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Metro

August 14, 2020

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON
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 August 14, on Metro's actions responding to COVID-19.

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 IMT 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.

Operations

The most current ridership numbers indicate that Metro is carrying about 560,097 boardings/day. Field observations continue to show that the majority of customers (99%) are wearing face masks/coverings when riding on our system.

Service

As part of Metro's Service Recovery Plan, the following bus service adjustments have been made over the past several months in support of social distancing and to even out loads for those making essential trips:

- Service additions/Increased frequencies
- Adjusted running times
- Use of larger articulated buses on additional lines (to the extent possible)
- Continued use of rear-door boarding, safety barriers for operators, and mandatory mask requirement for employees and customers

For rail service, we are continuing 12-minute service throughout the day and using weekday rail-car consists to allow for social distancing. Operations will continue to monitor ridership and adjust service as necessary.

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. The UVC portable light pilot program has begun efficacy testing, with integration on the B Line (Red) to follow. 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 24 print and electronic stories.

Workforce Communications

Work continues on safety messaging throughout the Agency.

We are gearing up to put light duty personnel and street teams back to work on mask distribution. Volunteers continue with individual packaging of our masks that were received from the FTA.

Face Covering Campaign

We all know how important wearing a face covering is, which is why face coverings are required on our system. Metro and its partner municipal agencies have created a PSA video emphasizing the importance of wearing a mask or face covering while in public, especially while on transit, to slow the spread of COVID-19. The spot features frontline employees from various LA County transit agencies saying why they wear a mask in both Spanish and English. It will be shared on Metro and muni social media channels as

part of our ongoing campaigns to ride safely. Please take a look and share it with your friends and family. Wear a Mask PSA:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gfaiwwnhf7znpj1m/AAB5qW6hg3Z_PGIAXZL8O-yAa?dl=0

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 August 13, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 304 Total Confirmed Cases:

- 80 Operators
- 67 Maintenance
- 34 Administrative
- 10 Security
- 113 Contractors/Vendors
- 2 Deaths (1 Contractor/Vendor; 1 Bus Operations)
- 118 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, we have resolved more than 610 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inboxes for COVID-related questions. Recently, we have seen an increase in the amount of weekly inquiries, likely due to the changes we have made around pay while on self-quarantine.

Currently, there are approximately 589 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. We are developing a new COVID Personal Leave policy and process that will allow us to better track and monitor leave usage in these cases.

Medical Services 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 123 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and 11 are currently pending clearance. In total, we have returned 690 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. We have added additional staff support from within HC&D and Operations to help support the Medical Services Coordination team, and we are hopeful that this additional help will speed up response and processes times.

To support management and employees as they navigate COVID processes, HC&D partnered with Corporate Safety to create a webinar and present live Q&A sessions regarding reporting, leave, return to work, and pay issues surrounding COVID. This mandatory webinar was made available agency-wide on August 3, and this past week we have offered three optional Live Q&A Sessions to provide employees an opportunity to ask questions about COVID-related processes. Approximately 180 employees attended these sessions.

Regarding childcare leave, 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 policy that will provide employees with more flexibility than the regular Personal Leave policy. This unpaid leave of absence will allow employees to be off work for up to six months due to COVID reasons such as childcare. Employees are encouraged to explore wage replacement benefits through California's Employment Development Department. As mentioned above, we are also developing a new process around COVID Personal Leave to help better track and monitor those on leave. This process will also help management have a more accurate gauge of staffing levels.

Metro Headquarters Re-opening Update

Metro continues to monitor internal and external conditions impacted by COVID-19 based on a data-driven approach to evaluate next steps in the process. The agency will continue to adopt a hybrid model for intermittent telecommuting (where possible) through the end of 2020. 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. I continue to lead the Friday morning meetings providing the group with updates from the Federal, State and Local authorities as well as Metro initiatives. In response to labor's request, Metro will be providing N95 masks for our operators.

Construction

Metro construction continues to proceed as an essential service. Required safety protocols are monitored and contractors are doing well in assuring safety of workers and completing work. Metro tracks reported positive cases with follow-up including cleaning of site, contact tracing and self-quarantine. We have received some notifications from contractors of impacts to work (productivity, supply chain). We have also been able to significantly expand work areas.

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.