



March 18, 2020

Via email to: [WashingtonP@metro.net](mailto:WashingtonP@metro.net) and Metro Board Secretary Michele Jackson for distribution to the Metro Board of Directors: [JacksonM@metro.net](mailto:JacksonM@metro.net)

Dear Metro CEO Phil Washington and the Metro Board of Directors,

As we grapple with the coronavirus pandemic and try to prevent worse outcomes it's critical we remember that, as is often the case, the most vulnerable in our communities and those who serve our vulnerable communities will be the most impacted.

As we take precautions such as social isolation, some of the most vulnerable in our community - unhoused residents, low wage earners and essential workers during this crisis - do not have the privilege to self quarantine and therefore rely on cities and agencies to provide protective measures. It is the responsibility of LA Metro to do everything possible to protect transit workers and people who are depending on the transit system for essential travel (e.g. to get food, medicine, childcare support), including our health workers and food service workers.

For these reasons, we call on Metro to immediately enact the following measures:

1. **Increase sanitation stations and access to hand sanitizer** - Residents who are on the go, unhoused and/or in need of ADA accommodations do not always have access to hand washing before getting on Metro - the number one recommendation in dealing with the spread of this disease. Metro should place sanitation stations at major stops and stations to allow transit riders to wash their hands and prevent the further spread of this pandemic. In addition, buses and trains could be equipped with hand sanitizer to help control the virus.
2. **Maintain a high level of service and consider increasing service on any busy lines** - Social distancing is not a privilege that all Los Angeles residents have and yet it is an imperative strategy in stopping the spread of this disease. LA Metro can do their part in slowing the spread of COVID-19 by maintaining regular service despite ridership declines, and monitoring busy lines for any crowding. Should it be impossible for riders to maintain 6 feet of distance, Metro should increase service to enable social distancing at bus stops, on station platforms, as well as inside train cars and buses.

Metro should create an easy to access hotline/text alert system that people who are on a crowded bus or train can alert Metro about crowded conditions and create real time

updates to bus and rail operation centers as well as headquarters to have real time solutions put in place and monitor trends.

3. **Suspend transit fare collection** - Metro should protect transit operators and support people who ride transit by temporarily suspending fare collection on their systems. This will allow for bus passengers to use all doors for boarding, thus reducing passenger crowding and further protecting both passengers and operators. Enacting fare-free transit will similarly protect passengers from fines or criminal penalties arising from fare enforcement. This policy would support people facing severe financial hardships COVID-19 and allow for increased opportunities for social distancing and reducing crowding at bus stops and the front of all buses.
4. **Continue increased sanitation of train cars and bus fleet** - We appreciate all that Metro frontline staff are doing to increase cleaning of Metro buses and trains. Thank you.
5. **Provide a plan for public engagement** - The March Metro Committee meetings and Full Board meeting have been canceled. Metro needs to share a plan for maintaining transparency and public engagement on key policy decisions during this time. Metro needs to ensure any changes in meeting format (going to online input or town halls) fully consider any access issues for core transit riders who may not have internet access or who may rely on public internet access points like schools or libraries.

It is the responsibility of a public agency to protect the community that relies on its services. Please don't hesitate to get in contact with us should you have questions or have ideas on how transportation advocates, such as federal advocacy, can support Metro in taking the actions above.

Sincerely,  
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CC: Metro Directors:

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