



Los Angeles County
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Metro

June 19, 2020

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

PAW

SUBJECT: WEEKLY UPDATE ON RESPONSE TO COVID-19

ISSUE

This memo is the weekly update to the Board, for the Week ending June 12, on Metro's actions responding to COVID-19 and the civil unrest.

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 Incident Management team assisted Corporate Safety with the implementation, procedures, and coordination of Metro Security with monitoring the Temperature Camera Sensor used for the State of the Agency meeting.

Operations

The most current ridership numbers indicate that Metro is carrying about 495,003 passengers/day. Masks continue to be required for both customers and Metro employees and Operations is utilizing rear-door boarding and barriers to maintain physical distancing to the extent possible. As of now, Operations plans to continue rear-door boarding through the end of summer 2020. About 95% of customers observed by Operations are wearing masks and Communications is working to distribute masks for bus and rail customers for use while riding Metro.

Service & Service Recovery Efforts

For just under nine weeks now, Metro has provided a modified Enhanced-Sunday schedule in response to reduced ridership levels due to COVID-19. Service delivery includes the use of weekday consists and 60-foot buses to allow for physical distancing and added capacity to the extent possible. To date, Operations has added trips on 19 bus lines and articulated buses on 5 lines.

As part of the 1st phase of Metro's Service Recovery Plan, additional service adjustments are planned to go into effect in conjunction with Metro's regularly scheduled bi-annual shake-up this Sunday, June 21, 2020, including:

- Service additions to 95 (over half) of the lines for social distancing
- Increased frequencies on select Tier 1 and 2 lines
- Adjusted running times based on faster current speeds
- Larger, articulated buses will continue to operate on all trips/selected lines to the extent possible in support of social distancing
- All other bus lines and rail will retain the current (Enhanced-Sunday) schedule during the week

Strengthened Cleaning Regimes, UV Lighting Pilot Project & 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. With the support of Security & Law Enforcement, end-of-terminal cleaning is being piloted with existing staff on the Red Line from 8 am-noon, M-F. End-of-terminal cleaning is also being piloted on a smaller scale on the E Line (Expo). Additionally, Metro will be piloting use of UV lights for added sanitation beginning in August/September 2020 on the B Line (Red).

Operations is also exploring additional sanitation options such as the use of antibacterial copper film over high-point contact surfaces. Metro will continue to distribute and procure necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) as safety is our top priority. As of today, PPE levels are stabilized, and supplies are sufficiently available at our operating divisions and locations.

CARES Act

On May 28, 2020, the Metro Board of Directors unanimously approved the allocation of CARES Act funding received by Los Angeles County. The approved CARES Act funding plan distributes a total of \$1.068 billion in Federal relief dollars to all transit operators in the County, including Municipal Operators, Tier 2 Operators, Small Operators, Access Services, and Metrolink. Following Metro Board approval, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has issued a sub-allocation support letter, also known as a “split letter.” The SCAG split letter officially establishes CARES Act funding levels for LA County transit operators. Once the split letter is received and accepted by FTA, agencies are then able to prepare their CARES grant applications and submit them for review and approval. Upon FTA approval of grant applications, all transit operators may begin drawing down the CARES Act funds up to their Board approved allocation amount as reimbursement for eligible expenses.

Union Station

On Monday, June 22 Union station will be modifying the check points and lane system back to the pre-COVID-19 operating status with some modifications. With the growing ridership the check points rapidly become “choke points” causing a negative impact on the social distancing requirements. The modifications to the pre-COVID-19 system is the addition of very large, easily read bi-lingual signage with pictograms as to social distancing and masks.

There will also be a contingent of guards trained in particular phrasing and de-escalation techniques to advise patrons of the social distancing and mask requirements should someone not be observing them. These efforts will facilitate the flow of patrons to their destinations and we believe the “friendly reminder” approach is our best tool since there is no enforcement option available.

Communications

Media Coverage

The Agency and its staff members were mentioned in more than 19 print and electronic stories.

Statewide Order Issued by Governor Newsom

Governor Gavin Newsom issued an order requiring all California residents to wear face coverings in public, including when shopping, taking public transit or seeking medical care.

The state mandate exempts children 2 years old and under and people with a medical, mental health or developmental disability that prevents them from wearing a face covering. Restaurant customers are also exempt when eating and drinking, as are residents recreating outdoors, as long as they are able to socially distance from others.

According to the order, masks must be worn by Californians in their workplace, when serving customers or any member of the public, when working or walking through

hallways and parking facilities and when riding on elevators. People who drive buses, taxis, ride-hailing vehicles, or any other service that accepts passengers must also wear masks.

Juneteenth Defined and Celebrated

On June 19th, sixteen days before the commonly recognized American Independence Day, the abolition of slavery across each of the United States is commemorated. Although the Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery as of January 1, 1863, the rebellious confederate states continued the abhorrent practice. Juneteenth marks the date the federally freed slaves were finally emancipated in Galveston Texas, 2 years, 5 months, and 18 days delayed. Despite the presidential proclamation, it took the presence of 2,000 Union troops led by General Gordon Granger, to free the more than 250,000 people subjected to continued illegal servitude and forced labor in Texas. Celebrations of this historic event were entitled Juneteenth, which became an official state holiday on January 1, 1980.

Juneteenth, also referred to as Freedom Day, is now celebrated across the nation as a partial or full holiday in most states, with increased advocacy for recognition as a national holiday. In 2019, the senate designated June 19, 2019 as “Juneteenth Independence Day” and communicated support for “the continued nationwide celebration to provide an opportunity for the people of the United States to learn more about the past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped the United States”. Yesterday, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order, and Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, introduced legislation recognizing Juneteenth as a paid holiday for state employees. Businesses including Google, Nike, Target, several NFL teams, and others implemented Juneteenth as an employer paid holiday.

Information about the historical legacy of Juneteenth is available on the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African American History & Culture website:
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/historical-legacy-juneteenth>

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 June 12, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 107 Total Confirmed Cases:

- 31 Operators
- 16 Maintenance
- 10 Administrative
- 3 Security
- 47 Contractors/Vendors
- 2 Deaths (1 Contractor/Vendor; 1 Bus Operations)
- 20 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 490 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inboxes for COVID-related questions. Overall, the number of inquiries continue to decline. There are approximately 580 employees on a continuous non-occupational leave of absence, from an average of anywhere from 450-500. Note that this number does not account for employees using continuous Emergency Family/Medical Leave (EFML) under the FFCRA, nor does it include those who were advised to self-quarantine due to their age or underlying condition and who required leave beyond the provisions of the FFCRA. This number has slightly declined over the last few weeks.

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 39 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and 2 are currently pending clearance. In total, we have returned 257 employees to work who were off due to COVID-related reasons, including exposure or suspected/confirmed positive cases.

Metro Headquarters Re-opening Update

Human Capital & Development hosted a collaborative webinar with all 19 operating departments on Monday, June 15, 2020 to discuss phase one assessment findings and learn about which strategies each department will use to welcome employees back to their physical work spaces during phase two of the plan.

Each department will work with General Services to further evaluate their space needs and ensure social distancing guidelines are in place for each floor of the building. Metro remains committed to implementing an equitable approach as we gradually reintroduce staff back to our headquarters building.

Construction

Metro construction continues to move forward in a safe manner. There have been intermittent cases of COVID-19 from contractors. Effective contact tracing has identified these cases and notified anyone who may have been in contact so that appropriate precautions can be made.

There are sporadic reports of supply chain disruptions, but overall construction work continues to proceed close to normal. The piling and decking at the Rodeo Station site on WPLE-2 in Beverly Hills was completed on June 15 – a major milestone. Other work in the City of Los Angeles has received peak hour exemptions and extended work areas due to low volumes of traffic.

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.