



**EnviroMetro**  
— LOS ANGELES' COALITION FOR GREEN —  
EQUITABLE & HEALTHY TRANSPORTATION

May 12, 2016

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

**Re: Appeal to Amend Draft Potential Ballot Measure Expenditure Plan**

Dear Mr. Washington:

Commendations to you and your staff for all of the considerations you have made in putting together the draft potential ballot measure expenditure plan. As you know, the EnviroMetro coalition, representing a constituency of 500,000 progressive voters in Los Angeles County, has been engaged in this process throughout the last year. We very much want to endorse the final proposal, but in order to do so, we are requesting changes in the plan. The following suggestions would not only win over the support of our coalition's 68 organizations, and our members, we believe these changes would also certainly improve the measure's appeal to many other Angelenos as well.

We urge you, in this critical time for improvements, to make the following suggested changes to the fund elements of the potential ballot measure:

Major Transit Construction Projects - 35% Allocation

- Similarly to how the proposed Bus Rapid Transit expansion initiative includes advanced planning costs, make funds also available to **initiate a planning process for expanded transit service to access parks and open space**. This initiative could fittingly be situated as a (small) part of the \$20 million in seed money for visionary projects. We request that the goal of funding a vision plan for increasing connections to open space and parks be explicitly stated as one of the purposes of this visionary project set-aside.

Major Highway Projects - 17% Allocation

- The proposed **8-lane new highway that is part of the High Desert Corridor project should not receive any potential ballot measure funds for construction**, as is currently included in the 45-year tax alternative. Right of way acquisition for a rail

connection is an acceptable expenditure, but a new highway that would cause more urban sprawl, automobile dependence, induced demand for driving, and greenhouse gas emissions does not belong in a 21st century multimodal investment package. It is contrary to our region's climate goals and VMT metrics, and is not a fiscally responsible use of taxpayer money -- to date, no price tag for the publically funded proportion of it has been identified, but the appropriate amount is \$0. It should be noted that the EnviroMetro coalition is, on principle, opposed to any highway capacity expansion projects; however, as a compromise, we refrain from insisting that the I-5 South and SR-71 expansion projects also be defunded.

- Establish a **Regional Advance Mitigation Program (RAMP) to address biological impacts** in a comprehensive, up-front way. This method improves efficiency, effectiveness, and opportunity for productive community involvement, and has proven to be the best use for already-required mitigation spending. Rather than doing so on a project-by-project basis, a program should be set up that pools 5% of all highway capital project costs (which is the anticipated cost of biological mitigation) and makes use of a citizens advisory council to determine the best opportunities to achieve the intended biological mitigation.
- Establish a **clean freight corridor funding program**, which directs the toll revenue from non-clean trucks making use of the new I-710 South zero-emissions lanes to fund fleet changeover and fueling and charging infrastructure. This program should be further supplemented by 3% of the potential ballot measure's revenue and should be part of this 17% highway expenditure category.

#### Transit Operations - 20% Allocation

- It should be explicitly stated that **recreational transit**, such as service that provides connections to parks and open space, is an eligible use of these funds.
- A stated purpose of this portion of funds should also be a commitment to **keeping fares affordable**, excluding the possibility of any rate hikes that would exceed the rate of inflation.

#### Local Return - 16% Allocation

- Increase this allocation from 16% to 18% and make a portion of it a competitive pool of money that can serve as an incentive for local street projects to achieve the **multi-benefits of complete, green streets**. This includes making streets more multi-modal (bike/ped-friendly) -- a critical piece of Metro's 1st/last mile strategy -- as well as improving stormwater management and combating the urban heat island effect. A minimum of 3% of the potential ballot measure's revenue is necessary to make this incentive structure impactful.
- Expand local jurisdiction's flexibility for eligible uses of these funds to include **recreational transit** that improves access to parks and open space.

#### Regional Active Transportation Program (ATP) - 2% Allocation

- Double this amount from 2% to 4% and use those additional funds to provide a competitive funding stream intended to **improve regional active transportation network connections** that are consistent with Metro's recently adopted Active Transportation Strategic Plan. Eligible costs could include advanced planning work as well as direct implementation costs to realize a comprehensive regional Greenway Network, one which complements existing and proposed rail lines and improves first and last mile connections by making efficient use of existing public right of ways.

Last, although not currently included in the draft expenditure plan nor ordinance language outline, the final measure should make reference to adherence to a **comprehensive green infrastructure policy**. Prior to the June 23, 2016 Metro Board meeting, the EnviroMetro Green Infrastructure TAC requests to work with Metro staff to further develop the guidance outlined in the environmental policy motion that was adopted in February -- Environmental & Sustainability Efforts to Further Metro's Goals to Reduce Emissions, Clean the Air & Improve Urban Areas. Further development of this policy should establish a framework for green infrastructure requirements and metrics that would impact all potential ballot measure funding to major capital projects, grants, operations, and local return.

Our coalition consists of dedicated advocates and practitioners with expertise in these areas, and we are more than willing to work with your staff to realize these proposed changes. We encourage you to be in touch with us sooner rather than later about making that happen, since we would prefer to not have to draw too much public attention to the current proposal's deficiencies. We think a viable solution is achievable, and we sincerely aspire to be able to support the final proposal this fall.

If you have any questions and/or to arrange for further collaboration, a good point of contact for our coalition is Bryn Lindblad -- [blindblad@climateresolve.org](mailto:blindblad@climateresolve.org) / (213) 346-3790.

We hope to be working with you to attain this crucial source of funding which could make possible the type of transformative transportation investments that our region so needs and deserves.

Sincerely, on behalf of the EnviroMetro Coalition,

**EnviroMetro Steering Committee**

Ariel Collins, The City Project

Belinda Faustinos, San Gabriel Mountains Forever

Claire Robinson, Amigos de los Rios

Daniel Rossman, The Wilderness Society

Jonathan Parfrey, Climate Resolve

Tori Kjer, Trust for Public Land

Wesley Reutimann, Bike San Gabriel Valley