



SOUTH BAY CITIES
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Eric Garcetti, Chair
L. A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn.: Joshua Schank
L. A. Metro Chief Innovation Officer

Re: South Bay Cities Council of Governments Comments on Metro's Recovery
Task Force Draft Final Recommendations

Dear Chairman Garcetti:

The South Bay Cities Council of Governments would like to take the opportunity to comment on Metro's Recovery Task Force – Draft Final Recommendations. Attached is a matrix summarizing the 37 recommendations and the SBCCOG's related comments.

SBCCOG understands the urgency of mobility and fiscal challenges that are facing Los Angeles County transit operators and local jurisdictions, including: COVID 19 not being under control, continuance of racial and economic inequities, record unemployment, loss of sales tax revenue and resultant negative impacts on regional and local budgets, increased traffic and increased vehicle ownership. COVID continues to be a catastrophic event which, similar to a major earthquake or other region-wide disruption, requires recalculation of previous assumptions and plans, not just for Metro, but for all of the stakeholders that coordinate with Metro.

The Recovery Task Force recommendations provide an excellent starting point for a thoughtful reconsideration of L. A. County's mobility priorities. SBCCOG agrees with and supports in concept many of the recommendations and we appreciate the effort required by the Metro Recovery Task Force to compile a conceptual set of investments. However, we believe It's time to step back and determine what can

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reasonably be implemented over the next decade before any specific initiatives are considered in isolation as stand-alone actions.

The SBCCOG has several concerns regarding implementation of the recovery recommendations without an understanding of the aggregate costs, benefits and trade-offs of the full Recovery program. We are concerned that the Metro Board will take up the entire list of 37 recommendations and consider approving most or all of them in one Board motion. We would also be concerned if the Board were to approve each recommendation in isolation. We strongly encourage the Metro Board to adopt a comprehensive implementation strategy that fully considers the inter-related mobility and financial aspects of the aggregated individual recommendations in light of current mandatory obligations and current commitments.

A comprehensive Recovery Implementation Strategy would identify:

1. **A comprehensive multi-year capital and operating plan.** The Board should be provided detail comparable to that found in Metro's successful NextGen Bus Study. Although some recommendations can be implemented without affecting current capital and operating budget commitments, several recommendations, such as the fare-less system initiative, will have significant initial and ongoing costs and revenue impacts that will ripple across the agency's current and future capital and operating budgets. Some recommendations may even require deferral or abandonment of current Board commitments. These far-reaching recommendations deserve more Board scrutiny before being included in Metro's Short-Range financial plans or annual budgets.
2. **A 10-year implementation timeframe for each recommendation.** We believe the recommendations and their financial implications could be better addressed if they were grouped according to an implementation timeframe (e. g.: immediate, 1-3 years, 3- 5 years, and 5+ years}. This would allow Metro to evaluate new initiatives in the context of current commitments and anticipated resources over the next decade.
3. **An analysis of annual budgetary tradeoffs for each recommendation.** Some of the Plan's elements include funding actions that have previously been approved by the Metro Board (e. g.: the NextGen Bus Study, the Congestion Reduction Program). We encourage Metro staff to identify the pre-existing funding sources and amounts of any prior Metro Board approvals

for each near-term recommendation. For recommendations that lack sufficient prior funding, Metro should evaluate whether current commitments need to be deferred or abandoned to fund more critical and timely recommendations within available current or short-term budget resources.

4. **Secure partner commitments prior to approving recommendations.**

Several of the initiatives such as acceleration of complete streets projects, joint development, and provision of new affordable housing around station areas require close cooperation with local jurisdictions that control land use and uses of local streets. Metro should involve all relevant public partners in the development of implementation plans for each of its recommendations. In addition, written concurrence from potential partners on the scope, funding sources and implementation timeframes should be secured before the Metro Board approves a multi-jurisdictional recommendation.

5. **Adopt specific Metro roles and funding commitments for “the trip not taken” applications.**

In addition to building out the fiber-optic infrastructure throughout L. A. County, Metro has the opportunity to play a central role and be a funding source to enable standardized telework and e-commerce applications that support reduction of vehicle miles traveled, congestion reduction, equity, and access to opportunity. Metro also should provide technical assistance and regulatory guidance in the development of public infrastructure that will be needed for autonomous vehicles that will be used in goods movement and transit.

6. **Reducing car ownership through promoting local use vehicles.**

For several years, the SBCCOG has encouraged our communities to support the purchase of local-use vehicles (golf carts, electric bikes, scooters, etc.) that can provide zero emission passenger and goods movement mobility options at a fraction of the cost of purchasing a traditional car or truck. We are also developing a South Bay Local Travel Network intended to remove vehicles from major arterials by effectively using the local street network in the South Bay. We encourage Metro to expand the recovery program to include a zero-emission local use vehicle subsidy component that would incentivize the purchase of a zero emission local use vehicle aimed at promoting car-light households and improving neighborhood mobility in disadvantaged communities.

If there are any questions, please call:

Jacki Bacharach, SBCCOG Executive Director, at (310) 293-2612, or
Steve Lantz, SBCCOG Transportation Director, at (213) 494-8557.

Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Olivia Valentine
Board of Directors Chair
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Hawthorne City Council Member

cc: L. A. Metro Board of Directors
SBCCOG Board of Directors
Dr. Joshua Schank
Jacki Bacharach, SBCCOG Executive Director

**Attachment E - Summary of Metro Recovery
Task Force Final Recommendations**

Attachment B, Exhibit 1 Draft - as of 1.3.21

#	Metro Recovery Task Force Final Recommendations	Costs	Timeframe (SBCCOG est.)	SBCCOG Staff Notes
1	Survey riders on current travel patterns, modes, future plans and customer experience	negligible	completed	Survey sent to 11,000 previous on-board survey respondents. 23% response rate. Effort was entirely in house
2	Fund Safe Streets	no new cost	completed	Metro in May allowed Cities that received 2020 Open Streets grants to repurpose \$ on safe / slow streets programs
3	Expand and Innovate cleaning - on high touch areas of infrastructure	\$8.8 mil / yr.	immediate, ongoing	Staff is exploring a range of technology and chemical treatment options.
4	Distribute masks to riders	\$1.3 mil / yr.	immediate, ongoing?	Reduces conflicts with bus drivers. Funded through December 2020 (@\$50,000); Needs additional funding to continue
5	Allow mask and personal sanitizer vending	potentially no new cost	immediate	Use Metro staff and licensed vendors at some stations where free masks are not being distributed by staff.
6	Implement smart phone contactless visual payment TAP application	revenue positive	completed for Apple phones, immediate for Android phones	Enables new fare revenue with rear door boarding by using contactless fare payment
7	Improve on-line public meeting protocols	negligible	immediate	Minor cost for Zoom licenses and WiFi hot spot for each meeting
8	Increase ventilation on buses, enhance HVAC filtration systems	unknown	1-3 years	Metro staff is testing 3-stage HVAC filtration system for future installation. Costs tbd.
9	Support employee parents that cannot work from home	neutral?	immediate	Metro is Implementing creative HR policies, childcare matching, TOWP donation, Metro villages at key stations for distance learning / telecommuting. SBCCOG is concerned that aggregate annual costs do not significantly impact operating and maintenance budgets.
10	Restore service to stay ahead of demand, retain rear-door boarding	unknown	immediate, ongoing	Revenue is near zero (down \$240 mil / year), Includes Next Gen Phase 1 service has lower revenue service hours (5.5 million / yr.) than pre-COVID (7 million / yr.); Metro monitors ridership/demand weekly. Cost impact depends on when Metro resumes fare enforcement.
11	Study New Bike Share Models	unknown	1-3 years	Re-bid contract or bring ops/maintenance in house to be performed by Metro staff. TBD in early 2021. Limited savings in current budget.
12	Promote Metro Active Transportation (MAT) - walking and biking with more bike infrastructure and more Metro bikes	\$120,000	immediate	Metro to fully fund MAT Cycle 1, pilot to distribute bikes, Adopt-A-Bike program using abandoned bikes.
13	Allow and promote telework - new telework policy in January 2021	unknown	1-3 years	14% of Metro staff is currently telecommuting. Cost: \$2,000 / participating employee for laptops, software, training offset by \$13 mil. reduction in non-hq rent and reduced turnover (\$10K - \$30K per employee)

14	Install more Bus Lanes at congestion hot spots - on streets	negligible	1-5 years	Planning and installation of bus lanes are in current budget and included in NextGen capital program/ Needs concurrence of local jurisdictions.
15	"We're Here for You." marketing and communications campaign	\$500,000 through 12/20.	immediate	Themes: Travel Safe, Cleaning efforts, service adjustments, rear-door boarding, social distancing, bus crowding, APTA's safety and Health Commitment program
16	Increase Customer Ambassadors - non security staff	Annual cost: \$55,000 to \$7.4 mil.	1-3 years	Options range from 50 repurposed FTEs to 50 new FTEs. Staff seeking a Community Organization partner for a pilot. Project being "aligned" with Fareless System Initiative. New staff not included in Metro budgets.
17	Explore new mobility solutions - MicroTransit, Mobility on Demand	negligible	1-3 years	Mobility Services RFI responses being reviewed. No significant costs in FY 21. May reduce fixed -route transit demand.
18	Use budget to advance recovery - for Metro short-term operating and capital priorities	\$1.5 million to \$130 mil.	1-5 years depending on funding	Implement Next Gen speed/reliability improvements (\$7 M), station and bus plaza expansion (\$16.3 M), enhanced service on BRT and other routes (\$107 M). Needs budget amendment for balance of FY 20-21 and beyond.
19	Reimagine capital projects - within Ordinance constraints	negligible	1-3 years	Recovery TF developed project assessment matrix tool to analyze projects based on enhanced mobility and ridership, equity and Title VI compliance, and health and economic development. Tool was not used for pandemic prioritization. No FY 20-21 budget impact, but potentially significant capital project impacts thereafter.
20	Better Address Homelessness -connect unhoused on Metro system with services and housing.	\$5 mil. /yr.	1-5 years	Use Metro property for transitional housing through partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs). Needs further analysis of future Metro budget impacts.
21	Run Express Buses on Improved HOV and Express Lanes - on freeways	tbd	1=3 years	Advocates raising min. vehicle occupancy requirement and expanding ExpressLanes network to improve bus speed and efficiency.
22	Accelerate Networks of complete streets	tbd	3-5 years	Recommends creation of an internal Metro Complete Streets Plan of priority corridors. Needs concurrence of local jurisdictions. Not included in Metro budget.
23	Fully integrate Transit in LA Region	tbd	5+ years	T. F. would have Metro drive regional, state and national mobility agendas and policies. Recommends one Integrated countywide fare (or fareless) structure, single/unified customer information location, enhanced data management through RIITS, enhance 511, updated signage at shared stops, seamless trip planning, more mid-day Metrolink service, synchronized shakeout dates between Metro and Munis. Needs new funding and concurrence of Muni Operators.
24	Offer incentives to reduce car ownership - and use transit	\$15 mil. / 10,000 conversions	1-5 years, depending on funding	Goal: get 10,000 new riders on transit and out of their car with a program of free transit, free/discounted bikes, mobility wallets, better bus options or other incentives for households to become car-free or car-light. Not included in Metro budget.

25	Improve station amenities	tbd	1-5+ years	E.g.: food, retail, restrooms. Need to evaluate capital and operating costs, potential funding sources. Not included in Metro Budget.
26	Improve Public Engagement and Strengthen Rider Voices	tbd	immediate, ongoing	Examples: Include demographic metrics in outreach effectiveness to ensure Metro reaches the most impacted stakeholders and transit reliant communities; Create toolkit of Metro resources for riders; Elevate role of CAC; Overhaul website. Not included in Metro budget.
27	Gather more data on equity and travel patterns	tbd	immediate, 1-3 years	Centralize storage and availability of location-based services data in Metro ITS Department to better understand travel patterns, access to key destinations and mode share demographics. New staff and technology licenses not included in Metro budget.
28	Share data and information internally more openly and effectively	tbd, potential cost savings	immediate	Develop internal data management policy on data access, security, deploy a digital asset management system, open data policy and portal
29	Accelerate Joint Development and Transit-Oriented Communities	revenue generator	immediate, ongoing	Update JD policy to prioritize communities with the deepest need to support economic development, counteract displacement; Reinvest revenue in an affordable housing trust fund, a strategic acquisition fund, and JD pilot projects. Needs concurrence of local jurisdictions. Not included in Metro budget.
30	Expand Region's broadband infrastructure	tbd, potential cost savings and new revenue	3-5 years	Co-locate infrastructure; include fiber and above-ground facilities for internal network operations and WiFi access to riders. Needs concurrence of local jurisdictions. Not included in Metro budget.
31	Create green jobs and green infrastructure	tbd	3-5 years depending on funding	Partner with utilities and local agencies on sustainable energy and water infrastructure; Use P3s, Cap-and-Trade financing.
32	Reimagine "Destination Discounts"	TBD	1-3 years	Additional Marketing and Arts/Design FTEs and program costs need to be determined. New positions not included in Metro budget.
33	Study how Metro can reduce capital construction costs	TBD, analysis costs are negligible	immediate	Staff will develop and implement measures in 11 areas of Capital Program Management.
34	Build staff capacity	25% potential savings	immediate, ongoing	Metro Program Management identified a potential to save 25% by using Metro staff for core agency functions rather than contractors. Enforce DBE/SBE/DVBE commitments in contracts. Metro needs to evaluate short-term savings vs long-term pension costs.
35	Use Measure M and R Ordinances	tbd	unknown	Without taking funds from any project, subfund or subregions, potential amendments could enable: Highway Reform recommendations, more rapid response to pandemic and transit system expansion. Needs local participation in development, written concurrence.

36	Expand revenue - optimize commercial revenue opportunities	tbd	1-5+ years	Partner on 13 areas of revenue generating projects, including: advertising, digital billboards, sponsorships, leases, etc. Revenues may require initial capital or staff investments. Initial staff costs not included in Metro budget.
37	Identify funding for incentives to reduce car ownership and increased transit funding	tbd	1-5+ years	Explore progressive revenue sources such as a vehicle license fee, tax on commercial parking, federal and state funding, etc. Not in Metro budget.