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Metro

MAY 22, 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 22, 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, the Command Staff Meetings were decreased from daily weekday meetings to twice weekly. The EOC remains activated with the Emergency Management Department handling the daily activities and continuing its 24-hour duty officer program.

Additionally, Emergency Management coordinated with IMT Finance & Administration subgroup comprised of Finance, Countywide Planning and Emergency Management. This subgroup initiated Phase 2 of a 3-phase process within the agency's reimbursement strategy related to the CARES Act and FEMA funding. Phase 2 consists of reviewing actual incurred costs, identifying unforeseen expenses by departments, and funding program analysis based on eligibility.

Operations

The most current ridership numbers indicate that Metro is carrying about 421,312 passengers/day. Field observations show that the majority of customers are wearing face masks/coverings when riding on our system. Bus Operators are required to utilize rear-door boarding and barriers, and maintain physical distancing to the extent possible. All other Operations personnel are required to wear masks or face coverings at work locations and in the field. field.

Service & Service Recovery Planning Underway

For just under five weeks now, Metro has provided a modified Enhanced-Sunday schedule. Service includes the use of weekday consists and 60-foot buses to allow for physical distancing and added capacity, to the extent possible. Since Sunday, April 19th, Operations added trips on 18 lines and articulated buses on 4 lines. Service and customer feedback are actively being monitored so adjustments can be made quickly.

Service recovery planning is underway as Metro prepares to build up of service based on sustainable resources and demand to support recovery. Metro's bus recovery plan includes the following phases and will be discussed at the May Board Meeting:

Phase 1 (May – June 2020): Orders Begin Lifting – This phase proactively establishes frequent core network for first wave of non-essential workers and includes a modified increase in frequencies.

Phase 2 (July – Aug 2020): Schools Back in Session – This phase proactively establishes frequent core network for first wave of students returning to school and includes a modified additional increase in frequencies.

Phase 3 (Sept – Nov 2020): Emerging Markets – This phase reacts to patterns of emerging economic growth factors and includes implementation of service for emerging markets.

Phase 4 (Dec – Jan 2020/2021): NextGen's New Normal – This phase begins the full buildout of a sustainable NextGen Plan and implements route changes, frequency adjustments, and deployment of MicroTransit to reflect the Metro's new normal service.

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, Corporate Safety and OEI continue to analyze the potential use of UV lights in addition to supplementary cleaning personnel at end-of-line terminals for enhanced cleaning and sanitation during revenue service. Metro will continue to monitor, distribute and procure necessary personal protective equipment as safety remains our top priority.

Communications

Media Coverage

The Agency and its staff members were mentioned in more than 20 print and electronic stories.

Workforce Communications

Metro participated in the #SoundTheHorn event on Thursday, May 21, as a tribute to #HeroesMovingHeroes on the front line for this public health crisis. All trains and buses running in service gave two one-second horn blasts at noon PST in solidarity with partner agencies. Last month, 128+ agencies participated in a coordinated day of action to simultaneously sound their train, bus and boat horns to honor heroic transportation workers across the country. Transportation workers continue to provide critical service for healthcare workers, first responders, childcare workers, grocery store employees and other heroes who are performing essential front line work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of Starbucks' *Million Cups of Coffee* campaign for front line workers, Metro employees were able to receive a free tall-sized cup of coffee on Monday, May 18, 2020. Starbucks has been and continues to be a great partner for Metro during this pandemic.

The Goods Three of Metro's transportation infrastructure projects under construction were featured on the Science Channel show "Building Giants: L.A. Mega Rail," which aired Wednesday, May 13. The show was filmed and produced by the Windfall Filming Company from the United Kingdom as part of the series "Building Giants" and features Metro's Regional Connector, Crenshaw/LAX and the Purple Line Extension projects. Media Relations staff assisted the film crew last summer documenting various aspects and key construction milestones of the three projects. The film crew also interviewed Metro's executive staff and construction workers as part of the hour-long episode. A link to the show is [here](#), however you must sign in through your TV provider.

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 22, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 71 Total Confirmed Cases:

- 20 Operators
- 12 Maintenance
- 5 Administrative
- 2 Security
- 33 Contractors/Vendors
- 1 Death (Contractor/Vendor)
- 14 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 400 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inboxes for COVID-related questions. This week, the number of inquiries increased for the first week since implementing the new leave program. Additionally, although FFCRA leave usage continues to decrease, overall non-occupational leave numbers are up to approximately 600 employees, from an average of anywhere from 450-500. We are analyzing data to better understand the current leave usage patterns.

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 18 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19, and one is currently pending clearance. In total, we have returned 133 employees to work who were off due to COVID exposure or were suspected/confirmed positive cases.

Metro Headquarters Re-opening Update

This week, Human Capital & Development led a collaborative webinar to kick off phase one of Our Path Forward for Metro Headquarters. 34 stakeholders, representing every managing department at LA Metro virtually gathered on Wednesday, May 20, 2020, to begin the business needs assessment of the plan.

Each department received a Phase One Toolkit containing survey materials, staggered scheduling examples, individualized floor plans and department rosters to assist in engaging employees about their schedule and space needs in the coming months.

Our Path Forward will continue to evolve as public health guidelines are updated. Human Capital & Development will partner with stakeholders in assessing individual department needs as we gradually integrate staff back to Metro's Headquarters Building during phase two of the plan.

Bi-weekly Labor Meetings

Members of the Senior Leadership Team continue to meet with leaders from our 5 Bargaining Units on every Tuesday and Friday. I join the Friday meeting and provide a briefing of activities across the organization.

Construction

All construction projects continue to proceed. Although there are reports of impacts to productivity, contractors and workers continue to do an excellent job in being able to effectively progress the work while maintaining all necessary safety protocols. Several projects have had improved access to work areas during this time of decreased economic and travel activity.

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.