



Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 Tel  
metro.net

**Metro**

**NOVEMBER 20, 2020**

**TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**FROM: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON** *PAW*  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: MONTHLY UPDATE ON RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

### **ISSUE**

This memo is the monthly update to the Board on Metro's actions responding to COVID-19.

### **BACKGROUND**

Due to the crisis regarding COVID-19, staff will issue monthly 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 meeting weekly 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 or external stakeholders.

Staff created a multi-departmental team (Countywide Planning, Finance, & Emergency Management) to work with FEMA on Metro's initial reimbursement application totaling \$138M in COVID-19 related expenditures.

### **Union Station**

COVID-19 continues to negatively impact the ridership at Union Station from all rail and bus services. Amtrak and Metrolink have reduced the number of cars per train and the frequency of trains on select lines. Adjustments back to previous number of cars and trains would be expected once ridership returns.

The efficient and free-of-charge Union Station on-site COVID-19 testing in the South Patio will continue until the end of 2020. The testing site allows the option for anyone to simply walk-up or schedule an appointment on-line at Curative.com.

### **Operations**

The current ridership for the week of 11/1/20- 11/7/20 indicates that Metro is carrying about 636,982 boardings/weekday. Field observations continue to show that the majority of customers (99% or greater) are wearing face masks/coverings when riding on our system. Operations is actively enforcing that the front of buses are no longer roped off to allow for additional capacity in support of social distancing for customers. For this week, only 7% of the buses observed had the front of the bus roped off.

### *Service*

As part of the bi-annual service changes starting December 13, 2020, bus service adjustments will include added trips for Weekdays and Weekends. In addition, the frequency of the service will be improved by 15-minute daytime weekdays on five lines: Lines 53 (Central Av), 55 (Compton Av), 70 (Garvey Av), 152 (Roscoe Bl), 603 (Hoover St) and 20-minute frequency daytime or peak weekdays on three lines: Lines 165 (Vanowen St), 234 & 734 (Sepulveda Bl). One line improved to 30-minute frequency daytime weekdays: Line 90/91 (Sunland/Sylmar via Foothill Bl). Also, MicroTransit service will begin revenue operations for the Watts/Willowbrook and LAX/Inglewood service zones at \$1 per trip. 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 re-open and as restrictions are gradually lifted.

The improved Union Station Patsaouras Bus Plaza opened three weeks ago on Sunday, November 1, 2020. The new platform is used by bus lines that run on the El Monte Busway and offer an easier and safer connection to Union Station. The platform

serves Metro's J Line (Silver) that offers express service between El Monte Station, downtown LA and San Pedro. Other Metro bus lines that use the new platform are the 487 and 489.

#### *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. Efforts to improve disinfection and sanitation on our system include testing of both the UV-C escalator devices at Union Station East Portal and the UV-C portable light pilot program on B Line (Red) vehicles. The initial test results provided by the EPA indicate that UV-C light is not sufficiently effective against SARS-CoV-2 (known as the Corona Virus) for our cleaning applications. However, more tests will be conducted by the EPA before a final decision is made regarding the escalator and portable light devices we are currently piloting. Staff is pursuing other technologies to clean the air on the trains and will be testing a modified HVAC unit on one of the P3010 Light Rail Vehicles.

### **Communications**

#### *Media Coverage*

The Agency and its staff members were not mentioned in print and electronic stories through Thursday, November 19, 2020.

#### *Workforce Communications*

We are continuing to individually package the masks received from the FTA. We have packaged more than 260,000. Street teams, eight pairs of two, will begin mask distribution Monday, December 7 through Thursday, December 24. They will rotate throughout the system from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

#### *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 November 20, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 497 Total (46 active) Confirmed Cases:

- 134 Operators
- 119 Maintenance
- 65 Administrative
- 15 Security
- 167 Contractors/Vendors
- 3 Deaths (1 Contractor/Vendor; 2 Bus Operations)
- 284 Recovered

### **Metro Headquarters Reopening Update**

Metro continues to progress through Phase 2 of the Agency's re-opening strategy. With the implementation of a hybrid model for telecommuting, Metro has been able to keep its' headquarters building below 50% capacity in order to maintain a low-risk workplace for employees. In November, a 37% capacity was maintained.

Metro will adapt its re-opening strategy to remain aligned with local and state guidelines as they evolve to meet the needs of Los Angeles County residents. Our commitment remains in the creation of 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 985 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inboxes for COVID-related questions.

Currently, there are approximately 661 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 68 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 729. Additionally, we have approximately 161 employees in our Long-Term Disability process (both occupational and non-occupational conditions), but only one of these employees is off work due to COVID-related reasons. In sum, Well-Being Services is managing files for approximately 890 employees on leave, both COVID-related and unrelated.

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 284 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and 3 are currently pending clearance. Since April, in total we have returned 1,400 employees to work who were off due to COVID-related reasons, including exposure or suspected/confirmed positive cases.

### ***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 an 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.