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**SEPTEMBER 11, 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 September 11, 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.

### **Union Station Testing Site**

This past week Union Station, in cooperation with the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), hosted a COVID-19 testing site in the Station. The event was very successful with hundreds of tests done daily. Due to the success, the LAFD and Union Station have established a testing kiosk in the Union Station South Patio. The kiosk is scheduled to be open for the remainder of September, Wednesday – Sunday, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There is no payment or fees for the test.

### **Operations**

Last week's ridership numbers indicate that Metro is carrying about 573,145 boardings/weekday. 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, several 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. Rail service will continue with an enhanced modified Sunday schedule and use of weekday rail-car consists to the extent possible. Operations will continue to monitor ridership and adjust service as necessary as we prepare for ridership to change as schools reopen and as restrictions are gradually lifted.

In support of the Regional Connector project, the L Line (Gold) will be cut at Little Tokyo station on Saturday, October 24, 2020 to begin tie in of the Regional Connector to the L Line (Gold). Rail service will be suspended between Union Station and Pico/Aliso. Twelve minute frequencies will be maintained on both segments of the L Line (Gold) with two car trains between Union Station and APU/CC, and 1 car trains between Pico/Aliso and Atlantic. Line 30 shortline trips will be extended from Little Tokyo station to Union Station via Pico/Aliso. In addition, a free bus bridge will provide service between Union Station – Little Tokyo – Pico/Aliso every 12 minutes. Staff will monitor the bus bridge and make adjustments as necessary during the 22 months of service until revenue operations of the Regional Connector.

#### *Strengthened Cleaning Regimes, PPE & UV-C Light Pilot Update*

Metro continues to practice strengthened cleaning regimes in response to COVID-19 on all vehicles, stations and terminals with EPA-approved disinfectants. The necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) continues to be distributed and procured as safety is our top priority. Metro is currently awaiting results from EPA regarding UV-C portable light pilot program on B Line (Red). On September 3, 2020, Metro installed two (2) LED UV-C Light devices on an escalator handrail at Union Station East Portal, where this device is declared as a new sterilization technology. This is part of a trial period, including conducting efficacy testing to be administered by Metro Corporate Safety and EPA.

## **Communications**

### *Media Coverage*

The Agency and its staff members were mentioned in more than 56 print and electronic stories between Thursday, August 27 and Thursday, September 10.

### *Workforce Communications*

Metro has joined the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and transit agencies across the nation in committing to specific measures to help ensure the safe return of transit riders as the U.S. recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

APTA's national "Health and Safety Commitments Program" seeks to ensure a safe and healthy rider experience. Under the partnership, which Metro is expected to commit to:

- Following official guidance on safe riding practices from health experts and agencies
- Protecting riders through cleaning, disinfecting, good ventilation, providing room for social distancing when practical, the use of face coverings and other methods
- Sharing information that will empower riders to make informed choices
- Ensuring transit workers and passengers are healthy



In other news, we have 11 light duty personnel and others working on packaging masks for street teams to distribute to the public. They expect to package more than 40,000 masks in the next two weeks for the street teams who will be back in action. The street teams will spread out across the system, distributing masks to ALL riders through Thursday, October 8

### *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 September 11, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 355 Total Confirmed Cases:

- 99 Operators
- 72 Maintenance
- 38 Administrative
- 11 Security
- 135 Contractors/Vendors

- 3 Deaths (1 Contractor/Vendor; 2 Bus Operations)
- 187 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 690 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inboxes for COVID-related questions. We have also successfully implemented Metro's new COVID Personal Leave process, which will provide additional leave options for employees requiring leave due to childcare, among other reasons.

Currently, there are approximately 616 employees on a continuous non-occupational medical leave of absence, from an average of anywhere from 450-500. In addition, there are 32 employees off work using continuous Emergency Family/Medical Leave (EFML) under the FFCRA, or who were advised to self-quarantine due to their age or underlying condition and who required leave beyond the provisions of the FFCRA. This brings the total number of employees off due to non-occupational reasons to approximately 648. Additionally, payroll data from the most recent pay period showed a 2% increase in the use of COVID-related earnings codes (from 4% to 6% of employees using these codes). This is likely attributable to the start of the school year.

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 185 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and 8 are currently pending clearance. In total, we have returned 934 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. With the help of loaned staff from HC&D and Operations, we are making good progress in reducing the delay and improving our response times.

### *Metro Headquarters Reopening Update*

Human Capital & Development in partnership with Risk, Safety and Asset Management held a meeting with labor leaders to share details of Metro's COVID-19 Dashboard. The data dashboard serves as a decision-making tool to support the agency's Incident Command Taskforce in responding to the impacts of COVID-19. Data gathered for the dashboard aligns with state and local details and represents internal employee information needed to maintain a low-risk workspace at Los Angeles Metro.

Metro will progress through Phase Two until December 2020, adopting a hybrid model for telecommuting, providing employees with the flexibility needed for childcare, family and elder care needs. The headquarters building will continue to remain at no more than 50% capacity in this phase. A data-driven approach will continue to be adopted in evaluating next steps in the agency's COVID-19 response.

### *Labor-Management Partnership*

Metro is now meeting one time per 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 weekly meeting providing the group with updates from the Federal, State and Local authorities as well as Metro initiatives. In response to labor's request, Metro has provided N95 masks for our operators. On Wednesday, September 9, we conducted a demo of Metro's COVID-19 Dash Board for our Labor partners.

### **Construction**

Construction continues across all projects with emphasis on proper safety protocols - social distancing, masks, cleaning, contact tracing, etc. We continue to identify opportunities for expanded work areas and hours with lower impacts to the communities.

### **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.