



Pomona Valley
Transportation
Authority

A partnership of the cities of Claremont, La Verne, Pomona and San Dimas

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February 10, 2021

**AGENDA
ITEM #4**

MEMORANDUM

To: Pomona Valley Transportation Authority

From: George L. Sparks, PVTA Administrator

Subject: Service and Industry Update

Recommended Action: Receive and File

A. Fare Waiver

Due to the surge in new COVID cases in recent months, we are planning to continue our current fare waiver policy until local conditions improve. The fare waiver reduces the amount of contact required between drivers and passengers. Given the lower ridership levels the lost fare revenue is estimated at less than \$2,500 per month.

B. Metro's Plans for Allocation of Funds from the Second COVID Relief Package

The Corona virus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), which we estimate includes approximately \$900 million for Los Angeles County transit agencies. Local transit operators like PVTA were included in the allocation of funds generated by the CARES Act. We are hopeful to see operators like PVTA included in Metro's funding allocations from the follow up bill. We are working in concert with other local operators to lobby for our agencies' inclusion in the allocation of CRRSAA funds. Attached to this update is a copy of the letter sent to Metro on behalf of local transit operators.

At the February 3 meeting of General Managers of the county's municipal operators, which includes Foothill Transit and Claremont DAR, Metro's CEO, Phillip Washington indicated that Metro staff was going to recommend that the Metro board adopt the same allocation formula used to distribute the CARES Act funding. Metro is expected to adopt the allocation amounts at their February 25th meeting. Metro indicated that the CRRSAA funds would be allocated for the 2022 fiscal year. Once adopted we will include any stimulus allocations for PVTA in our FY 2022 budget.

C. Metro's Fareless System Initiative

The process for consideration of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's, Fareless System Initiative (FSI) has been extended. FSI would eliminate fares on all Metro bus and rail services. The proposal would have wide ranging implications for transit operators throughout the county including, a significant loss of revenue to the region, major operational and financial impacts on Access Services and it would present policy and operational challenges for many of the county's transit operators. Metro had planned to present its recommendations for approval by the Metro board on February 25th. Metro staff now plans to present a report on the proposal to the Metro board in February with formal action on the initiative in April. Metro has formed a taskforce of operators to provide input on the proposal. We will be updating PVRTA member cities on Metro staff's recommendations once they are made available.

D. Federal Mask Mandate

The Centers for Disease Control has issued a mask mandate that includes public transit. PVRTA already requires riders and drivers to wear masks. The Federal Transit Administration has issued guidance on the applicability of the CDC rules and enforcement requirements. Below is a summary of frequently asked questions.

What Does the Order Require?

The CDC Order requires conveyance operators to use their best efforts to ensure that persons wear masks while boarding and disembarking a conveyance, for the duration of a trip, and within a transportation hub. Best efforts may include:

- Boarding and allowing entry to only those persons who wear masks;
- Instructing persons that Federal law requires wearing a mask on the conveyance and in the transportation hub and failure to comply constitutes a violation of Federal law;
- Monitoring persons onboard conveyances and in facilities for anyone who is not wearing a mask and seeking compliance from such persons;
- At the earliest opportunity, disembarking any person who refuses to comply; and
- Providing persons with prominent and adequate notice to facilitate awareness and compliance of the requirement to wear a mask, with best practices including, if feasible, advance notifications on digital platforms, such as on apps, websites, or email; posted signage in multiple languages with illustrations; printing the requirement on tickets; and other methods as appropriate.

What Are the Exemptions?

The CDC Order exempts the following categories of persons:

- A child under the age of 2 years;
- A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of the disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*); and
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

The exemption for a person with a disability is a narrow exception that includes a person with a disability who cannot wear a mask for reasons related to the disability. CDC will issue additional guidance regarding persons who cannot wear a mask under this exemption [here](#).

The CDC Order also states that the requirement to wear a mask shall not apply under the following circumstances:

- While eating, drinking, or taking medication, for brief periods;
- While communicating with a person who is hearing impaired when the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication;
- If unconscious (for reasons other than sleeping), incapacitated, unable to be awakened, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance; or
- When necessary to temporarily remove the mask to verify one's identity, such as when asked to do so by a ticket or gate agent or any law enforcement official.

In addition, persons who are experiencing difficulty breathing or shortness of breath or are feeling winded may remove the mask temporarily until able to resume normal breathing with the mask. Persons who are vomiting should remove the mask until vomiting ceases. Persons with acute illness may remove the mask if it interferes with necessary medical care such as supplemental oxygen administered via an oxygen mask.

PVTA staff are working with our contractors to make sure we comply with the order and inform our riders appropriately of its requirements.

E. Metro CEO Phillip Washington Leaving

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's CEO, Phillip Washington has announced that will not be seeking to extend his employment agreement which expires in May 2021.

February 2, 2021

Mr. Phillip A. Washington, Chief Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Mail Stop 99-25-1
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Dear Mr. Washington,

On behalf of the local transit operators of Los Angeles County, we are requesting that Metro include local transit systems in the financial aid that is provided to transit operators from the Corona Virus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). We appreciated Metro's recognition of the needs of local operators in Los Angeles County in the allocation of CARES Act relief and urge Metro to provide additional funds to local operators that continue to be impacted by the pandemic.

These 43 local public transit systems represent 47 cities, deliver 18 million passenger trips annually, and operate 700 vehicles. These local transit services are provided at a cost of over \$110 million annually, using primarily local return funds generated by their cities.

Like all the transit operators in Los Angeles County, local providers continue to experience the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. Local transit systems are providing additional community transit services to provide assistance to those most at risk from the virus and transportation for essential workers. These local systems are experiencing the financial impact of the outbreak in terms of the loss in fare revenue, additional costs for increased daily vehicle cleaning, personal protective equipment for drivers and other employees, and a decrease in local sales tax measures that fund our services.

The CARES Act and CRRSAA combined provided COVID funding to Los Angeles County equal to 75% of our combined (municipal, eligible and local transit systems) reported 2018 National Transit Database (NTD) operating expenses. The CARES Act distribution to local operators averaged from 6% for our Voluntary Reporters to 20% for our Regional Paratransit Operators operating costs. With the new CRRSAA funding we request that we receive our fair share of the funds that we helped to generate and so desperately need.

The local transit systems appreciate the opportunity to work with Metro to equitably ensure continuity of both local and regional transit services in the region in the wake of this COVID-19 crisis.

Sincerely,



George Sparks
PMTA Administrator in coordination with Local Transit Systems
CC: Metro Board



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