

VALLEY VOTE

Meeting Report for February 18, 2013

Valley VOTE Board members, community leaders, and concerned citizens convened on at Galpin Ford to hear featured speaker, Jackie Lacey, LA County District Attorney, and several informative committee reports summarized below.

Jackie Lacey, LA County District Attorney

Jackie Lacey was recently elected. During her election her campaign lived within its resources and donated remaining excess campaign funds to charity. Ms. Lacey provided insight into her goals and the leadership which we will be fortunate to enjoy.

Her experience includes prosecution of kidnap, molestation, murder and drug dealing cases but beyond that she is a true leader. She was the first manager hired by previous DA, Steve Cooley. She is the first female Los Angeles County DA and has a long, distinguished public servant in the District Attorney's office.

The District Attorney is the largest group of prosecutors with a \$330 million budget. Most of the attorneys are young with less than six years of experience. The office covers criminal and civil actions to protect the County.

Jackie will lead by example and is a firm believer in providing leadership training, education, and encouragement and insists on the proper use of setting goals. She has set many goals for the DA's office including:

- Continue full pressure on violent crimes.
- Increase fraud and white collar crime prosecutions. Upgrade the high tech crime unit and provide more counseling for kids of crimes. Protect us from credit card and internet fraud. Protect seniors from scammers and abuse.
- Be proactive in protecting the Public due to realignment of jails and the high probation turnover. Help to establish sentencing guidance in the courtrooms to ensure dangerous offenders are not subject to early release and home incarceration. Ensure incarceration for appropriate crimes remains in state prisons rather than shifting everything to the County.
- Protect the environment by working with Sierra Club and Conservancy to ferret out offenders.
- Improve support for those with mental health issues.

Jackie told us that resources are always an issue. The passage of AB109 is causing a major impact from courtroom closures all around the County. The November change to the "three strikes law" is creating a substantial workload because all sentenced for non-serious crimes can petition to get out. She told us that her office prosecutes an average of 60,000 felonies per year.

Chairman Richard Leyner welcomed back former Executive Board Member David DeVoss from a multiyear news reporting assignment in Afghanistan and Iran covering the Crop Substitution Program. The Board unanimously approved reinstatement onto the Executive Committee. He then introduced the committee reports summarized below:

Vic Viereck – Measure A - 1/2 % Sales Tax Increase

The Los Angeles City Council had previously considered a few different taxes to raise revenue. Those were an increase in the city's document transfer tax, from \$4.50 up to \$9.00 per \$1,000.00

(in addition to the county's \$1.10 per \$1,000.00), a parcel tax for Parks and Recreation, and increased charges for parking facilities.

After discussions with some business interests, including the California Association of Realtors, the City Council decided to shelve the prior three taxes, and promote Measure A. Measure A would increase sales tax in the City of Los Angeles from 9% up to 9.5%. That would increase the city's share of sales tax from 1.5% to 2%. There are also business interests that oppose Measure A.

While it's good to (hopefully) get the prior tax proposals behind us, Measure A has its own negatives. As any business owner knows, if you increase your own prices when your competitors don't, your revenue may decline instead of increasing. The City of Los Angeles has a similar problem to the State of California. It's known for its anti-business climate. Measure A would enhance that image. Our sales tax would be ½% more than our neighboring cities. It would have the tendency to redirect customers to other cities, particularly for higher priced items such as autos and technology products. That discourages businesses from opening in Los Angeles, instead of other cities. It's another nail in the coffin.

Also, when people have only a specific amount budgeted to spend, a sales tax increase causes a higher percent of the amount spent to go to the tax, and reduces the amount of taxable profits.

Besides making public employee pensions and health care more fiscally responsible, many governmental operations need more critical operational analysis.

VicViereck@SBCGlobal.net

Pauline Talent – Real Estate Taxes

California, and particularly the City of Los Angeles, has a reputation of being the most highly taxed and highly regulated place to do business in the United States. Any wonder that Texas, for one, is soliciting our businesses.

Another proposed "revenue generator." is a tax increase, not yet on the ballot, but in the discussion stage, and of concern. This is the Split Roll Property Tax. Proposition 13, went into effect in 1978. This put a cap on taxing real estate property. Under Proposition 13, value is based at time of acquisition or transfer. The tax can be increased, annually, by the rate of inflation, or 2%, whichever is the lesser. This affects all real property. Under the split roll proposal, only singled family residencies and condos would be protected by Proposition 13. This means that industrial, commercial, land. Apartment units and investment property would no longer be protected from tax hikes. The thinking is, that this will generate huge sums, to mitigate California's overspending habits. The higher taxes of course are not going to be absorbed by the landlord; these increases will be passed on to the tenants. This would drive even more businesses to leave the State. There goes your tax income stream.

What happens to residential real estate, still being protected by Proposition 13? If the jobs leave town, there will be more defaulting on mortgages, and there is the start of another recession.

Those advocating splitting the tax rolls refer to the inclusion of commercial real estate under the protection of Proposition 13, as a "loophole," and one that should be done away with. This is not a loophole, but rather a means to lessen volatility in the real estate market. Please talk to your Congressman. This is not a good idea.

Pauline Tallent, www.tallentrealestate.com

Bart Reed, Transit Coalition – Improving Mass Transit Opportunities

The Coalition supports a CSUN transportation tiger team of students who have been reviewing transit schedules to evaluate the efficiency of connections. The general result is not good.

Getting from one location to prime destinations such as the University or high density work areas is not easy. Title VI calls for support of diversity usage of mass transit. The Coalition has taken the tiger team results and recommended better destination support for many new job concentrations, health care facilities, and other destinations for MTA consideration. Transit to parks was also highlighted as important as well as Mission College. Mission College area bus support currently stops at 6 PM which makes it difficult for students with late afternoon or evening classes. The students have also identified needs for area sidewalks.

They also researched the Orange Line and adequacy of support for bike riders. One fourth of the students can't get on a bus because its racks are full.

Numerous other suggestions were made. The Coalition sponsors a monthly meeting at MTA headquarters downtown to address transit issues. The February meeting will feature speakers about the LAX connections and how they plan to develop them.

BartReed, bartreed1951@gmail.com <http://thetransitcoalition.us/nationaltc/>

Denny Schneider- Airports Report

LAX expansion has moved two steps closer to reality. The LA Board of Airport Commission and LA Planning Department approved Specific Plan Amendment Study Alternative 1 which moves the runway 260' north. Seems innocuous, but the actions to accomplish this can have a devastating cost.

Three elements come to the forefront: a rerouting and tunneling of Lincoln Boulevard, covering and changing the Argo Flood Channel, and mitigating a closed 6 lane highway that goes under the current runways. LAWA estimates the total cost to be \$2B, but construction complications remain unaddressed. Examples include burying Lincoln Blvd in an area where three major 20' outfall sewers can't be moved but are in the tunnel path. This, alone, could increase that cost by many \$billions resulting in deferral of fixing terminals and access, dry up money need to fix highways throughout the region. Enclosing and limiting capacity of the Flood Channel in an area where underground water flows can cause flooding of either the terminals or Westchester. The closed highway must be fully removed or there will be sink hole issues akin to an aircraft falling into one like the one the swallowed a fire truck on Ventura Blvd.

LAWA is emphasizing their runway move when the terminals and access represents 8X more economic benefits and jobs. They and special interest groups are justifying action with a "safety card," but the reality is that LAX north runway complex is already safer than most and taxiway fixes and other actions such as full staffing of the tower can accomplish much more for far less.

Bottom line: The LAWA Plan risks major impacts and bankrupting the City!

Say no to this total folly by going to www.ModernLAX.com.

Better news. LAWA is working with the FAA to allow continuation of a lease of VNY property to an aircraft mechanic school for \$1 per year so that it can remain open.

Denny Schneider, President Alliance for A Regional Solution to Airport Congestion RegionalSolution.org [310 641-4199](tel:3106414199)

The next monthly meeting of Valley VOTE will be on Monday, March 18, 2013 at Galpin Ford.

Valley VOTE Mission Statement

Valley VOTE, a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley Residents, business people, educators, community activists and organizations, is committed to exploring and fostering the implementation of programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the city of Los Angeles, to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters. Please forward this Email to interested individuals and organizations. If you would like to be removed from our distribution list please send an email to President, Vic Viereck at vicviereck@sbcglobal.net.