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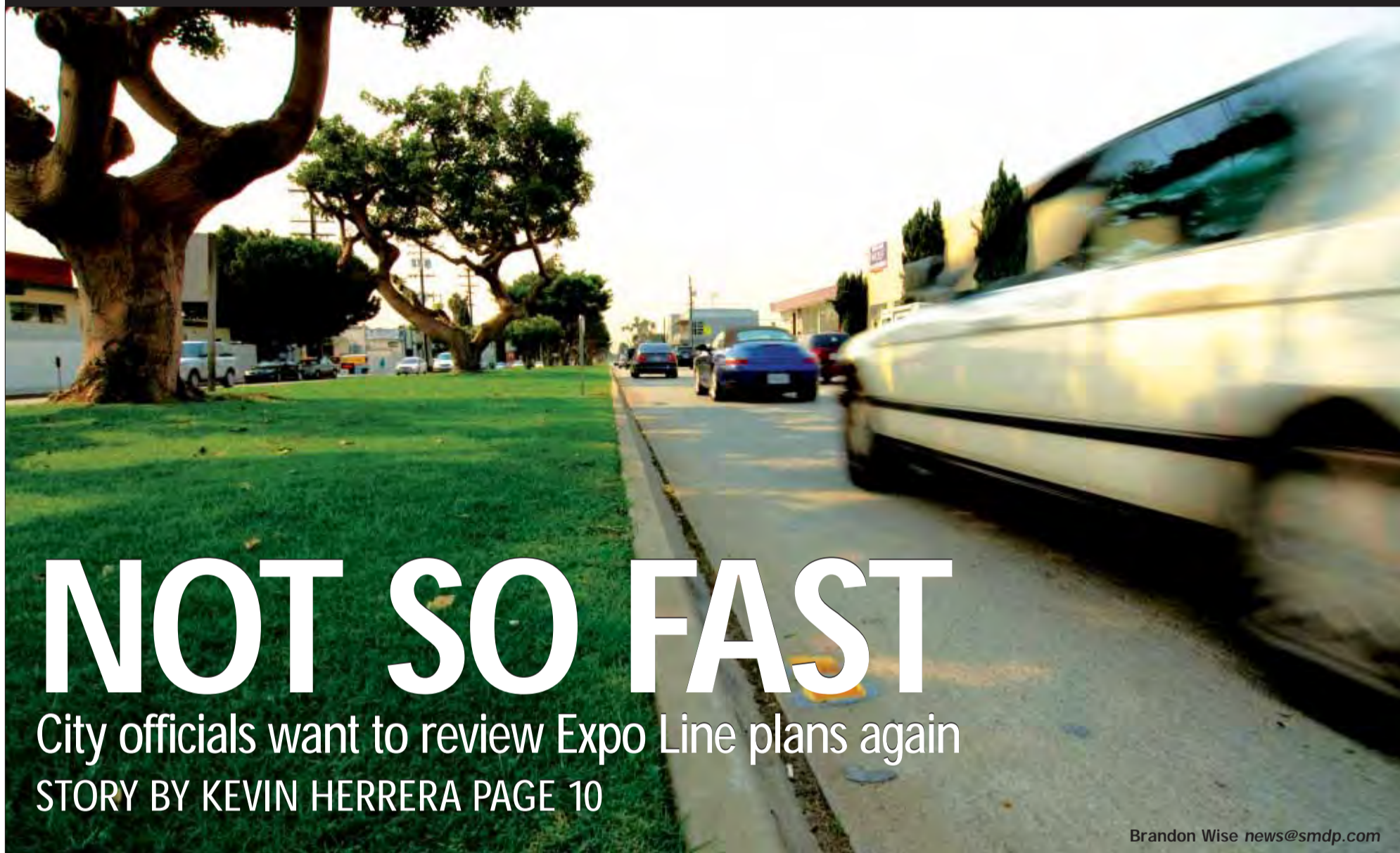
Santa Monica Daily Press

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NOT SO FAST

City officials want to review Expo Line plans again

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Brandon Wise news@smdp.com

A noble scientist

Samohi grad awarded the Nobel Peace Prize

BY MELODY HANATANI | Daily Press Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES When Jeremy Pal watched "An Inconvenient Truth," he came into the movie with not much expectations and a slight dislike for the star of the documentary.

Little did the Loyola Marymount University professor know that he would one day be among the group of scientist sharing the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with the former Vice President Al Gore.

"It was better than I expected it to be," the Santa Monica High School graduate said on Thursday. "Obviously, Al Gore is not a scientist or researcher in any sort of form ... but all things considered, he did a pretty good job and came off being quite likable in my opinion."

The Nobel Foundation announced the 2007 laureates earlier this month, naming Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for "their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change."

Pal, a professor of civil engineering and environmental science, is among a group of contributing authors with the



Photo courtesy of Loyola Marymount University

HEADY HONOR: Jeremy Pal, a professor at Loyola Marymount University, was a contributing author to a study on global warming that earned a Nobel Peace Prize.

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Expo Line gets second look

BY KEVIN HERRERA

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN Citing preliminary reports that have the Exposition Light Rail line traveling through Santa Monica down the middle of Olympic Boulevard with elevated sections in downtown that could be as high as 35 feet, city officials are spending \$300,000 to have other options considered.

The Exposition Construction Authority will consider which routes will undergo further environmental review on Thursday, Nov. 1.

City staff has issues with the rail line traveling down Olympic Boulevard to a potential Fourth Street station adjacent to the Civic Center and a renovated Santa Monica Place mall. As currently proposed, the rail line would travel down the mid-section of Olympic, which would require the removal of the landscaped median and coral trees.

Staff would like the Expo Authority to consider removing one lane of traffic on each side of the median to preserve the landscaped median, coral trees and the green boulevard along Olympic.

"The future Exposition light rail line is critically important to Santa Monica and it is crucial that the project serve the community in the best way possible," Ellen Gelbard, deputy director of special projects, wrote in a city staff report. "Much of the future land use planning focuses on the Exposition light rail and the incredible opportunity that it presents."

There is also an issue with the Olympic route and how it connects with downtown. Current studies have the rail line rising as high as 35 feet above street level to cross Lincoln Boulevard and freeway ramps before connecting with the Fourth Street station, which would also be raised.

"It is important that the light rail station be well integrated into our downtown and the likelihood is vastly improved if the station is at-grade and easily accessible," Gelbard wrote.

Councilman Kevin McKeown said he finds the idea of having elevated portions of the rail line "appalling." Other members of the council agreed.

Their preference seems to be Colorado Avenue. Under this proposal, the rail line would use the Expo right of way until it ends at 17th Street, where the alignment would transition to run down the middle of Colorado to downtown. City staff considers this to be a more pedestrian friendly alternative.

Russell Sydney from the Sustainable Transport Club in Santa Monica, told



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VISION OF THE FUTURE: This landscaped median on Olympic Boulevard would have to be removed to make room for the Expo Line in current plans.

council members that Colorado would be preferred by bicycle riders because it would be easily accessible and not include elevated sections that would create problems for those will neighborhood electric vehicles.

trees in the downtown area as part of a streetscape improvement project. The Treesavers group has filed to have the tress landmarked, which has put the project on hold.

The Colorado option would require the

would be less expensive than the Olympic aerial alignment. It would also avoid the issue of median and coral tree removal.

City staff is looking at other issues as well, including the placement of stations near Cloverfield Boulevard and 17th Street. Current studies show the easternmost station located above Cloverfield in an aerial configuration. The construction authority has indicated both aerial and at-grade stations will be evaluated. City staff believes a station should be located at Bergamot Station, which has been the plan ever since that property was purchased by City Hall.

In Mid-City, staff is concerned about the placement of a station to connect with Santa Monica College. Currently, the construction authority is not committed to a third station, just the one at Cloverfield and in downtown. City staff is hoping they can convince the authority to put a station at 17th Street and Colorado because of its proximity to SMC and its ability to connect with Big Blue Bus routes.

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IF YOU THINK PEOPLE ARE UPSET ABOUT FICUS TREES, WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY STARTS GOING AFTER CORAL TREES."

Russell Sydney, Sustainable Transport Club

"I think one of the important elements is the character of Olympic Boulevard," Sydney said. "If you think people are upset about ficus trees, wait and see what happens when the construction authority starts going after coral trees."

Sydney was referring to the controversy over the council's decision to remove ficus

removal of one lane of traffic in each direction. City staff believes the majority of parking spaces could be retained on Colorado and have minimal impact on traffic given that the majority of drivers use Colorado east of 20th Street where the Water Gardens complex is located.

It is believed that the Colorado option

Loyola Marymount professor earns a Nobel

FROM NOBEL PAGE 1

IPCC, a collaboration of scientists, that earned the prize in the category of peace.

"It's a great honor to be part of that process that led to the peace prize," Pal said.

The 37-year-old Pal was born in Santa Monica and raised in Venice, graduated from Lincoln Middle School and later from Santa Monica High School in 1988. He went on to attend Santa Monica College for a brief period of time before moving on to Loyola Marymount University where he graduated with his bachelor's degree in civil engineering and later MIT for his post-graduate studies.

Before he joined the faculty at his alma mater, Pal worked for five years at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics as a scientist.

Pal, who now lives in Westchester, was attracted to the field of environmental science because of his love for natural resources and the great outdoors.

"We are natural and we are part of nature," he said.

Founded in 1988 by the World Meteorological Association and the United Nations Environmental Programme, the IPCC aims to find a scientific consensus as to what is happening to the climate, assessing published reports and research. The group is split into three different focus groups and one task force, each assessing a different aspect of climate change, from the options of limiting greenhouse gases to the negative and positive effects of climate change.

Pal, who joined the Switzerland-based organization three years ago, focuses his work on regionalizing projections of potential global warming, exploring weather data on regions

such as Los Angeles and parts of Europe and Asia.

"I look at changes in extreme temperatures and precipitation ... and see how that would impact water resources and agriculture and human health," Pal said.

Several of the IPCC's working groups issued reports earlier this year that concluded that most global warming to date has been caused by human beings and is virtually certain to increase or continue in the future due to human activities, one of the biggest culprits being emission.

"There's a lot of pride in the sense that the product developed by the IPCC is really well received and now the dissemination of the report is going to be wider," said Dr. Kristen Averyt, spokeswoman for the IPCC. "The public in particular will really get to know the product."

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