



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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Metro

MAY 8, 2020

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON PAW
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 May 8, 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 public health and safety updates and intelligence briefs, deploy best practices in emergency management, communicate and share information with City, County, State, and Federal partners, and plan for needs related to logistics/supplies for staff, such as gloves and masks, the impact of ridership reductions, the financial analysis associated with grant reimbursement opportunities and other emergency response activities. The ICS will remain activated during the continued declarations of emergencies and is linked to the EOC on a 24-hour basis for emergency updates and response. Metro staff receives regular updates and guidance on how to respond to cases of positive tests for COVID-19 and to take prescriptive actions related to quarantine directives from LA County Public Health.

This week, Emergency Management has coordinated with Human Resources and Corporate Safety to identify and record recovered cases of Metro employees previously confirmed as positive COVID-19 cases. Information on recovered cases will be updated weekly.

Small Business Week

On Monday, I joined the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department (DEOD) team on Day One of the Small Business Week series of events. The session, entitled “Real Talk: Metro, COVID-19 and Small Business Inclusion,” was my opportunity to reach out and reassure the audience that Metro’s commitment to them is unwavering. Over 120 small business owners tuned in to the Live Stream with questions ranging from requests to lower the requirements for contracts to concerns about prompt payment during these unprecedented times. The 45 minute chat reiterated Metro’s demand for small business inclusion, the programs in place to facilitate their involvement and the opportunity to rethink strategies for gaining contracts. We talked candidly about the need to study up on the Primes, become fluent in Metro culture and language, researching competition, seeking out partners and stepping-up their game.

Metro has a 40 year mandate to reshape the nature of transportation. As the largest public works program in the Country, we will continue to set the standard for excellence and innovation. When businesses reopen, Metro will need small businesses to be ready. We challenged the listeners to take advantage of the tools Metro offers in order to increase their capacity and ability to compete.

Operations

The most current ridership numbers indicate that Metro is still carrying about 391,000 passengers a day. We continue to communicate to customers about the Enhanced Sunday Schedule. Effective Monday, May 11, 2020, Metro will begin requiring customers and operators to wear face masks/coverings, to the extent practical, while maintaining the safety of our operators and customers. Bus operators will continue to use barriers, rear-door boarding and maintain physical distance to the extent possible.

Service & Service Recovery Planning Underway

For just under three weeks now, Metro has provided an Enhanced-Sunday schedule. Weekday service includes Sunday bus service plus Rapid and most Local/Express service, with additional trips to address early morning weekday demand and capacity for social distancing. Most trains run 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 includes Sunday service on bus and rail lines. Service includes the use of weekday consists and 60-foot buses to allow for physical distancing and added capacity, to the extent possible. Service and customer feedback are actively being monitored so adjustments can be made.

Service recovery planning is underway as Metro prepares to build up of service based on sustainable resources and demand to support recovery. Metro’s plan will follow NextGen principles and will be responsive to post-COVID 19 cleanliness standards

along with new operating standards and requirements guided by the CDC and other regulatory agencies/directives as the Stay at Home and Safer at Home Orders are gradually lifted. Metro's service recovery plan will be flexible and a collaborative effort among internal and external stakeholders to ensure transit delivery post COVID-19 is responsible and effective.

Completed B Line (Red) Partial Station Closures

For one week now, the seven stations along the B Line (Union Station, Civic Center, Pershing Square, 7th St/Metro Center, Westlake/Mac Arthur Park, Vermont/Santa Monica, and Universal City/Studio City) remain partially closed to reduce touchpoints, maintenance resources and materials, while maintaining ADA access.

Strengthened Cleaning Regimes, Consideration of Additional Cleaning Activities & 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. Additionally, Operations, General Services and Corporate Safety continue to analyze the potential pilot use of UV lights in addition to supplementary cleaning personnel at end of terminals for enhanced cleaning and sanitation during revenue service. Metro will continue to distribute and procure necessary personal protective equipment as safety remains our top priority.

Update on Metro Mobility on Demand Program

Last week, Metro's Mobility on Demand program contractor, Via, began a small-scale emergency food delivery service in response to the Covid-19 crisis, in partnership with First Five LA and Para Los Ninos. (First Five is a state-funded early childhood education agency for the County, and Para Los Ninos is one of the partner non-profits they work with.) Via delivered food bank donations and household essentials to families with young children who are unable to go to the store safely and cannot afford to order traditional home delivery groceries. Recipients of food and diapers expressed gratitude to be able to protect themselves and their families from exposure and for receiving essential items in this time of insecurity.

The service is operating at no additional cost to Metro. The first deliveries are being made in the First Five "Metro LA" region which surrounds the intersection of the 10 and 110 freeways. Para Los Ninos will continue to identify families who need meal deliveries with the potential to scale up deliveries to meet demand. Metro, Via, and First Five LA will continue to work with additional non-profits to determine the need for this service across the County.

Communications & Government Relations

Federal

Congress and the White House are continuing to discuss a new COVID-19 related bill to address the continuing economic damage being done by the pandemic across the United States. There is some, though not total agreement, that the next federal bill will focus on providing financial assistance to State and Local Governments. Metro is continuing to advocate that Congress continue to provide funds to transit agencies

nationwide to address the financial shortfalls faced by declines in sales tax revenue, fares, among other revenue sources. A number of other subjects may be addressed in the next COVID-19 related bill, including but not limited to, hazard pay funding for frontline workers, student loan debt relief, additional Paycheck Protection Program funding, and providing childcare assistance for frontline workers.

Finally, Congress is also considering a number of proposals to provide a second round of stimulus checks to all Americans. As our agency did with respect to the CARES Act that was signed into law on March 27, 2020 – we will continue to aggressively advocate for Congress and the White House to provide funds to transportation agencies to ensure that they can continue to provide mobility to all Americans during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Towards this end, we continue to remain in close touch with the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation to ensure they have accurate and timely information about our agency during this pandemic.

Media Coverage

The Agency and its staff members were mentioned in more than 60 print and electronic stories.

Effective Monday, May 11, consistent with the County's Public Order, Metro will require everyone aboard a Metro bus or train to wear a face covering. Given that, Communications will be rolling out an updated education campaign on this new requirement through static, digital and social media starting next week. The agency will enforce this requirement to the extent that is practical — and we will be considering the best way to enforce this rule going forward.

A press release and [Source post](#) were released earlier this week clarifying Metro's requirement.

Workforce Communications

Two to three minute video segments featuring members of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) debuted on Tuesday. They are sent to staff via email blast on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The SLT discuss what their departments have been doing over the past seven weeks during the COVID-19 stay-at-home order and how their teams have been managing.

Responding & Reporting of COVID-19 Cases Learning Tool

This learning tool has been developed by Human Capital & Development in partnership with Risk, Safety and Asset Management to assist in navigating the response and reporting process of COVID-19 cases.

Union Station Vendors

The following vendors in Union Station are open for your patronage:

- Starbucks
- Subway Sandwiches

- Wetzel's Pretzels
- Trimana Convenience Store

We expect Green Bowl To-Go to reopen soon with the return of our daily passengers to Union Station.

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 May 8, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 59 Total Confirmed Cases:

- 17 Operators
- 10 Maintenance
- 4 Administrative
- 2 Security
- 26 Contractors/Vendors
- 1 Death (Contractor/Vendor)
- 10 Recovered

Workforce and Leave Policy

We continue to support employees navigating the COVID-19 leave of absence process that aligns with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Since April 1, we have resolved more than 360 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inbox for COVID-related questions. Notably, the numbers of inquiries have steadily decreased week-to-week since implementing the new leave program. Additionally, staff continues to work through the new return-to-work process for employees who were exposed to or confirmed to have COVID-19. To date, we have returned an additional 9 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and 3 are currently pending clearance. In total, we have returned 96 employees to work who were off due to COVID exposure or were suspected/confirmed positive cases.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team have continued to meet twice a week with Leaders from our five Labor Unions. This venue has served to provide timely updates and address issues at the lowest possible level.

The plans for re-opening the Gateway Headquarters are underway with a phased approach that is focused on building and maintaining a low-risk workplace.

Construction

Construction continues on all projects. Metro and the contractors are focused on maintaining recommended safety protocols. There have been periodic reports of impacts on attendance and productivity. However, there have also been opportunities to access additional work areas for longer periods of time due to decreased traffic volumes.

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 coming this month.

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.