



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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Metro

JULY 31, 2020

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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

ISSUE

This memo is the bi-weekly update to the Board, for the Week ending July 31, 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 bi-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.

Metro Emergency Management also increased FEMA application for COVID-19 reimbursement request amount by \$58M from \$119M to \$177M due to June 2020 additional actual costs.

Union Station Update

Union Station continues to have positive results from our traveling public as to observing social distancing and the wearing of masks. All of our efforts over the preceding weeks of check points, signage, security personnel trained in addressing non-compliant individuals in cordial, appropriate ways and being educated in de-escalation have paid a dividend. However, the most persistent group to not observe the social distancing and mask requirements are the homeless. With our previous check points in place the homeless seemed to avoid Union Station. With the checkpoints removed, the homeless population is rediscovering the station. With that, we are again experiencing an escalation in damage and vandalism to the property. In an effort to mitigate these impacts and also serve the homeless population, we are continuing our coordination with - and regularly have on the property - PATH, Hope, Dream Center and LA Door. Metro has embarked on a program of Shelter the Unsheltered. A great article on Operation Shelter the Unsheltered from this past May appears in the Source, [here](#).

Operations

The most current ridership numbers indicate that Metro is carrying about 533,778 boardings/day. Field observations continue to show that the majority of customers (99%) are wearing face masks/coverings when riding on our system.

Service & Service Recovery Efforts

As part of Metro's Service Recovery Plan, bus service adjustments implemented just under six weeks ago included service additions to 95 lines, increased frequencies on selected lines, adjusted running times, and the use of larger articulated buses, to the extent possible, in support of social distancing. As of this Monday, trips on the following lines were also added or adjusted to even out loads and provide more capacity:

Weekdays

Lines: 18, 20, 33, 45, 51, 53, 66, 108, 111, 152, 204, 224, 232 and Metro Rapid Lines 720 & 754

Saturdays

Lines: 28, 81, 180/181 and 260

All other bus and rail lines have retained the modified Enhanced-Sunday schedule. For rail service, we are continuing 12-minute service throughout the day and using weekday rail-car consists to the extent possible to allow for social distancing. Operations will continue to monitor ridership and adjust service as necessary.

B Line (Red) Partial Station Closures Update

The closures below were implemented in late March 2020 and remain in effect until further notice and signage will direct customers to nearby entrances/exits. These partial

station closures reduce touchpoints, maintenance resources and materials, while maintaining ADA access:

B LINE (RED) PARTIAL ENTRANCE CLOSURE	ALTERNATE ENTRANCE
Union Station West (Alameda Entrance)	Union Station East (Vignes Entrance)
Civic Center/Grand Park (1st St Entrance)	Temple St Entrance
Pershing Square (4th St NW/Angels Flight Entrance)	4th St NE/Grand Central Mkt Entrance
7th St/Metro Ctr (Hope St NW/Qdoba Entrance)	Hope St SW/The Bloc, Flower Street and Figueroa Street Entrances
Westlake/MacArthur Park (North Stairwell Entrance)	South Entrance
Vermont/Santa Monica (LA City College Entrance)	Main Entrance
Universal City/Studio City (CityWalk/Park & Ride Stairwell)	CityWalk/Park & Ride Elevator and West Entrance to Bus Plaza

Strengthened Cleaning Regimes, PPE & UVC Light Pilot Update

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 EPA-approved disinfectants. UVC portable light pilot equipment has been received and is scheduled for efficacy testing on the Red Line next week. Once testing results are available, Operations will integrate this program into service operations on the subway. This pilot program will be conducted by Operations staff with input from the EPA and Corporate Safety and is intended to enhance sanitation of our equipment. Operations will continue to explore the feasibility and efficacy of other disinfection alternatives for bus and rail vehicles. Metro continues to distribute and procure necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) as safety is our top priority.

Communications

Media Coverage

The Agency and its staff members were mentioned in more than 12 print and electronic stories.

Workforce Communications

Work continues on safety messaging throughout the Agency.

Our Street Teams are taking a break for the next three weeks. In the meantime, volunteers are individual packaging some of the masks that were received from the FTA for continued distribution later in August.

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 July 31, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 265 Total Confirmed Cases:

- 69 Operators
- 60 Maintenance
- 26 Administrative
- 6 Security
- 104 Contractors/Vendors
- 2 Deaths (1 Contractor/Vendor; 1 Bus Operations)
- 28 Recovered

Workforce and Leave Policy

Well-Being Services continues to support the COVID-19 leave of absence process that aligns with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Since April 1, 2020, we have resolved more than 565 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inboxes for COVID-related questions. Recently, we have seen an increase in the amount of weekly increases, likely due to the changes we have made around pay while on self-quarantine.

Currently, there are approximately 614 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.

Medical Services Coordination continues to coordinate the return-to-work process for employees who were exposed to or confirmed to have COVID-19. To date, we have returned 88 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and 12 are currently pending clearance. In total, we have returned 582 employees to work who were off due to COVID-related reasons, including exposure or suspected/confirmed positive cases. Due to the large volume of employees seeking to return to work after quarantine, there is a significant delay in getting exams scheduled at our contracted medical clinics. Staff is working diligently to process and return employees to work as expeditiously as possible, while also adhering to Corporate Safety's guidance on required quarantine due to COVID exposure. Even with the high volumes and delays, the Medical Services Coordination team cleared 120 employees in one week alone; we greatly appreciate their diligence and hard work during this challenging time.

As noted over the last few updates, we have been working through pay issues for employees on Metro-directed quarantine. To this end, we have established a new pay code and request process for employees who Metro directs to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure both inside and outside of the workplace. We have also established a new pay code to account for any delays experienced due to return-to-

work exam scheduling. To support management and employees as they navigate the process, HC&D has partnered with Corporate Safety to create a webinar and live Q&A sessions regarding reporting, leave, return to work, and pay issues surrounding COVID. This webinar will be mandatory for all managers and above, and we anticipate having it available on Monday, August 3.

Due to the impending school year, we have received many inquiries regarding Metro's plans around providing additional leave for childcare due to COVID reasons. Although at this time, Metro is not providing any additional paid leave to employees, we are prepared to adapt our approach if new legislation is passed at the federal, state, or local levels. We are encouraging supervisors and managers to remain flexible and compassionate. To help support employees, we have created an Emergency COVID Personal Leave process that will provide employees with more flexibility than the regular Personal Leave policy. Employees are also encouraged to explore wage replacement benefits through California's Employment Development Department.

Metro Headquarters Re-opening Update

In light of the most recent COVID-19 numbers in Los Angeles County, Metro has made the decision to slow down our reentry into Gateway during Phase 2 and pause the reintegration of our senior leadership and management teams back to the Gateway Building. We will monitor internal and external conditions to evaluate our next steps in the coming weeks.

A hybrid model for intermittent telecommuting (where possible) through the end of 2020 is encouraged. Through these changes, our priority remains the same. We are committed to a healthy, safe and secure workplace for all Metro employees.

Labor-Management Partnership

Metro continues to meet two times each week with our senior leaders and our 5 labor unions. The meetings have been used to review the cases of COVID-19 within the organization and any service updates. Training related to the use of Leave and Return to Work has been completed. CEO Washington continues to lead the Friday morning meetings providing the group with updates from the Federal, State and Local authorities as well as Metro initiatives.

Construction

Metro construction continues to move forward in a safe manner. There have been intermittent cases of COVID-19 from contractors, consultants and one Metro employee. Effective contact tracing has identified these cases and notified anyone including Metro employees and consultants who may have been in contact so that appropriate precautions can be made. There continue to be reports of supply chain or employee absence disruptions, and we are closely monitoring schedules and overall construction work continues to proceed close to normal.

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.