



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

May 20, 2016

Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair, Metro Board of Directors
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. Ridley-Thomas:

Commendations to you and the Metro 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, the final ballot measure should provide funding 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.
- In order to meet the aggressive target set by the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, transit projects should be placed on a faster timeline than highway improvement projects as these are the projects that will reduce the most greenhouse gas emissions when completed.

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 portion of the proposed new highway 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.
- A **Regional Advance Mitigation Program (RAMP) that addresses biological impacts** in a comprehensive, up-front way should be developed. 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.
- A **zero-emissions freight corridor funding program** for the new I-710 South zero-emissions lanes should be established to fund heavy duty fleet and vehicle changeover and auxiliary power infrastructure. This program should be funded by 5% of the potential ballot measure's revenue and should be part of this 17% highway expenditure category. For this comprehensive corridor transformation, our coalition is supportive of the vision and scope laid out in Motion 2015-1595, which was adopted by the Metro Board in October 22, 2015 and the associated proposal advanced by the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice.

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

- This allocation should be increased from 16% to a minimum of 18% (consistent with the green infrastructure framework described below), with a condition that a portion of it be dedicated to supporting the implementation of **complete, green streets and greenways**. 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.

- Local jurisdictions should be given the flexibility to use these funds for **recreational transit** that improves access to parks and open space.

Regional Active Transportation Program (ATP) - 2% Allocation

- This allocation should be raised from 2% to a minimum of 5% and additional funds used to create a competitive funding stream that will **improve regional active transportation network connections** 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.
- In regards to the Performance Metric, we see that there are not clear ways of measuring the benefits of increasing bicycle and pedestrian travel, resulting in active transportation projects being undervalued. We request that active transportation projects be scored higher to account for the economic and safety benefits that these projects provide, resulting in these projects being implemented on an earlier timeline than currently proposed.

Although not currently included in the draft expenditure plan nor ordinance language outline, the final measure should make reference to adherence to an adopted **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. This policy could result in a minimum of 2% of all funding being dedicated to incorporating location-appropriate green infrastructure -- including green streets, bioswales, infiltration galleries, rainwater harvesting, and/or native landscaping.

Finally, we believe that, given the duration of the measure, a provision should be established that allows the Metro Board to modify funding allocations - with a two-thirds vote - in order for future elected officials to adapt the plan as circumstances and priorities change. Transportation priorities have changed greatly in the last 50 years and only now are we beginning to fix some of those mistakes. Our current priorities may shift in the coming decades and it is important that we have the foresight now to create a clear and transparent process to amend the project list and timeline in response to future needs.

Our coalition consists of dedicated advocates and practitioners with expertise in these areas, and we are more than willing to work with Metro 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 / (213) 634-3790.

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,

Ariel Collins, The City Project
Belinda Faustinos, San Gabriel Mountains Forever
Bruce Reznik, Los Angeles Waterkeeper
California Greenworks, Inc.
Charlotte A. Pienkos, The Nature Conservancy
Claire Robinson, Amigos de los Rios
Dan Silver, Endangered Habitats League
Daniel Rossman, The Wilderness Society
Darrell Clarke, Sierra Club Angeles Chapter
Deborah Weinstein Bloome, Tree People
Jack Sahl, Friends of the Angeles Forest
Jonathan Parfrey, Climate Resolve
Kristen Pawling, Natural Resources Defense Council
Maria Camacho, River LA
Mark Masaoka, Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council
Melanie Winter, The River Project
Michelle Kinman, Environment California
Omar Gomez, The Council of Mexican Federations
Rita Kampalath, Heal the Bay
Tim O'Connor, Environmental Defense Fund
Tori Kjer, The Trust for Public Land
Veronica Padilla, Pacoima Beautiful
Viviana Franco, From Lot to Spot
Wesley Reutimann, Bike San Gabriel Valley
Will Wright, AIA Los Angeles

cc: Phil Washington, Metro CEO

cc: John Fasana, First Vice Chair, Metro Board of Directors

cc: Eric Garcetti, Second Vice Chair, Metro Board of Directors

cc: Michael Antonovich, Metro Board of Directors

cc: Mike Bonin, Metro Board of Directors
cc: Diane DuBois, Metro Board of Directors
cc: Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, Metro Board of Directors
cc: Don Knabe, Metro Board of Directors
cc: Paul Krekorian, Metro Board of Directors
cc: Sheila Kuehl, Metro Board of Directors
cc: Ara Najarian, Metro Board of Directors
cc: James Butts, Metro Board of Directors
cc: Hilda L. Solis , Metro Board of Directors
cc: Carrie Bowen, Metro Board of Directors