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Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

Editorial Note: Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the material in this presentation, the scope of the material covered and the discussions undertaken lends itself to the possibility of minor transcription misinterpretations.

**PRESENTATION BY
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke
Second District, Los Angeles County
Topic: The Demographics, Economics, and Characteristics of the 2nd District**

September 6, 2001

Chairman Philibosian introduced Supervisor Burke who was in her third term on the Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Burke remarked that the 2nd District and the 4th District join at the Marina, in Westchester and at the Los Angeles International Airport. The 2nd District has nine cities and is one of the more diverse districts in terms of population with 935,000 Hispanics, 160,000 Asian Pacific people (including Tongans, Samoans, Japanese, Koreans - including Koreatown) and 200,000 African Americans. The 2nd District has changed over the years in its ethno-economic constitution (working class, lower income, and small pockets of higher income people in Cheviot Hills and Playa del Rey with the most affluent African American populations in the View Park and Ladera Heights areas). Its issues include health care (there are two large hospitals - Martin Luther King Hospital and Harbor Hospital) and gang violence (3/4's of the deaths in the county since the beginning of 2001 occurred on the border of the 2nd District and the 1st District, specifically the Willowbrook/Compton border).

Supervisor Burke continued by stating that the 2nd District is known for its "activists" and its "activity"; i.e. the 8,000 people who became involved in the issue of the proposed electrical generator that was going into Baldwin Hills.

Supervisor Burke stated that her priority is working with the Department of Children and Family Services and the Foster Care issues. There are 76,000 children in Los Angeles County who have been abused and neglected and are under the care of the Department of Children and Family Services. Of those children, the 2nd District has the largest number, even though many of the children are in kinship (staying with a grandparent, an aunt, or a cousin, etc.). Los Angeles County has a need to address the issues of children and jobs. If there is going to be a major project in an area, the company/contractor should invest in the community by attempting to hire local residents. Los Angeles County needs to promote local business and contractors instead of outside markets. Alameda Corridor is a good example, it is a project that goes through the 2nd District, and covers two major areas: Carson and Compton. Alameda Corridor has been able to set aside \$500,000 to train youth in trades, secretarial skills, and computer skills. These students have been able to find jobs in other parts of industry.

Supervisor Burke recognizes that there is a need for economic development in conjunction with government

investment in the 2nd District; a County Building will entice other businesses into the area. There is a Request for Proposal (RFP) for some 800,000 square feet of office space to house various county departments within what is called Region 6 in the 2nd District. Magic Johnson has beneficially changed the 2nd District by establishing theatres and major developments in Baldwin Hills and Ladera Heights and has encouraged others to invest, i.e. Wal-Mart's, Starbucks and Fridays. Playa Vista is another important project providing employment in the 4th and 2nd Districts, jointly.

Compton has Majestic Reality, with an auto mall project. The county is trying to get money from Proposition A to make the area around Compton Creek a park. There is a \$1M investment in conjunction with Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy to accomplish this.

Galaxy is building a stadium at California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) in Carson. The Sampras Tennis Stadium and the American Soccer League plan to have their headquarters there as well.

The Baldwin Hills Park is another priority, which includes purchase of the oil well land, when it has dried up. At the north end, adjacent to Culver City, the State of California invested \$40,000,000 to purchase property for the purpose of creating a park that was going to become a high priced development. Every indication is that the land next to that will be acquired for a golf course, which will be operated by Culver City. Supervisor Burke stated that she is "greening" the La Brea Avenue area and the Conservation Corps is being used to maintain the land. The Ambassador Hotel will be used for educational purposes by Los Angeles Unified School District. On Crenshaw Boulevard, a \$65,000,000 church at West Angeles has been constructed. A Church bought the Forum where church services are held creating a facility for multiple uses. Bethany is another major church on Rosecranz.

In the past there have been many people who have been reluctant to put their money in the 2nd District. The University of Southern California (USC) has expanded their commitment in the area, which will help stimulate the economy.

LGS Commissioner Andes asked whether Dominguez Hills would become a separate entity? Supervisor Burke replied that she did not believe so, Dominguez as a city and community name should become identified with the region. Rancho Dominguez is part of an area that is going to be designated by signs. California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) because of its relationship with the city of Carson will probably not be separating.

Commissioner Thompson asked whether the Kenneth Hahn Stroke Center is operating at Martin Luther King. Supervisor Burke answered no, but that she would like to see it established. Martin Luther King has a new trauma center, and one of the things that is needed is a women's center to bring together all of their different health issues. This would be the second center established in the 2nd District with the first at Hubert Humphrey. The eye center is also being developed. A housing project has been set up, remote tele-examinations (using the internet) for people who cannot get to the best ophthalmologists.

Mr. Simmons stated that the county has financed job training, but that youths cannot use their training. The reason is that students are not being trained in for today's technology, i.e. special mathematics to understand the diagnostics in changing tires. A review of the curriculum is necessary to assure that the curriculum has been updated. Supervisor Burke responded that in terms of automotive training, Toyota has a major auto training facility in cooperation with the Urban League, trains students in current Toyota technology. What often happens is that there have been public/private partnerships and it has been difficult to get equipment unless one is tied into the manufacturer. A number of automobile companies offer that kind of training. Magic Johnson was able to get Hewlett-Packard to provide computers in the Ujima Village Project, (a housing project that HUD sold to the county for \$1); and PacBell established a new, up-to-date computer-training center for youth and adults. Within the senior centers, there are classes that are paid for by the junior colleges and 150 seniors graduated from one senior center.

The county is now dealing with the challenge of training people who have been on welfare; they may be individuals who may be semi-literate, and who have never held a job. There are Adult Priorities (AP) courses in high schools.

Commissioner Farrar asked what significant issues, other than health care, were facing Los Angeles County? Supervisor Burke replied that health care issues are county priorities because one out of three people in Los Angeles County have no insurance, and disregard the county's offer of an insurance plan called Healthy Families, which costs only \$9.00 per month. However Los Angeles County needs to catch up on twenty years of infrastructure improvements, including roads, sewers and fiber optics installation for faster Internet access. The Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration has earthquake issues. Fortunately, property has been selling at a profit (even though the state of California State takes a large percentage of the property tax) the increase in property values and tax collections have enabled the county to rebuild libraries and to eliminate lead base paint in children's play equipment. Supervisor Burke stated that she is a member of Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), dealing with the secession of San Fernando Valley and San Pedro from Los Angeles. Supervisor Burke stated that she was not very enthusiastic about the idea, but that the issue has to be confronted. All of the facts should be reviewed and placed before the people of Los Angeles and the people of San Fernando Valley. Secession and governance will probably be among the most discussed issues in the 21st century. Supervisor Burke feels that the demands of the populace to have "hands on government" are what drive the secession movement.

Mr. Simmons asked why county contract employers can pay a living wage and give employees health insurance, or pay a higher wage without giving health insurance. He thought the county should offer one salary, which would include health insurance and would relieve county costs. Supervisor Burke replied that federal law prohibits the county from directing a company to provide health insurance. The only way the county could approach the issue was to offer alternatives. Supervisor Burke would like to mandate that every employer provide health insurance, but the real solution is a federal, universal health care so that every employer/employee had access to health care. Supervisor Burke said hospitals are having problems operating and surviving bankruptcy and not because they are accepting indigents who are only 3% of their patients.

Commissioner Petak stated that mandating to "retrofit for seismic" would cost \$20B in the State. Supervisor Burke agreed, and remarked that fortunately the hospitals still have a few more years to complete the retrofit. If the hospitals have to make that kind of investment in terms of their buildings and equipment, many say it is better to let the county worry about it.

Chairman Philibosian thanked Supervisor Burke for her presentation.

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