After a Decade of Accomplishment, We Honored the Men and Women Responsible for Leading Us to Where We Are Today

SPRING FORWARD LA! • 2021

A PROJECT OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS
Friends, Supporters, Honorees,

We had a really, really good time at our Spring Forward LA event in March 2021, when we honored the leaders in business, organized labor, government and the nonprofit world who have worked with us on Measures R and M and so many other issues since 2008! We call them “Transit Transformers”: Metro CEO Phil Washington, former Duarte Mayor and former Metro Boardmember John Fasana, Long Beach Mayor and former Metro Boardmember Robert Garcia, LA County Business Federation (BizFed) CEO Tracy Hernandez, Laborers’ International Union of North America Local 300 Business Manager Sergio Rascon, LA Business Council (LABC) President Mary Leslie, and Skanska USA Executive Vice President Mike Aparicio.

This event booklet includes interviews we conducted with these seven honorees, as well as twitter “shout outs” to the sponsors who have also been essential to our success over 13 years. We are so grateful for your support! And let’s be honest—we also staged this event because we felt the need for a little “pick me up.” 2020 was a challenging year for everyone, but spring has come and with it renewed hope for the future of LA County, California, and the rest of the world!

And we have much more work to do . . .

This past year we learned so many important lessons, especially the understanding that if we don’t come together to meet the challenges in front of us—even if, as with the coronavirus, these challenges demand bold and transformative change—we will not have the future to which we aspire. This is particularly true for Black, Indigenous and People of Color who continue to suffer the most from the pandemic and the recession that has followed it, and the affordable housing crisis that has forced so many people to live on the street.

We must make a concerted effort to “Build Back Better” by addressing the challenges in our future: from curbing climate change to the need to build more affordable housing to the public health hazard of dirty air to rescuing public transit and our transportation system as a whole.

Move LA is proud to have had more than a decade of success building broad-based coalitions to advocate for the bold strategies that are needed. And we are grateful that we have won the support of major business and philanthropic donors.

Thank you all!
Twitter shout-outs on the day of the event!

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit · Mar 25**
Thank you Diamond Sponsors @CE_NatGas @CleanEnergyNGV for fueling heavy-duty vehicles with renewable natural gas, which takes dirty diesel off the roads and keeps it out of our lungs. RNG is the only fuel with carbon-negative emissions. ow.ly/VZ3E50E8Fip

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit · Mar 25**
Thank you @LACareHealth for offering health insurance to low-income people through 4 health coverage programs, and providing health care services for Medi-Cal managed care beneficiaries, uninsured children and other vulnerable people! And thanks for being our Silver Sponsor!

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit · Mar 25**
@GlenDake & @reneeokwilson, dear friends and colleagues who champion the same issues we champion, dream big like we dream, and care about people, politics, the environment and a just society: Thank you both for being a Silver Sponsor. When we need you, you are always there!

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit · Mar 25**
A toast to our Diamond Sponsor @BYDCompany! At their American headquarters in Los Angeles they produce all electric buses made by union workers who live in LA County, and they’re working to bring Skyrail to @metrolosangeles Sepulveda Pass project! en.byd.com/Skyrail

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit · Mar 25**
Thanks Gold Sponsor SoCal Edison for delivering more solar energy than any other US utility. And @SCE's Green Rate program allows you to purchase more renewable energy—50% to 100% of what you need—even if you can't put solar panels on your roof. More at green-rate.org.

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit · Mar 25**
TY to our Gold sponsor @ladwp, the largest public utility providing water & power & now working to achieve 100% renewable energy in @LACity. USC researchers say LA can be powered entirely by renewable energy in 25 years w/o significant disruption to lifestyles or the economy.
Twitter shout-outs on the day of the event!

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit - Mar 25**
Big thanks to our friends and colleagues @xwhimmatric and Michael Soloff for their work with us, for standing with us, for being a Gold Sponsor, and for having so very many good ideas, and caring so much about the people who haven’t got a roof over their heads ... but should!

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit - Mar 26**
@IBEWLocal11 is not just a union, it’s a movement for social justice, safe job sites, training, green jobs & opportunity in LA County. Thank you for working with us and especially for being a Silver Sponsor. And for the union’s righteous principles HERE: ibew11.org/about/

**IBEW LOCAL 11**
SINCE 1891

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit - Mar 25**
Cheers to our Diamond Sponsor @socalgas, committed to becoming the largest North American gas distribution utility to achieve a net-zero target by 2045, aligning w/ the Paris Agreement’s intent to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees C by mid-century!

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit - Mar 25**
Thank you Thomas Safran & your associates @Tsahousing for developing & managing affordable multifamily residential housing & for specializing in both family & senior low-rent housing and mixed-use developments! Please build more! And thank you for being our Silver Sponsor!

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit - Mar 25**
Thank you @SWCTF Southwest Carpenters Union for being a Gold Sponsor and committed to building careers, influencing policies that drive community wealth, and raising the standard of building and living for all workers! There’s an awesome video here: swcarpenters.org/about/

**Move LA Transit @MoveLATransit - Mar 25**
Huge thanks to our Platinum supporter @TransitCenter! Their financial support has helped local advocates up their game when advocating for a more equitable, sustainable, accessible, affordable, and reliable @metrolosangeles1 bit.ly/39eY5Ss
We consider Metro CEO Phil Washington a real hero for what he has done during his 7-year tenure at LA Metro, because he has used the funding voters provided with Measures R (2008) and M (2016) to turn the agency into one that is, as he told us on a Zoom call last August, “not just about mobility anymore, and not simply a big transit construction program.”

“Now Metro is also about investing in communities—as well as new transit lines,” he said, “and delivering jobs, training programs, and small business assistance programs. While previously LA County had invested mostly in freeways to provide mobility, the Measure R and M era of investment is doing something very different: Now we are funding the construction of new transit lines with the goal of providing access to opportunity—education, jobs, healthcare—and to uplift disadvantaged and low-income communities.”

We admired Phil Washington even before Mayor Garcetti brought him to LA from Denver in 2015, where he’d had an illustrious career following passage of a ballot measure, not unlike Measure M, and began building out Denver’s transit system. In Los Angeles he has taken even bigger and bolder steps, recommending that Metro move forward with a congestion pricing program and a fare-free transit system.

On that Zoom call last summer he discussed topics ranging from the need to help LA County’s low-income riders and people who are homeless, as well as Metro’s work on equity, transit-oriented communities, the impact of Metro’s investments, affordable housing and the 4,500 units of housing (37% are affordable) Metro has built or is building, the need for vibrant and safe streets, bus rapid transit, and transit electrification and job creation. Read more below:

SAFE STREETS
“COVID-19 has demonstrated that people are willing to drive less, and to walk and bike more, so we’ve begun supporting communities through grant programs to pilot safe streets and provide more space where people can be outdoors as we shelter in place. COVID-19 has shined a light on the most pressing issues we face as a region, has made us see that burdens are not shared equally. We’re seeing that Black and Latino communities are suffering from the virus at higher rates, that Blacks and Latinos living in low-income communities and people with poor health are the most vulnerable to the pandemic. And we’ve seen that economic repercussions have only increased the need for affordable housing and policies to stabilize these communities.”

A 10-MINUTE WALK
“Equity is the most central part of the solution, not only to our recovery from COVID-19 but to the broader picture at Metro: The majority of Metro riders are from lower-income households. Metro has the highest percentage of low-income riders in the U.S. Chicago, my hometown, comes in second. But while we have the most low-income riders we also have the lowest fares among systems of our size. And our goal is to ensure that all residents are within a 10-minute walk of a transit stop—we made that very clear in our long-range transportation plan.”

EQUITY
“KeAndra Cylear Dodds is Metro’s first Executive Officer of Equity and Race, and is in charge of putting Metro’s equity platform into action and make sure equity and race are part of the evaluation process when decisions are made about where the future transportation...”
network will go using our new equity assessment tool. She is strengthening our relationships with community organizations, advocacy groups and local governments. Metro approved our equity platform in 2018 to provide a framework for how Metro tackles equity issues, engages communities, and delivers projects to address the vast disparities that exist in LA County. And we're going to share the idea of an equity platform around the country.”

**TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES**
“In 2018 we also adopted Metro’s transit-oriented communities policy, which outlines our commitment to partnering with communities to increase transit ridership, stabilize and strengthen communities, and engage our partners from visioning to realization with the goal of distributing transit investments across the region. We know about the rising cost of housing and congested streets and how it’s become harder and harder to afford housing near jobs in neighborhoods where they can also meet other daily needs.”

**THE IMPACT OF METRO’S INVESTMENT**
“We also understand that Metro’s investment in these communities can really influence development patterns. So we want to work with cities to develop in ways that complement transit investments. That’s why we developed the transit-oriented community policy: to encourage communities to look not just at or around the station area but to also investigate the two-and-a-half-mile radius around the station so that our investments can have an impact more broadly.”

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
“The issue of affordable housing is huge. We have provided cities with $24.6 million in grant funding and are creating a technical assistance program to help local jurisdictions leverage the positive benefits of the transit investment. And just this spring the Metro Board approved repurposing nearly $1 million for small business loan funds to provide emergency relief to small businesses near transit.”

**4,500 UNITS OF HOUSING (37% AFFORDABLE)**
“The affordable housing crisis and the rise in homelessness, compounded by COVID-19, is really pushing us into a deeper conversations about these issues. In 2015 Metro pioneered the most aggressive affordable housing policy of any transit agency in the U.S. when we decided that 35% of the housing built on land we own would be affordable to households earning less than 60% of AMI. Today Metro has built 2,200 housing units, 34% of which are affordable, on Metro-owned land through our joint development program. Right now we are in the midst of negotiating and entitlement another 2,300 units, which will bring our affordability to 37%. So we’re not stopping. The severity of the housing crisis is so great that we’re looking for ways to do more. We are re-examining our affordability goals. I’ve asked our joint development team to re-examine that 35% goal, and to see if we can go higher with our objectives.”

**VIBRANT STREETS**
“We are very interested in creating more vibrant streets—streets that are special places. We are creating an active transportation program to provide grant funding to local jurisdictions to improve sidewalks and crosswalks and bike lanes. During the next five years we expect to award $75 million to support pedestrian and bike improvements around the county. We can’t improve transit ridership if people don’t feel safe walking or biking to the nearest bus stop or transit station.”

**BUS RAPID TRANSIT**
“We are still committed and in the process of discussing several new bus rapid transit (BRT) lines, and believe there is great potential for BRT to increase the reliability of our transit service. We are studying the potential of developing an entire BRT network; the North Hollywood to Pasadena line is just one line we are studying now.”

**ELECTRIFICATION AND JOB CREATION**
“The state has set a goal of electrifying all transit by 2040 but Metro’s Board of Directors wants to do it in the next 10 years. COVID has set sales tax revenues back but we have started to electrify the Orange Line with new buses and will have finished by the end of the year. Electrification of the Silver Line, which runs all the way from the East San Gabriel Valley down the 110 to the South Bay, has been slightly delayed by the revenue shortfall but we are fully committed to electrifying where we can and eventually our entire fleet. And with that comes new jobs. We’re looking at ways to train both our existing staff and young people on this new technology and are excited about the opportunity to electrify our entire fleet.”

**A BRIGHT FUTURE**
“This is a challenging time. COVID has put all of us and the struggles of LA County under a magnifying glass. But we believe that with great stress comes focus and productivity.”
Mike Aparicio has just been named Executive Vice President at Skanska, a Swedish firm that is one of world’s oldest and biggest construction and development companies—one that has signed the Paris Agreement, been named to Forbes list of Best Employers for Diversity several times, and to Fortune’s “Change the World” list of companies pursuing socially or environmentally sustainable practices.

Mike, a third-generation California contractor, began working in his family’s road-building business after college, then got work on the Red Line subway in the 1990s, and soon became project manager on what was then called the Blue Line to Pasadena (then the Gold Line and now the L Line)—a construction joint venture project that helped his career take off.

Perhaps this is partly because of his perspective on construction work: “While most people think it’s all about digging and welding and pouring concrete, in fact it has a very human side. Construction is also a people business. One of our biggest calling cards for Skanska is that we try to nurture relationships—with the neighbors, the people who run the agencies, with city council members—because this is also where we live and work.

“Building in LA means you’re almost always working on the street where somebody lives, or in some restaurant’s parking space, or in somebody’s front yard, or where you’re in the way and somebody’s garbage doesn’t get picked up. And if our work annoys people, and they complain to their councilmember, the work can be shut down for weeks, months—or years.”

Skanska is an international company and hiring SoCal natives to do the work is more important than most people realize, Mike says, “because they know Los Angeles County, the agencies and the people who run them, they know the stakeholders, and as importantly, they know the neighborhoods.”

When “Measure R hit,” as Mike puts it, there were suddenly a lot of construction jobs in Los Angeles County. Mike along with many of his colleagues left their jobs on other Metro projects to join the Skanska team that would build Expo Phase 2.

Then Skanska got contracts to work on the Purple Line extension to Beverly Hills, and the Regional Connector joint venture project in downtown LA.

Mike believes LA has definitely benefited from the rail lines that are now beginning to link all parts of the county, and he notes that Skanska has taken the revenue earned in Los Angeles and re-invested it in three major new building projects here.

“In the beginning,” he says, “there were so many problems that happened during construction—from the sinkholes that occurred when the Red Line was built into Hollywood to the many controversies over which projects should be built first and how and where. But when Measure R delivered $40 billion for new transportation projects in 2008—and together with Measure M will make $120 billion available over 20 years—Skanska took a calculated risk.

“We had already built a team, and we became the winner of about $4 billion worth of projects. We are now the largest contractor in Southern California, the envy of the construction industry, and everybody wants to partner with us.”

And Skanska has fallen for LA County—because of the work that’s been available certainly, but also because of LA’s diversity and cultural richness, Mike says, and because Skanska loves to be in the role of city builder. Mike has been their main man in LA—and with his new title as Executive VP he’s now responsible for all of Skanska’s work on the West Coast!
The Los Angeles Business Council has been, under the leadership of President Mary Leslie, one of Move LA’s important allies: A progressive business group with a keen interest in transit development in LA County—not only in transit but housing as well.

Even more importantly, LABC advocates for both market-rate and affordable housing near transit, especially in transit-oriented housing or TOD, with the goal of creating affordable, livable communities that connect Angelenos to jobs, reduce congestion, and clean the air.

This is where Mary’s interests align most closely with Metro CEO Phil Washington’s: a shared interest in affordable housing near transit.

Washington had championed the idea of constructing housing near the new transit system he was building as General Manager and CEO of the Denver Regional Transit District after the successful passage of a ballot measure there, not unlike the two ballot measures—R and M—LA County voters supported here.

When Mayor Garcetti convinced Phil to leave Denver for Los Angeles, and Phil began working with the Mayor and LA County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas on affordable housing—and with the help of public-private partnerships—not everyone was on board. But Mary and LABC were there.

“The LABC believes transportation and housing are inextricably linked. It is the best way to build sustainability and not need a car to commute,” Mary says.

Seven years later Metro has pioneered the most aggressive affordable housing policy of any transit agency in the U.S., after deciding that 35% of the housing built on land Metro owns will be affordable to households earning less than 60% of AMI. Metro has now built 2,200 housing units, one third of which are affordable, on Metro-owned land through the agency’s joint development program, and Metro is in negotiations over another 1,000 units.

“Clearly, constructing housing along rail lines as you build them makes more sense and costs less money than building rail lines all the way out to where the housing is now,” says Mary. “It’s all about leveraging the benefits of the transit investment.

“Phil has said the only way that it makes sense to build transit is to build transit and housing together,” she says. “This is how we get rid of traffic congestion, reduce carbon emissions, and provide affordable housing for transit riders. This is how transit and housing can move us toward both sustainability and affordability.”

Sustainability has always been the touchstone for the LA Business Council, which continues to focus on economic and environmental sustainability as the best way to advance LA’s economy: Renewable energy that harnesses the power of LA’s sun while generating local investment and jobs, energy efficiency that controls energy costs for businesses, affordable housing and transportation to help businesses recruit and retain workers.

Mary Leslie takes risks in her advocacy: LABC was a ballot signatory for both Measure R and M and supported Measure H in LA County for services to help the people experiencing homelessness, as well as Measure HHH, a voter approved bond in the City of LA to build permanent supportive housing for the homeless.

Some call Mary and LABC a breath of fresh air because of the advocacy they pursue. It may not seem natural to some to have a major local business organization like LABC make sustainability, affordable housing, a humane approach to the homeless crisis, and the advancement of renewable power part of its core program.

To most urban communities, Mary and LABC would be a revelation, but in LA County in 2021, it just seems intelligent.

That is the genius of Mary Leslie’s leadership—leading, indeed teaching, the business community that sustainability, smart growth, renewable power and transit-oriented development are not words used only by the political left, but words used by the thoughtful, deliberate and community-minded—like Mary Leslie and LABC.
Sergio Rascon, Business Manager of Laborers’ International Union of North America Local 300, became a construction worker like his father when he was 17. He tagged along with him to union meetings and begged his father to get him into the union, even though he knew the answer was absolutely not—because his father thought Sergio should go to college. That was in 1971, shortly after the earthquake in Sylmar, and there was a lot of repair work to be done, and Sergio was so determined to work that his father finally gave in. Sergio started out making the union-scale wage of $3.85 an hour—and he loved the work because he was “young, healthy and strong.”

His family had come to the U.S. when Sergio was only 10, and he and his brothers worked picking oranges, lemons and grapefruit in Fillmore and Santa Paula on weekends. There was something special about Sergio that people responded to—he was earnest, honest, unafraid, and respected. And it was a very different time—when immigrants could get a green card in less than a month, whereas now Sergio knows people who have been waiting for 8-10 years.

Sergio continued to attend union meetings and move up the labor ladder, soon becoming a labor foreman and then a dispatcher, and later an executive board member, president of the board, assistant to the Business Manager, and then the Business Manager himself in 1995—the highest position in the union but with an election every 3 years.

He didn’t meet Denny Zane until 2007. That’s when Denny had begun testing the waters to see how much interest there was in supporting a funding measure that could conceivably get on the 2008 ballot and raise the money needed to begin construction of a better public transit system in LA County.

Sergio was also one of the first to understand that the best way to find the money needed to build a new transit system was to go to voters with a ballot measure proposing it. Meantime, Denny organized a conference at the downtown LA Cathedral (Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels), attended by about 300 people, and Sergio sat on a panel at the end of the day that went on to become the most important moment in LA County’s recent transit history.

Also on the panel was LA County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Metro Boardmember Richard Katz, political strategist Parke Skelton, pollster John Fairbanks and Sergio, with Denny as moderator. And the question that brought it all home was: “Could a ballot measure like this win?”

Denny says that Sergio’s response was one of the biggest take-aways from the meeting for him because Sergio said: “It’s better to try and to lose, than not to try at all. Because if we don’t try, then we won’t know. And if we try and we lose, just let it be—at least we won’t have to be ashamed that we didn’t do anything.”

Sergio’s observation proved both wise and prophetic.

“Look at where we are after passing Measures R and M,” he told us. “Look at what we’ve built and the jobs that were created. No one can say they voted for something that came to nothing, that it was money that only benefited some people. We all depend on infrastructure projects. No one can say it wasn’t the proper thing to do.”
LA BizFed CEO Tracy Hernandez has championed transit since the beginning.

The Los Angeles County Business Federation or BizFed is a different kind of business organization—a network of existing business networks, a “federation” that dared support a sales tax increase in 2008 and again in 2016 (Measures R and M) even though businesses typically do not support tax increases (bad for business, the thinking goes).

But BizFed CEO Tracy Hernandez stepped up to support Measure R in the first months after she created the organization, and eight months later she stepped up again to support Measure M. Since then BizFed has grown to include 450,000 members (more about that later).

The organization came into existence when David Fleming, Tracy’s friend and mentor—then chair of the LA Chamber of Commerce—suggested she take the lead in convening all LA’s business groups to work together as a united federation while members at the same time maintained their own autonomy.

The LA County Federation of Labor was the unlikely model she followed—a federation of labor unions that each had their own mission, agenda and memberships, but understood that if they organized around common interests they would be more powerful.

Tracy says BizFed’s many members do see the world differently, which makes for heated meetings on occasion, but Measure R in 2008 won a supermajority vote of her members. And when Metro Boardmember Richard Katz called to express his surprise at the supermajority vote and ask her if she’d also sign the ballot argument for Measure R, she said yes.

Measure R won, and later so did Measure M. “In the beginning we were assumed to be a counter-voice to the Labor Federation,” she says, “but we worked together on Measure R—and the rest is history. It was pretty radical for a business group to support a sales tax measure.”

That was then and this is now, post COVID, and Tracy has been surveying her members on the future of transit. They tell her that working remotely will definitely be part of the mix going forward, suggesting a reduced need for transit. But both she and her members believe, however, that Los Angeles, and especially DTLA, needs a robust and integrated full-service transit system now as much as it ever did.

“We’re nowhere close to having a reduced need for transit—we still fully support all the investments in the transit system that are being made because of R and M and SB 1 [statewide legislation that funds transportation],” she says. “And people are now so accustomed to having things delivered to their doorsteps instead of going shopping that we’re likely to need an even more sophisticated transportation system.”

Hernandez has always thought that people who employ people—like her members do—should be more civically engaged so that public policy, social problems and community development can be better understood and well-served. And that idea has grown into what has now become “a massive grassroots alliance” of more than 210 chambers, trade associations, minority business groups, economic development organizations and business improvement districts—representing 450,000 employers (who now are BizFed members) and 4 million employees.

She has been expanding BizFed to other regions that want to organize in order to strengthen and amplify the voice of business. Having launched the Central Valley Business Federation in 2018, this concept has proven viable for diverse regions.

“We operate under the same intel-sharing and issue-vetting processes and we collaborate,” she says. “The Board of the Central Valley BizFed can make their own decisions but we share our insights and when both regions agree our leverage becomes so much greater, especially on state legislation and for regulatory boards. When legislators and lawmakers see we agree we like to believe they think, ‘Holy cow. We’d better get this done!’”

LA BizFed CEO Tracy Hernandez has championed transit since the beginning.
Mayor Robert Garcia has been a real asset to Long Beach—young, ambitious, articulate, openly gay and progressive. He won re-election to a second term with 80% of the vote, became a national figure while working with the Biden campaign, and earned recognition as a statewide leader in the fight against COVID-19 after establishing testing capacity for more than 1,900 people a day—twice the state’s requirement.

But he’s chosen to leave the Metro Board after just one term, leading to speculation about a possible national career. Others say it’s because Long Beach is a big city that requires all his attention: The city is home to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach (one of the world’s largest ports), its own public health department and airport, the California State University system headquarters and Cal State Long Beach—the second largest campus in the CSU system.

And his mother—who was a hospital worker—and his stepfather both died of COVID late last year. Move LA mourns this tragic loss of life.

2020 proved to be a busy year for the mayor, who was also working hard to monitor the “New Blue Improvements Projects” along the Blue Line (now the A line) from DTLA to Long Beach. He was pushing Metro hard to ensure there was no skimping on improvements: He wanted new lighting and signage, digital screens at stations, bus stops with shade, and to make sure that Blue Line riders—who had to take the bus for 9 months while improvements were underway—could get to their destinations.

Much like former Metro Boardmember/former Duarte Mayor John Fasana, Mayor Garcia has stressed the importance of a regional perspective at Metro. While on the board he dedicated significant time to the NextGen project to modernize Metro’s bus system, stressing that Metro’s system must interact and interconnect not only with Long Beach Transit, Santa Monica’s Big Blue Bus and Foothill Transit—which are all large systems—but also with the two dozen smaller municipal systems.

In a recent interview with the Planning Report he pointed out that because of the NextGen study “We’re finding that some areas of the region are well-served by bus and others are not—job centers have shifted and the places people want to go to are changing—this presents an opportunity to better align our bus services [with municipal bus services].” Garcia was one of the boardmembers who urged Metro CEO Phil Washington to restore bus service to pre-COVID levels as soon as possible because of the need for the many essential workers who use the bus system to be able to travel safely—not on buses that are crowded.

And like Fasana he has pushed for the construction of the West Santa Ana Branch Line, and also the Eastside Transit Corridor—the planned light rail line that would extend the Gold Line (now the L Line) from its current terminus at Atlantic station further east into Whittier. He believes these two projects and the southeast to northwest connections they make possible will be game-changers for all of LA County.

Last but not least, the City of Long Beach has updated its Land Use Element to encourage more dense development along transportation corridors served by transit. “It’s difficult when you have a lot of historic neighborhoods and single-family homes and you want to protect them,” he told the Planning Report, “but you also want to create affordable housing and opportunities for young people to live and work. We shouldn’t be so afraid of density, which produces safer, more modern cities with better amenities.”
John Fasana was elected to serve on the Metro Board in 1993, when Metro was a brand new agency—having replaced both the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Agency and the Rapid Transit District (RTD). When he retired last December Fasana had served on the board for 27 years, longer than any other boardmember.

The 1990s were tumultuous: Construction of the subway had proven contentious, problematic even before it caused Hollywood Boulevard to sink by a foot. There were lengthy battles at rambunctious board meetings over which projects would be funded—the Blue Line to Pasadena? Crenshaw? Expo?—and whether Metro was shorting the bus system in favor of more glamorous rail projects.

Fasana together with his allies on the board and other officials in the San Gabriel Valley rescued the Blue Line to Pasadena, which Metro was considering canceling due to a shortage of funds. Working with then-State Senator Adam Schiff and other local politicians, they took the project and its funding away from LA Metro and created a new agency, now called the Gold Line Foothill Construction Authority. That agency still manages the project, and has extended it first to Sierra Madre, then Azusa, and now Pomona—with conversations continuing about whether to extend it to Claremont and then Montclair in San Bernardino County and maybe eventually to Ontario Airport.

Fasana also chose to play the part of regionalist on a board that sometimes seemed biased toward projects in the City of LA—often perceived as the 800-pound gorilla in the boardroom. In this role Fasana together with his allies on the board and other officials in the San Gabriel Valley rescued the Blue Line to Pasadena, which Metro was considering canceling due to a shortage of funds. Working with then-State Senator Adam Schiff and other local politicians, they took the project and its funding away from LA Metro and created a new agency, now called the Gold Line Foothill Construction Authority. That agency still manages the project, and has extended it first to Sierra Madre, then Azusa, and now Pomona—with conversations continuing about whether to extend it to Claremont and then Montclair in San Bernardino County and maybe eventually to Ontario Airport.

Fasana and others also fought to keep the Blue Line from being cut to extend the Green Line to the South Bay, and for the West Santa Ana Branch Line—which will be the first rail line to serve Southeast LA County.

He also created LA County’s very first congestion pricing program, turning the underutilized HOV (high-occupancy vehicle) lanes along parts of the 10 and 110 freeways into toll lanes, thus encouraging drivers to drive off-peak, take transit, or share rides with others. The money made (from drivers who would pay higher tolls to drive in the HOV lanes during rush hours) was invested back into other projects benefitting these transportation corridors.

Fasana has been an advocate for other important San Gabriel Valley transportation projects, including Alameda Corridor East’s program to improve 58 railroad crossings on one of the busiest goods movement corridors in the U.S. He’s championed Foothill Transit, known for providing superior bus service and good deals for students in northeast LA County. And he helped double the size of the El Monte Bus Station—home to Metro’s Silver Line and Foothill Transit’s Silver Streak BRT service—that serves 22,000 passengers and 1,200 bus departures (from 29 bus bays) with 24-hour service!

In 27 years you can get a lot done! Let’s toast John Fasana!

(Note: The names of these rail and BRT lines have changed: The Gold Line is now the L Line, Crenshaw is the K Line, the Green Line is the C line, Expo is the E Line, the Silver Line is the J Line.)
THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

PLATINUM
Anonymous • TransitCenter

DIAMOND
BYD • Clean Energy Renewable Fuels • SoCalGas

GOLD
Glen Dake & Renee Dake Wilson • Los Angeles Department of Water & Power
Southern California Edison • Sue Himmelrich & Michael Soloff

SILVER
Carpenters/Contractors Cooperation Committee • Laborers’ International Union of North America, Local 300
L.A. Care Health Plan • NECA Los Angeles & IBEW Local 11
SCAG • Skanska • Thomas Safran & Associates

BRONZE
AARP California • AECOM • Cedars-Sinai Medical Center • Charter Communications
Eastern Columbia Properties • International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 12
Kroner Environmental Services, Inc • Sieroty Company LLC
THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

SUPPORTER
Comet Electric • Cordoba Corporation
Fehr & Peers • Los Angeles County Federation of Labor
LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Los Angeles/Orange Counties Construction & Building Trades Council
Mass. Electric Construction Company • Mott MacDonald • Plenary Group
PointC • Sequoia Consultants • Tranzito • Trifiletti Consulting
Walter N. Marks, Inc.

FRIEND
Allan Marks & Mara Cohen • Arellano Associates
Cerrell Associates • DRNXMYTH • Loren Bloch & Ping Ho
Marlene & Marshall Grossman
Mike Schneider & Sharon Greene
Tom & Debra Shrout
UFCW Local 770 • WSP

FOUNDATIONS
Energy Action Fund • The Durfee Foundation
The Johnny Carson Foundation
Marisla Foundation
Resources Legacy Fund