



**Metro**

Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 Tel  
metro.net

**APRIL 24, 2020**

**TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**FROM: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: WEEKLY UPDATE ON RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

### **ISSUE**

This memo is the weekly update to the Board, for the Week ending April 24, on Metro's actions responding to COVID-19.

### **BACKGROUND**

Due to the ever-changing crisis regarding COVID-19, staff will issue weekly updates to the Metro Board of Directors on the latest actions to respond to federal, state, and local directives during this national emergency.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Incident Management**

Metro's Incident Management Team (IMT), in coordination with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and several departments, continues to respond to the evolving crisis and take actions accordingly. Metro continues to send out daily COVID-19 briefs using our alert system to all field staff and maintains a 24-hour duty-officer to receive COVID-19 related calls from staff.

Special note: This week, Metro is piloting a fever detection camera system at Gateway HQ to test the feasibility of screening staff and/or visitor temperatures upon conclusion of the 'Safer at Home Order' and personnel beginning to report back to work.

#### **Operations**

The most current ridership numbers indicate that Metro is carrying in the range of 350,000 to 370,000 people per day. We continue to utilize rear-door boarding, bus operator barriers, and will accept fares offered by customers. We are communicating to

customers using audio, headsigs, digital map cases, and printed material to wear face masks/coverings and to maintain social distancing when riding Metro.

*Service & Partial Station Closure Plan*

As of this past Sunday, April 19, 2020, we implemented the following Enhanced-Sunday schedule due to low ridership experienced on bus and rail as a result of the Safer at Home Order:

- Weekday Service: Metro began operating usual Sunday bus service plus all Rapid and most Local/Express service that normally does not run on Sundays. Additionally, all trains began running every 12 minutes between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. and every 20 minutes at other times with last trains leaving terminal stations at midnight
- Weekend Service: On weekends, Metro will operate regular Sunday service on bus and rail lines
- Rail: Weekday car consists are being maintained as much as possible given the availability of maintenance personnel necessary to adequately maintain and clean vehicles
- Bus: Operations will continue to deploy 60-ft buses much as possible to ensure there is adequate space for social distancing across the system

To date, Operations has made adjustments on several bus lines in response to customer feedback mostly related to overcrowding. In order to address customer concerns, 40-foot buses are being replaced by 60-foot articulated buses on lines with overall capacity needs, while additional trips are added during targeted time periods to address time specific crowding issues. In addition, early morning trips have been added on some lines that have a later Sunday start time compared to the weekday schedule. We will continue to listen to customer comments, closely monitor service, and make immediate adjustments to respond to on-street reality.

*B Line (Red) Partial Station Closures*

This week, Operations completed site visits and will begin fencing work this Friday, April 24 at Universal City Walk and work inward to Union Station. The partial station closures listed below will reduce touchpoints, maintenance resources and materials, while maintaining ADA access:

<b>B LINE (RED) PARTIAL ENTRANCE CLOSURE</b>	<b>ALTERNATE ENTRANCE</b>
1. <b>Union Station</b> (West Entrance)	East Entrance
2. <b>Civic Center/Grand Park</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> St Entrance)	Temple St Entrance
3. <b>Pershing Square</b> (4 <sup>th</sup> St NW Entrance)	4 <sup>th</sup> St NE Entrance
4. <b>7<sup>th</sup> St/Metro Center</b> (Hope St Entrance)	Flower St and Figueroa St Entrances

5. <b>Westlake/MacArthur Park</b> (North Entrance)	South Entrance
6. <b>Vermont/Santa Monica</b> (City College Entrance)	Main Entrance
7. <b>Universal City/Studio City</b> (Park & Ride / CityWalk Entrance)	Bus Plaza Entrance

*Strengthened Cleaning Regimes & PPE*

Metro continues to practice strengthened cleaning regimes in addition to regular cleaning activities in response to COVID-19 on all vehicles, stations and terminals. Metro will continue to distribute and procure the necessary personal protective equipment and supplies for our frontline employees as safety remains our top priority.

*Restroom Facilities*

Metro Operations has agreements for operator use of restroom facilities with many diverse businesses along the various corridors where it operates. During this time period when City and County Stay at Home orders are in place, many non-essential businesses have closed. Therefore, we needed to find an alternative to these locations. In a new partnership, Starbucks has agreed to allow the use of their restroom facilities for any Metro Operators who are in uniform or can produce a work ID. While many Starbucks remain closed to the public, some have continued as drive-thru operations. These locations will allow our Operators use of the restroom facilities. In addition, starting May 4, when Starbucks anticipates re-opening all of their locations, Metro operators will have even more access to restrooms along their routes.

**Communications & Government Relations**

*State and Federal*

On Monday, April 27, the California Assembly Budget Subcommittee #6 will conduct an informational hearing on the COVID-19 crisis. We understand this hearing will focus on economic conditions. We are working with the California Transit Association and transit agencies across the state to provide testimony at these hearings to support the needs of transit agencies around the state. As we brief members and provide testimony at hearings we are highlighting the need to ensure public transit remains funded and that infrastructure investments are key to the state’s economic revitalization.

On April 23, 2020, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted legislation to replenish the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program. Specifically, the bill provides \$310 billion to restart the SBA’s Paycheck Protection Program, \$75 billion for hospitals and healthcare facilities, \$50 billion for emergency disaster loans, and \$25 billion for more COVID-19 testing around the nation.

Metro continues to remain actively engaged with the U.S. DOT and our Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation with respect to the transit funding included for our agency in the CARES Act. Metro continues to have a shared dialogue with national stakeholders discussing the potential for a future stimulus bill addressing our national infrastructure. And lastly, Metro is focused on advancing our Board-approved

Rebuilding America initiative as Congress continues to debate the potential of advancing a \$760 billion infrastructure authorization bill – as envisioned in Chairman DeFazio’s (D-OR) Moving Forward Framework plan – which has been endorsed by the House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

#### *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act*

As I reported at yesterday’s Regular April Board Meeting, we are reviewing the Federal CARES allocations with stakeholders (Municipal Operators), and working transparently with Regional Transit partners. We anticipate issuing a Board Box next week to describe the process for seeking reimbursements.

#### *Media Coverage*

The Agency and its staff members were mentioned in more than 30 print and electronic stories.

As reported in last week’s update, LA Times reporter Laura Nelson has joined a Facebook group managed by bus operators and has inquired about several of their concerns related to personal protective equipment, social distancing and other safety-related issues. Staff reported that safety for our frontline workers is our primary concern. We are doing everything possible to ensure a safe work environment for our operators. A story is expected to run early next week.

#### *Workforce communications*

Email blasts have expanded to twice daily, 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. The early morning blast features lighter fare such as Movies starring Metro, commuting playlists and exercise tips. The Daily Brief was redesigned to include standard features such as “Facts and Figures” that provides the tools needed to find answers to questions and resources provided to employees by Metro.

Pre-production has started on the short videos of encouragement and departmental information from the Senior Leadership Team which are scheduled to launch Friday, May 1. happy•ish is the two-minute good news segment that will give shout-outs to employees and departmental accomplishments three times a week beginning Monday, April 27. The team has been assembled and pre-production has begun on the documentary, Metro in the time of COVID-19 (working title).

#### *COVID-19 Confirmed Cases*

Metro continues to post a list of confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Metro employees, contractors and vendors. The list is available [via this link](#) on the Metro website and will be updated by 6 p.m. daily.

As of April 24, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 34 Total Confirmed Cases:

- 13 Operators
- 4 Maintenance
- 2 Administrative
- 2 Security

- 13 Contractors/Vendors
- 1 Death (Contractor/Vendor)
- 1 Recovered

### **Workforce and Leave Policy**

We continue to support employees as we implement the new COVID-19 leave of absence process that aligns with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Since April 1, we have received almost 300 inquiries to our dedicated phone and email inbox for COVID-related questions. We have also provided ongoing updates to FAQs, which now contains answers to over 125 questions and visual aids to assist with navigating the new process. Additionally, staff has been working through the new return-to-work process for employees who were exposed to or confirmed to have COVID-19.

In review of data from the last pay period, approximately 20% of the workforce used COVID-19 related leave. This is a slight decrease from the previous pay period, which was about 22%. We will continue to monitor leave data and provide updates.

Members of the Metro's Senior Leadership Team continue to meet with our Labor Leaders twice a week. This forum has been a good venue to readily address emerging issues.

### *PPE*

Metro has distributed over 120,000 masks and 550,000 pairs of gloves to date. Earlier this week we received an additional 266,000 masks, which will be inventoried and sorted for distribution as needed. We have more than 700,000 personal hand sanitizers, over 650,000 N-95 masks and more than 700,000 surgical masks on order. Additionally, we have also ordered 1,500 pairs of goggles and 10,000 face shields.

### **Construction**

Construction continues to proceed on all projects. Contractors and construction workers have been effectively applying PPE, social distancing and other required safety protocols. There have been periodic disruptions due to positive cases or social distancing requirements; however, projects are largely proceeding with few significant impacts. We continue to take advantage of the lull in traffic to increase access to work areas.

### **Finance**

The Finance Department's monthly forecast remains unchanged for sales tax, fare revenue and expense from last week. We will have a sales tax loss update in June 2020.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Metro continues to monitor and adapt to the evolving situation. As the crisis continues, we will stay in close contact with the Board to keep everyone informed.

For more information or if you have questions, please contact me directly at 213-922-7555 or our Chief of Staff, Nadine Lee, at 213-922-7950.