



September 3, 2015

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Edward C. Starr, City Manager 
SUBJECT: WEEKLY REPORT: August 28-September 3, 2015

CITY MANAGER/ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENTS

- Zipping along the Los Angeles-San Bernardino Metrolink line or the Gold Line from Pasadena to Union Station (or any one of the other light rail lines serving the Los Angeles area), it is common to see traffic congestion on the region's freeways and surface roads. You may even think to yourself that traffic congestion is getting worse in the Southland. According to a report released by INRIX, your suspicions are well-founded—traffic congestion in the United States has returned to pre-recession levels, with Washington D.C. topping the list. The 2015 Urban Mobility Scorecard reported that annual travel delays due to traffic congestion caused drivers to waste more than 3 billion gallons of fuel and kept travelers stuck in their cars for nearly 7 billion extra hours—42 hours annually per rush-hour commuter. The total annual nationwide price tag: \$160 billion, or \$960 per commuter.

INRIX, headquartered in Kirkland, Washington, collects trillions of bytes of information about roadway speeds from over 185 million real-time anonymous mobile phones, connected cars, trucks, delivery vans, and fleet vehicles equipped with GPS locator devices. The data collected is processed in real-time and cross-referenced with a database of variables that affect traffic, including weather forecasts, special events, school schedules, road construction, and highway performance data drawn from the Federal Highway Administration. The database is then used to create traffic speed information for major freeways, highways, and arterials across North America.

Washington, D.C. tops the list of gridlock-plagued cities, with 82 hours of delay per commuter, followed by Los Angeles (80 hours), San Francisco (78 hours), New York (74 hours), and San Jose (67 hours).

The problem has become so bad in major urban areas that drivers have to plan for more than twice as much travel time as they would otherwise need for light traffic situations, just to account for the effects of irregular delays such as bad weather, collisions, and construction zones. For example, drivers on America's Top 10 worst roads waste on average 84 hours or 3.5 days per year on average in gridlock—twice the national average. Of these 10 worst roads, 6 are in Los Angeles, and Chicago and New York each have 2.

Scorecard findings also illustrate that traffic congestion isn't just a big-city issue. Cities of all sizes are experiencing the congestion challenges seen before the start of the recession. Significant contributors include growing urban populations and lower fuel prices that made it more affordable for people to drive. These combined factors have outpaced the nation's ability to build infrastructure.

Of America's Top 10 Worst Traffic cities, 7 experienced population growth last year, outpacing the national average of 0.7 percent, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, Houston and Riverside. Some of the worst traffic cities also experienced some of the largest decreases in fuel prices (-4.1 percent nationally) including Riverside, Houston, Los Angeles, San Jose, Boston, and Chicago. The result, the average travel delay per commuter nationwide is more than twice what it was in 1982. For cities of less than 500,000 people, the problem is four times worse than in 1982.

Recent data from the U.S. Department of Transportation shows Americans have driven more than 3 trillion miles in the last 12 months—a new record, surpassing the 2007 peak just before the global financial crisis.

It is evident the U.S. needs more roadway and transit investment to meet the demands of population growth and economic expansion, but added capacity alone can't solve congestion problems. Solutions must involve a mix of strategies, combining new construction, better operations, and more transportation options, as well as flexible work schedules.

The report predicts urban roadway congestion will continue to get worse without more assertive approaches on the project, program, and policy fronts. By 2020, with a continued good economy:

- ✓ Annual delay per commuter will grow from 42 hours to 47 hours
- ✓ Total delay nationwide will grow from 6.9 billion hours to 8.3 billion hours
- ✓ The total cost of congestion will jump from \$160 billion to \$192 billion.

The 2015 Urban Mobility Scorecard clearly shows the urgent need for investment in public transportation/transit and the nation's road network. Public transportation is effective in saving hundreds of millions of hours of delay and hundreds of millions of gallons of fuel. Many transportation analysts insist that without public transportation, the nation's roadways would be gridlocked.

The 2013 Urban Mobility Report, showed that travelers would have suffered an additional 865 million hours of delay and consumed 450 million more gallons of fuel without public transportation.

According to a recent survey conducted by the American Public Transportation Association and the Mineta Transportation Institute, 75 percent of Americans support using tax dollars to improve public transportation, and close to 70 percent agree that Congress and states should increase the level of investment in public transportation infrastructure.

To help address this growing problem, some communities along public transit routes are looking at developing transit districts. Montclair has been central to this effort by promoting extension of Gold Line light rail service to San Bernardino County and focusing on development of high density, mixed-use projects in North Montclair. With both Metrolink and the Gold Line serving Montclair, the City promotes regional environmental and economic health for the region and expanded access to an array of cultural, social, health, educational and entertainment opportunities for public transit riders and the public transportation-dependent public.

While other nations significantly invest in their transportation infrastructure, America now ranks 28th in infrastructure investment and continues to fall behind global competitors. More and more, Americans are sitting in traffic asking if the dreadful state of the nation's road networks is the best America can do.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- The Building and Code Enforcement Divisions won a hard-fought battle earlier this week when the former World Brake at 4100 Mission Boulevard was demolished.

The building, which suffered significant damage in a fire on Christmas Eve 2012, had been an eyesore and attractive nuisance for over 2-½ years. Despite continual efforts to keep trespassers out of the dangerous building, vagrants and the homeless repeatedly removed security fencing, gates, and doors and found shelter in the structure. Complicating staff's efforts to have the building demolished were an uncooperative former owner who eventually lost the property to foreclosure, and then having to deal with a similarly uncooperative bank that assumed ownership of the property.

A breakthrough was achieved this summer when a prospective buyer who owns other property on Mission Boulevard and is known to staff expressed interest in the site. After extensive communication with staff and City Prosecutor Jim Eckart regarding the City's desire to have the building demolished as soon as possible, the buyer closed escrow, completed the asbestos abatement, and received clearance from the SCAQMD to move forward with demolition.

"Before," "during," and "after" photos appear below. Building Official Merry Westerlin, who spent countless hours dealing with the former owner and the bank since early 2013 in an attempt to have the building demolished, is overjoyed at achieving victory at long last.

Before





During





After





Merry Westerlin, Building Official, feeling jubilant

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- On September 1 and 2, the Montclair and Upland Fire Departments received Hazardous Materials Decontamination training from Battalion Chief Dave Pohl. There was a short classroom review of decontamination procedures, which included safety at hazardous materials incidents, set up of the decontamination corridor, and donning and doffing of chemical resistant suits. The crews then proceeded outside where they set up the necessary equipment to properly decontaminate a Hazardous Materials Specialist or possible civilian exposed to a hazardous material.

Photos taken at the training follow on Pages 9 and 10.





HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

- Last Thursday, the Senior Center held a presentation called "Laughter is Food for the Soul." Comedian Marty Ross, who specializes in senior audiences, performed for over 50 senior citizens. After Marty's performance, group pictures were taken using props; ladies received red wax lips, and the men received black wax mustaches. Refreshments were served and everyone received a goodie bag with bubblegum, hand clappers, bubbles, and a Hostess Ding Dong. Many participants stated they had not laughed so much and so hard in a long time, and they received many "likes" on their Facebook pages.

Did you know, research shows we change physiologically when we laugh? We stretch muscles in our face and whole body, our pulse and blood pressure go up, and we breathe faster, sending more oxygen to our tissues. People who believe in the benefits of laughter say it can be like a mild workout, and it may offer some of the same advantages as a workout.

Photos are shared on Page 14.

- The L.A. County Fair opens tomorrow at Fairplex in Pomona and runs through Sunday, September 27. The Fair will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, with the exception of Labor Day on Monday, September 7.

City employees and the community may purchase discounted Fair tickets from the Recreation Center. The tickets are good any day the Fair is open. Adult tickets are \$12, and child tickets (6-12 years old) are \$6. Children 5 and under are free. Tickets must be purchased with cash.

Montclair Day at the Fair is Friday, September 11. Activities will include a parade featuring Montclair groups and a special ceremony for Montclair's Community Heroes (Irene Norquist, Senior Community Hero; and Emma Casillas, Adult Community Hero). Coupons for \$5 admission to the Fair on Montclair Day are available at the Senior Center, Recreation Center, City Hall, and on the City's website:

http://www.cityofmontclair.org/depts/human_services/special_events/mdatf.asp.

Discounted tickets can be purchased online or at the gate with a coupon. Fridays are also "Food Drive Fridays" at the L.A. County Fair. Just bring five canned goods between noon and 6 p.m. to get in free!

The Montclair Golden Express will provide free transportation for those 18 and older on Montclair Day only, beginning at 11 a.m. To make reservations, call the Senior Center at (909) 625-9483. For more information on discounted tickets, call the Recreation Center at (909) 625-9479.

SUCCESSOR REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY/ MONTCLAIR HOUSING CORPORATION

- Haggen—a supermarket chain based in the Pacific Northwest—is suing Albertsons for \$1 billion. The chain is alleging Albertsons tricked them into buying 146 stores to facilitate Albertsons' merger with Safeway and then proceeded to sabotage Haggen's entry into the new markets. Haggen claims Albertsons engaged in "systematic efforts" to eliminate it as a competitor in five states after the Federal Trade Commission forced Albertsons to sell 146 of its stores to Haggen as part of its merger with Safeway earlier this year.

In a lawsuit filed Tuesday in federal court in Delaware, Haggen says it has since been forced to lay off hundreds of workers and close about a fifth of the stores it had acquired from Albertsons. "Albertsons' illegal campaign includes premeditated acts of unfair and anti-competitive conduct that were calculated to circumvent Albertsons' obligations under federal antitrust laws, Federal Trade Commission orders and contractual commitments to Haggen," the lawsuit said.

Haggen claims Albertsons provided them with misleading price information about products, muddled inventory data, understocked some stores and overstocked others with perishable products, and ran ad campaigns and discounts to steal customers away from the converted stores, all of which allegedly doomed Haggen's acquisition of the stores from the start.

"Had Haggen known Albertsons' true intentions, Haggen would never have purchased the stores, nor would the FTC have permitted such a purchase," the lawsuit claims.

Albertsons said the lawsuit's allegations "are completely without merit."

ECS:spa

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

~ Thomas A. Edison

SEPTEMBER 2015



07	Labor Day – City Offices Closed	
08	City Council Workshop – Audit Responsibilities and Process, Council Chambers	5:45 p.m.
08	City Council Meeting Council Chambers	7:00 p.m.
14	Planning Commission Meeting Council Chambers	7:00 p.m.
15	City Manager’s Staff Meeting City Hall Conference Room	9:00 a.m.
17	Safety Committee Meeting City Hall Conference Room	9:00 a.m.
17	Public Works Committee Meeting City Hall Conference Room	4:00 p.m.
21	Code Enforcement Committee Meeting City Hall Conference Room	6:00 p.m.
21	City Council Meeting Council Chambers	7:00 p.m.
28	Planning Commission Meeting Council Chambers	7:00 p.m.
29	City Manager’s Staff Meeting City Hall Conference Room	9:00 a.m.

Senior Center Presentation "Laughter is Food for the Soul"

