



Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 Tel  
metro.net

**Metro**

**OCTOBER 9, 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 October 9, 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 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 continues to send out daily COVID-19 briefs using our emergency alert system to all field staff and maintains a 24-hour duty-officer to receive COVID-19 related calls from staff.

Staff updated and disseminated the Employee Personal Preparedness Guide to include activities and recommendations for pandemic preparedness and response.

## **Operations**

The current ridership numbers indicate that Metro is carrying about 614,680 boardings/weekday. Field observations continue to show that the majority of customers (99%) are wearing face masks/coverings when riding on our system. As of Sunday, October 4, 2020 roping off the front of buses is no longer permitted to allow for additional capacity in support of social distancing for customers.

### *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.

On Saturday, October 24, 2020, the Regional Connector Transit Project will begin a service interruption on the L Line (Gold) at the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station for a period of 22-months to connect the A (Blue), E (Expo) and L (Gold) Lines. The L Line (Gold) bus shuttle will mirror the service of the L Line (Gold): Union Station, Little Tokyo/Arts District, Pico/Aliso Station. In addition, pre-closure announcements, signage and personnel will be available at all three impacted stations. Metro is working diligently to notify customers in advance and during the service interruption on alternative services.

### *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 coordinating efficacy testing for both the UV-C escalator devices at Union Station East Portal and the UV-C portable light pilot program on B Line (Red).

## **Communications**

### *Media Coverage*

The Agency and its staff members were mentioned in 10 print and electronic stories through Thursday, October 8, 2020.

### *Workforce Communications*

We have individually packaged more than 152,000 masks for distribution to the riding public.

### *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 October 9, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 392 Total Confirmed Cases:

- 109 Operators
- 85 Maintenance
- 46 Administrative
- 11 Security
- 141 Contractors/Vendors
- 3 Deaths (1 Contractor/Vendor; 2 Bus Operations)
- 232 Recovered

### **Metro Headquarters Re-Opening Update**

Human Capital & Development continues to meet with labor leaders on a weekly basis to share Metro's COVID-19 Dashboard updates. Data reported on the dashboard is in alignment with state and local details and serves as a decision-making tool. The agency will move forward through Phase Two of Metro's Our Path Forward Plan for the rest of 2020.

Continuing with the implementation of a hybrid model for telecommuting, the Metro headquarters building has remained at a 37% capacity. The COVID-19 internal and external conditions identified by Metro's Incident Command Taskforce are being monitored as the agency stays committed to creating a healthy, safe and secure workplace for all Metro employees.

### **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 800 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inboxes for COVID-related questions. We have seen an increase in inquiries, likely due to the start of the school year and the new COVID Personal Leave process.

Currently, there are approximately 630 employees on a continuous non-occupational medical leave of absence (less than one year), from an average of anywhere from 450-500. In addition, there are 56 employees off work using continuous Emergency Family/Medical Leave (EFML) under the FFCRA, or who were advised to self-quarantine due to their age 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 686. Additionally, we have approximately 155 employees in our Long-Term Disability process (both occupational and non-occupational conditions), but at this time only one of these employees is off work due to COVID-related reasons. In sum, Well-Being Services is managing files for approximately 841 employees on leave, both COVID-related and unrelated. These are the highest non-occupational leave numbers we have seen in recent years.

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 231 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and 6 are currently pending clearance. Since April, in total we have returned 1,130 employees to work who were off due to COVID-related reasons, including exposure or suspected/confirmed positive cases.

As previously reported, we have experienced delays in getting employees processed to return to work. However, with the help of loaned staff from HC&D and Operations, we are happy to report that our response times are now generally 24-48 hours or less, which aligns with our regular business practices. We greatly appreciate the support from our partners in this effort.

#### *Labor-Management Partnership*

Metro continues to meet weekly with our senior leaders and our 5 labor unions to discuss the impacts of the pandemic on our workforce.

#### **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.