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**JUNE 29, 2020**

**TO:** BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**THROUGH:** PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON *PAW*  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**FROM:** RICHARD CLARKE *RFC*  
CHIEF PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OFFICER

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CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** 2020 SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE UPDATE

**ISSUE**

Metro provides an annual sustainability performance update to the Metro Board and the public. This reflects Metro's commitment to continual improvement. The annual evaluation and reporting of the agency's performance are designed to conform with the sustainability metrics we have committed to report more than a decade ago.

In the past two years, staff has also been developing an update to the *2008 Metro Sustainability Implementation Plan. Moving Beyond Sustainability* (MBS) is LA Metro's new 10-year agency-wide sustainability master plan set for Board approval later this summer.

The MBS describes the expanded scope of agency-wide sustainability and resiliency scope, including a new governance structure to implement sustainability strategies within our agency and in cooperation with stakeholders. This changed sustainability implementation landscape requires new means and methods to more comprehensively report current and expanded sustainability metrics after MBS implementation.

Detailed information on the previous year's sustainability metrics and a new reporting tool in the form of a sustainability dashboard are described herein.

## **BACKGROUND**

Metro has been committed to sustainability for more than a decade. The *2008 Metro Sustainability Implementation Plan* provides the framework and work plan on how to accomplish sustainability goals within the agency. The update to that plan, *Moving Beyond Sustainability*, establishes goals and targets that reflect the changed landscape of sustainability, resiliency, equity, and environmental finance.

Our current annual sustainability report has provided essential data to inform decision making and resource allocation. The process ensures that we fulfill regulatory compliance mandates, construction requirements and Board commitments on renewable energy, climate change impact reduction, reduced potable and increased recycled water use, and overall resource conservation and recovery.

MBS is anticipated to be approved by the Metro Board in Summer 2020. The ultimate goal continues to be the advancement of sustainability throughout our agency operations. The MBS also aligns with the goals and strategies of other stakeholders to achieve sustainability and resiliency within the region. Considering these factors, sustainability implementation in LA Metro has evolved beyond operational metrics and under a new governance structure. Additional relevant metrics will be reported starting in 2021.

## **DISCUSSION**

Metro's annual data collection and reporting process provides invaluable insight into operational performance. The information is used to evaluate program effectiveness and drive efficiency improvements. All of these improvements have lead to overall long-term cost savings and monetized environmental benefits.

The year 2020 has brought unprecedented challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. We needed to reassess and re-invent our sustainability program to remain relevant and responsive to the needs of our agency and our region. In that respect, our ability to make use of sustainability-related data to positively inform decision making becomes more critical. We need data that is more accessible and transparent to the public so it could provide an almost as real time information as possible to our policymakers. This is key in ensuring that information could be used at the highest and best of our abilities to ensure that Metro plays an even more important role in helping our agency and our community become more sustainable and resilient.

Transforming our reporting medium from a traditional printed report of accomplishments and data output to an online and open source version is essential to achieve this goal. This web-based reporting will provide a highly adaptive and responsive reporting

environment that is both cost-effective and interactive, while providing transparency about program effectiveness and connecting initiatives to our data.

The 2020 sustainability performance update is therefore now presented in a series of tabs, tables, and interactive graphs at [www.metro.net/projects/sustainability/reporting/](http://www.metro.net/projects/sustainability/reporting/). The data shows that Metro's prior investments in improving environmental equity are paying off. As a result, Metro is conserving valuable water resources and improving community health through regional air quality improvements and greenhouse gas reductions.

While the focus of this Board Report is on these two metrics, additional metrics have generally shown positive results for our agency. All data included in this update are from the calendar year 2019.

### *Introducing our new reporting dashboard*

The reporting website [www.metro.net/projects/sustainability/reporting/](http://www.metro.net/projects/sustainability/reporting/) shows the same types of information that previous printed sustainability reports have provided, but more. Highlights include:

- A Performance Indicator Summary Chart showing the percent change from last year now also gives the user the option to choose which years to compare;
- Graphs of metrics data are dynamic, allowing the user to select data to view, which years to focus on, and the graphs can be exported if Metro chooses to turn this function on;
- Those programs and initiatives tied to the data present themselves with the relevant graphs, helping us to show the public what we do and how we do it; and
- A new dynamic timeline shows those policies, programs and plans that have provided a long-standing foundation for current accomplishments.

This dashboard is smartphone and tablet friendly, requires minimal design effort and staff maintenance. The new format reduces the cost of producing and updating information in the future. The back-end architecture can be replicated for other reporting purposes across the Agency.

### *Metro is using less water, even as the system expands*

On-going efforts to conserve LA's limited water resources and reduce water consumption through efficiency improvements are proving successful. In 2019, Metro's total water consumption decreased by 9.36% compared to 2018, which represents nearly 26,000,000 gallons of water saved. When water consumption is normalized to Vehicle Revenue Miles (VRM) to account for year-to-year changes in operations, Metro only consumed 2.02 gallons of water per VRM in 2019, down 8% from 2.19 gallons per VRM in 2018.

One way we did it: Previous year analysis of water consumption patterns revealed that irrigation along our rights-of-way, and particularly along the Orange Line, accounted for a significant percentage of total water consumption. This information led to investing in system upgrades that were completed in 2019. The reduction in water consumption along the Orange Line has already saved Metro \$190,000 in 2019, an average savings of \$27,000 per month.

*Strategic investments are resulting in better air quality*

Regional criteria air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions have a significant impact on community health and reducing these emissions provides the greatest benefit to those who need most to breathe a little easier across LA County. As a Board priority, reducing these emissions has been a significant focus of the sustainability program over the last several years.

In 2019, Metro reduced total greenhouse gas emissions by an impressive 12%, a reduction of nearly 45,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. Likewise, total criteria air pollutant emissions, comprised of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and hydrocarbons, decreased by 13.4% in 2019, down from 67.5 pounds per 10,000 VRM in 2018 to 58.4 pounds per 10,000 VRM in 2019.

How we did it: Three programs worked collectively – Metro transitioned from conventional compressed natural gas (CNG) to renewable natural gas (RNG) for the bus fleet, we invested in “near-zero” emission engines and we converted to more renewable sources of electricity through our transition of electric accounts to Clean Power Alliance within Southern California Edison service areas.

Moving to renewable sources of energy not only reduces emissions but also provides Metro with more options for sourcing energy in the future, creating a more resilient energy system.

There continues to be financial benefits from the use of renewable energy resources. Monetized benefits from the sale of renewable energy carbon credits continue to be used for sustainable infrastructure, per LA Metro Board policy.

**NEXT STEPS**

Data driven decision making has been the hallmark of our sustainability program in the past decade. The new interactive method of sustainability reporting will serve as a template for our new reporting needs when the MBS is adopted by the Board later this summer. The new reporting tool will also provide a timelier mechanism in evaluating the effectiveness of agency sustainability initiatives. It will also help in identifying optimum opportunities that will yield cost savings and equitable and environmental wins.

Annual on-line reports will be provided at the end of every fiscal year, beginning in FY21.