

January 9, 2009

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Honorable Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Room 303
Los Angeles, CA 90012-3239

RE: Economic Recovery Plan

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa:

We, the undersigned environmental and environmental justice advocates, urge you to take advantage of President-elect Barack Obama's economic recovery plan to emphasize green infrastructure improvements and the creation of green jobs. The plan is a tremendous opportunity to advance your initiatives to make Los Angeles the greenest big city in the nation.

We must invest in a new kind of infrastructure – **smart** green infrastructure as opposed to old, gray infrastructure. The new smart green infrastructure uses an emerging set of technologies based on natural processes that provide essential city services while at the same time mitigating climate change, supplying us with sustainable energy and water and creating opportunities for green-collar jobs. Green infrastructure, including transportation infrastructure, transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, is the key to achieving the elegant density that you have called for.

We support the advancement of green infrastructure projects in the current infrastructure list before the City Council. However, many of the projects on that list appear to be business-as-usual car-centric infrastructure, such as: street widening, road resurfacing, and freeway repaving. Also, we must ensure that bridge retrofits over our waterways do not constrain future river restoration and bikeway projects. While these projects may provide temporary jobs for some and short-term traffic relief for others, their selection will result in a missed opportunity to promote projects that invest in green transportation. Similarly, we would like to see more projects that capture, clean and store the water we need, filter the air, and reduce waste hauling that make our neighborhoods more livable and beautiful.

We have an opportunity to make a once-in-a-generation change and positively address L.A.'s many environmental and economic needs. The choice is clear. As an example, transit projects, create 19% more jobs than equivalent road-building projects. We can choose innovative **smart green** projects that solve multiple problems or embrace old approaches that have the potential to compound the problems we already have. **Smart** green multi-benefit projects (increasing local water supply and open space, improving water and air quality) and alternative greener transportation modes will not only provide environmental benefits, but also make the City more competitive since it would be leading with green projects, and stabilizing the economy with additional employment, commercial and industrial growth.

The stimulus funding would be ideal for supporting high profile, regionally significant, environmentally-friendly projects. Examples of green infrastructure projects are as follows:

- Los Angeles River Bike Path
- Woodman Avenue Infiltration Project as well as other infiltration projects
- Hansen and Tujunga Spreading Grounds Enhancement Project
- Taylor Yard Water Recycling project as well as the other recycling projects
- DWP's Small Business Direct Install program
- Expo Light Rail Acceleration and Safety Improvements

- Wilshire Boulevard Bus-only Lane project
- Expansion of Rapid Bus service
- San Fernando Road Bikeway Phase 2 + Metrolink Safety Enhancements of Grade Crossings
- Community School Parks at Trinity and 28th Street Elementary Schools
- City building retrofits for energy efficiency
- Cleantech Manufacturing (Crown Coach) Campus

In addition, this is a critical opportunity to advance your agenda, including the creation of parks within walking distance of every child in Los Angeles, and also green streets. It is possible to make nearly every schoolyard and public park in Los Angeles a Watershed Park which capture, clean and store rainfall, prevent flooding and water pollution and enhance local supplies. Green streets and neighborhood retrofits are included in many local watershed management plans. An example is currently being built in Sun Valley. Although some of these projects aren't yet designed, through your leadership, these could be fast-tracked to be ready for the next round of funding.

Lastly, we are asking you as well as other local, state and federal officials to reject proposals which attempt to set aside environmental laws, principles, and safeguards or compromise public health and safety.

We are ready to work with you in helping to further define opportunities to make projects smarter and greener, to identify additional projects that meet these criteria, and to help attract more funds to Los Angeles. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Jim Clarke, City of Los Angeles
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Harry Reid
Nancy Sutley

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
The Honorable James Oberstar
The Honorable David Obey