



GRIDLOCK POLITICS

Mad development on the liberal Westside has made traffic - not social services, not jobs - the top i

By [Bobbi Murray](#)

Even with a mayoral primary just three weeks away, we don't talk much about politics in Los Angeles. What we do talk about is driving - commute times, potholes, why the 405 and the 101 are parking lots at 2 a.m. That's why the city council race in the 11th District, on the city's Westside, may interest even non-wonks: It's all about traffic.

It's a top issue for the three candidates running for the seat being vacated by term-limited Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski in a council district with some of the most traffic-choked spots in L.A. The 11th includes tony Pacific Palisades and Brentwood on the north end and stretches to the more blue-collar neighborhoods of Mar Vista and LAX-adjacent Westchester to the south.

All three contenders have similar plans to address the gridlock that accompanies the hyper-development on the Westside - extend the Green Line to LAX, connect the Westside to other rail projects, and assess the potential traffic problems before green-lighting developments.

Their approaches to other issues are similar as well, and all three bring impressive résumés to the race. Voters in the 11th, in fact, seem to have lucked out in the upcoming election. "We're fortunate that we have a competitive election with three strong candidates," says political scientist Fernando Guerra of the Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University, who lives and works in the district. If he were to put together a pool of contenders, Guerra says, it would look like the current selection, both for the acumen and knowledge of the issues they display and the diversity they represent.

Flora Gil Krisiloff, a multi-degreed public health nurse who emigrated from Taiwan as a child, has a long history of civic activism, creating a charter school complex for Brentwood and Pacific Palisades and founding the Brentwood neighborhood council. Former cable executive Bill Rosendahl was for 16 years also the likable host of public affairs TV shows that brought together political and civic leaders in roundtable discussions; Rosendahl advocates a plan for the city to negotiate lower prescription costs for senior citizens. According to the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Fund, he's also the first openly gay candidate to run for the

11th District council seat. Angela Reddock is an employment attorney who graduated from Amherst College, studied at Oxford, and was appointed by Mayor James Hahn to the community panel that investigated last year's videotaped flashlight beating of Stanley Miller. Reddock is African-American.

As the top fundraisers and endorsement powerhouses in the race, Krisiloff and Rosendahl have emerged as the front-runners and appear to be headed for a runoff. No contender is likely to get an outright 51 percent of the vote on March 8. An 11th District runoff will probably be the only one to emerge from the council races in the eight odd-numbered districts, where incumbents are expected to re-win their seats without much trouble.

Krisiloff and Rosendahl each raised around \$240,000 by the end of the last reporting period and both have long, showy lists of endorsements. In addition to her key support from Miscikowski, Krisiloff scored another endorsement earlier this week from the *Los Angeles Times*; she also counts Assemblywoman Judy Chu and actor/environmentalist Ted Danson among her supporters. Rosendahl won approval from the County Federation of Labor and ex-Mayor Richard Riordan, and got the nod from a who's who of liberal elected officials that includes Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg and state Senators Gilbert Cedillo and Sheila Kuehl.

Rosendahl has also been endorsed by former Councilwoman Ruth Galanter, who lost out to Miscikowski in a redistricting fight in 2002 that gave Miscikowski much of the coast and in effect exiled Galanter to a newly-created San Fernando Valley district during her last year in office. It set the stage for Miscikowski to play her recent role in reviving Mayor Hahn's \$11 billion LAX revitalization, which City Hall insiders called DOA until the council member got involved.

But both candidates pooh-pooh the notion of a Galanter/Miscikowski rematch with the present contenders as surrogates. Krisiloff's endorsement by Miscikowski comes from a long association with the councilwoman. The two met some 20 years ago when Miscikowski was chief of staff for Krisiloff's then-Councilman Marvin Braude, and Krisiloff led the fight against a mini-mall development near the Brentwood corner of 26th and San Vicente. But Krisiloff stresses her independence and history of grassroots work. She opposes LAX expansion and says that she and Miscikowski have agreed to disagree on LAX. "Cindy's endorsement of me represents a recognition of all my hard work and accomplishments," she says.

Rosendahl says that he sought Miscikowski's endorsement early on, but she made it clear she planned to back Krisiloff. As for Galanter's support for him, Rosendahl says, "I earned her endorsement over time."

His backing from labor, oddly enough, stems from his days as an executive for the very conservative and not labor-friendly Adelphia cable company. He had been managing Century Cable and 700 employees when Adelphia swallowed up the smaller company, expanding the ranks to 2700 workers. The local Adelphia workers were making between 20-40 percent less than their counterparts in other markets, Rosendahl says, and the company kept losing them to companies that paid better. He went to company head John Rigas, now convicted of defrauding the company, and used the argument to persuade Rigas to raise wages.

Reddock, meanwhile, has a shorter list of endorsers but has garnered support from the likes of Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, a number of educators, the New Frontier Democratic Club, and New Frontier Young Democrats. She had raised around \$47,000 by the end of January, but has barnstormed neighborhood councils and other civic groups across a district Reddock says has a high level of political awareness and is receptive to her message of more thoughtful development.

She has gotten a worm's-eye view of L.A.'s gridlock woes as a member of the city's transportation commission for the past three years, and can speak in surprisingly accessible terms about the technical fixes that could help: for example, expanding the systems that monitor traffic flow and synchronize lights. She imagines a comprehensive rail system that is more convenient than the individual cars L.A. loves. "We need a leader that's willing to sit down and put it together into a strategic program to lobby for funds," Reddock says. She also advocates a reexamination of what she calls a Band-Aid approach to development that doesn't take traffic into account.

Rosendahl talks about all the commercial development along Colorado Boulevard during the '90s now bringing traffic into the 11th District, and advocates coordination between planning bodies in the various cities. "You cannot start a development without the Department of Transportation," he says. "So that the issue of what traffic does it create, what mitigations are there to move the traffic are part of the planning process."

He, like the other contenders, wants to see an expansion of light rail, including one between downtown and the beach. The political will now exists, he says, where it didn't before. Krisiloff agrees that those who previously objected to a rail line through their neighborhood could probably be convinced to support one now. "The outcry now is incredible because we're all in traffic gridlock."

It wasn't long ago that transportation issues would have been considered too wonky to make a campaign centerpiece, but now it's tops on the public's mind, says the Center for the Study of Los Angeles' Guerra. The top-tier issues, he says, used to be education, jobs, the economy. Traffic is now a real problem. "It's real from objective data, it's real from public opinion data and it's real from leaders understanding it," he says. "They just don't know what to do."

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