Karwoski, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President for Programs, would love to hear from you at [lisa.karwoski@hatchmott.com](mailto:lisa.karwoski@hatchmott.com).

Last year's programs began on April 29 at AECOM's Downtown Los Angeles offices. Three presenters explored the topic of rail-station area-planning. Approximately 40 attendees heard AECOM's Nancy Michali (left) and her colleagues explain why original station-based ridership numbers on the Red Line/Purple Line and Eastside Gold Line Extension varied from actual ridership numbers due to station area land use planning and development decisions.

Rounding out the team of presenters, Lillian Burkenheim Silver of Eco-Rapid Transit discussed her work developing transit-oriented land use, urban design and access policies for the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor.

"The presenters were pleased with the audience participation," said Michali, a new WTS-LA board member who chairs the Adopt-A-School Committee. "I particularly enjoyed the questions from younger audience members who missed the planning and construction of the Red Line. They were eager to know the background on some decisions."



"We thought this was a worthy topic because rail-station area-planning affects everyone's quality of life," Michali added. "It's an issue receiving a lot of public discussion on how to best integrate rail transit into

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surrounding communities.” Michali believes another reason for the audience’s enthusiasm was that “People love to hear what’s going on behind the scenes.”



Lunch on the Edge presents a range of topics, as illustrated by the August 7 lunch. ICF International’s Terry Rivasplata (left) highlighted details of the latest legislative updates on CEQA and NEPA at ICF’s Los Angeles office. Attendees heard Rivasplata explain how the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration are approaching the new drafts.

Reflecting the expertise of Lunch on the Edge presenters, Rivasplata specializes in CEQA compliance and plan preparation. He co-authored *The CEQA Deskbook*.

“Besides Terry’s information, two things made this event stand out,” said Jeff Markwardt, Senior Proposal Manager for ICF International. “First, the lunch was perfectly timed—the Governor’s Office of Planning and

Research released its CEQA Guidelines revisions the day before. Second, the audience included women and men from the private, public and non-profit sectors.” Markwardt serves as chair of the chapter’s Volunteer Committee.

Rivasplata further elaborated on SB 743’s (2013) mandates to shift from using automotive delay as a measure of significant environmental impact. The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, Rivasplata’s former employer, has proposed several new metrics to help analyze potential environmental consequences to multimodal transportation networks. New guidelines will likely be mandated in mid- to late-2015 or beyond.

Please help WTS-LA continue Lunch on the Edge and win the appreciation of your peers. Contrary to the popular saying, you might discover that there is a free lunch.

This article was written by Ned Racine.