



EnviroMetro

LOS ANGELES' COALITION FOR GREEN
EQUITABLE & HEALTHY TRANSPORTATION

November 30, 2015

Metro Board of Directors
Phil Washington, Metro CEO
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)
1 Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Proposed Performance Metrics Framework for Major Projects; VMT considerations

Dear Metro Board Directors and Mr. Washington:

As Los Angeles' coalition of environmental and stakeholder organizations, we thank you for inviting feedback on the Proposed Performance Metrics Framework for Major Projects.

Angelenos are ready to support the transportation network of the future to reduce traffic congestion and create more livable and healthy streets and communities. A successful ballot measure will strive to encompass numerous benefits, thereby enabling a diverse and broad constituency to support the measure. We ask Metro to realize this vision by incorporating the following suggested changes to the Proposed Performance Metrics Framework for Major Projects:

- 1.) **Highway projects should be assessed according to their impact to vehicle miles traveled (VMT).** The current draft of the Proposed Performance Metrics Framework for Major Projects curiously turns a blind eye to VMT for highway projects. We strongly suggest that Metro evaluate all major projects for VMT reduction and include this key indicator in its evaluation criteria.
- 2.) **VMT should be assessed within the Mobility theme,** not merely in the Sustainability category. Adding roadway capacity is not a long-term solution for congestion relief, as numerous studies indicate. There are more effective methods to improve mobility by reducing VMT. As such, we urge Metro to consider VMT reduction as a performance measure that could be used to guide infrastructure spending aimed at improving mobility – both when evaluating the system as a whole as well as individual proposed highway and transit projects.

This past October, the California Department of Transportation acknowledged that increasing roadway capacity does not solve congestion but rather “induces additional VMT in the short-run and even more VMT in the long-run.”¹ Specifically, Dr. Susan Handy finds that “adding 10 percent more road capacity leads to 3-6 percent more vehicle miles in the near term and 6-10 percent more over

¹ Susan Handy. “Increasing Highway Capacity Unlikely to Relieve Traffic Congestion.” National Center for Sustainable Transportation, UC Davis. http://www.dot.ca.gov/research/docs/10-12-2015-NCST_Brief_InducedTravel_CS6_v3.pdf

many years (Ibid.) In light of this undisputable finding, Metro should assess the VMT implications of every highway and roadway construction project.

We welcome the opportunity to work with Metro staff to integrate these suggested changes into the final evaluation metrics, and ultimately into the sales tax ballot measure and LRTP. We also look forward to providing feedback in the coming months as Metro's focus moves beyond capital investment projects to include programmatic expenditures, too.

Please direct any follow-up questions to Bryn Lindblad by email (blindblad@climateresolve.org) or phone (213-346-3200 x303).

Sincerely,

[EnviroMetro](#) – Los Angeles' Coalition for Green, Equitable & Healthy Transportation