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**DECEMBER 18, 2020**

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

*PAW*

**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.

### **Operations**

The current ridership for the week of 12/6/20-12/12/20 indicates that Metro is carrying about 543,645 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.

### *Service*

Bi-annual service changes took place on Sunday, December 13, 2020. Bus service adjustments include changes to increase efficiency and added trips on weekdays and weekends as follows:

15-minute improved frequency during daytime weekdays on five lines: Lines 53 (Central Av), 55 (Compton Av), 70 (Garvey Av), 152 (Roscoe Bl), 603 (Hoover St).

20-minute improved frequency during daytime or peak weekdays on three lines: Lines 165 (Vanowen St), 234 & 734 (Sepulveda Bl).

30-minute improved frequency during the daytime weekdays on Line 90/91 (Sunland/Sylmar via Foothill Bl).

Also, Metro's MicroTransit service began revenue operations for the Watts/Willowbrook and LAX/Inglewood service zones at \$1 per trip. Since the launch of service, on December 13, 2020, Metro Micro has completed 119 trips and has carried 134 customers. To protect our Metro Micro operators and customers, face masks are required, plexiglass partitions have been installed, and the vehicles are cleaned daily. Additionally, while Metro Micro vehicles have capacity to seat a maximum of 10 passengers, capacity has been limited to 50% to allow for distancing unless traveling with family and friends in the same small group.

Lastly, 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.

To help Metro's customers celebrate the holiday season safely during the current stay at home order, all Metro Bus, Rail and MicroTransit services will provide free service on the nights of Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve for customers who will need to use the system.

### *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 continues and Metro is in process of testing the application of copper in high touch areas on a Bus and Rail cars and at various locations at the Gateway building. The tests will comprise of durability and efficacy, which will be done in partnership with the EPA.

## **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 December 18, 2020, 12 p.m., Metro has 842 Total (525 active) Confirmed Cases:

- 255 Operators
- 195 Maintenance
- 125 Administrative
- 15 Security
- 252 Contractors/Vendors
- 3 Deaths (1 Contractor/Vendor; 2 Bus Operations)
- 317 Recovered

## **Metro Headquarters Reopening Update**

Since March 2020, Metro has evolved with the ongoing changes and implications that COVID-19 has created. As we navigate through this global crisis, we want to ensure employee awareness of our organization's path forward as stewards of public trust and leaders within the transportation infrastructure industry.

During the first week of November, COVID-19 case rates increased by approximately 50 percent in California. On Monday, November 16, 2020, 94 percent of California's population was transitioned to the most restrictive tier under the state's Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

Considering an unprecedented, rapid rise in COVID-19 cases across Los Angeles County, it is recommended that Metro continue to progress through Phase Two of the Our Path Forward Plan until March 31, 2021.

This decision will provide staff the ability to remain productive within their alternative work environments and encourage telecommuting where it is optimal. The agency will also continue operating with no more than 50% capacity at Union Station Gateway (USG). Over the last month, capacity within USG has remained at 35%.

Internal and external conditions will be monitored weekly to determine the safe transition into Phase Three, with the safety and security of Metro employees being the number one priority.

### **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 1,085 inquiries sent to our dedicated phone and email inboxes for COVID-related leave questions.

Currently, there are approximately 660 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 728. Additionally, we have approximately 174 employees in our Long-Term Disability process (both occupational and non-occupational conditions), and 2 of these employees are off work due to COVID-related reasons. In sum, Well-Being Services is managing files for approximately 902 employees on leave, both COVID-related and unrelated. These figures continue to remain at all-time highs.

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 310 employees to work who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and 5 are currently pending clearance. Since April, in total we have returned 1,583 employees to work who were off due to COVID-related reasons, including exposure or suspected/confirmed positive cases. Due to the recent surge of cases in LA County, we are experiencing a very large backlog in cases to be processed, which is creating a delay in the return-to-work process and, consequently, an increase in paid administrative leave usage and manpower shortages. We estimate about 250+ employees are currently pending return-to-work exam scheduling. The Well-Being Services team is simply not staffed for our current workload, so we have been actively working with our partners and SLT to

implement solutions to address the issue, including augmenting our loaned support staff.

*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**

Work continues for all projects under construction. There are periodic reports of positive COVID-19 cases on specific projects. CalOsha recently issued revised guidelines regarding workplace safety to minimize impacts of the pandemic. These include those related to social distancing and quarantine requirements after contact with an infected worker. All contractors are complying with these regulations.

**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.