

Metro's Martha Welborne to WTS Los Angeles: "We Are a Serious Transit City"

COMMITTEE REPORT



*Martha Welborne (Chief Planning Officer for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority)
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Martha Welborne, Chief Planning Officer for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), used her February 10 appearance at WTS-LA's first 2015 luncheon—a "standing room only" event—to review current Metro initiatives and assure her audience that, as the agency crafts another ballot initiative, there will be plenty of local input.

Welborne, who leads a staff of more than 200, also spoke of Metro's work developing a master plan for Union Station, the historic 42-acre transportation hub in downtown Los Angeles. Welborne noted that, with the arrive of high-speed rail, Union Station will become even more crucial to transit riders.

"When high-speed rail comes to Los Angeles it will come to Union Station—as it should," Welborne said. "When high-speed tracks arrive, they will bring about 25,000 trips per day to Union Station, which now handles approximately 112,000 trips per day."

Before an audience of 270 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel, Welborne emphasized the success of Measure R, the half-cent sales tax approved by Los Angeles County voters in November 2008. Besides generating \$35 billion for transportation projects over 30 years, she stated that Measure R will create more than 210,000 construction jobs. She specifically listed the five projects under construction because of Measure R funding: Expo Line Phase II; Gold Line Foothill Extension (Pasadena to Azusa); Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor; Regional Connector; and the Purple Line Extension.

Welborne, a trained architect and urban planner, also addressed a misconception regarding Los Angeles transit resources.



“Most people still think that Los Angeles does not have much transit,” she said. “That is simply not true. We’re at 1.5 million riders daily; if you add the municipal bus lines, we would beat Chicago. We are a serious transit city.”