



**REVISED**  
**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
**OCTOBER 19, 2006**

**SUBJECT: IMPROVED FISCAL POLICIES**

**ACTION: ~~ADOPT~~ DISCUSS FINANCIAL STABILITY POLICY**

**RECOMMENDATION**

- A. Receive and file the attached analysis of the June 2006 Board motion to improve Metro's fiscal policies (Attachment A).
- B. ~~Adopt~~ Discuss the attached Financial Stability policy (Attachment B).

**ISSUE**

At its June 2006 meeting, the Board noted that serious challenges remain for Metro to both address the bus operating and capital structural deficit and to develop a fiscally responsible FY2007-2008 budget. To better meet these challenges, the Board passed a motion directing the CEO to report back within two months with an analysis of and recommendations for a number of proposed changes in fiscal policy.

**POLICY IMPLICATION**

Metro has an important responsibility to the taxpayers of Los Angeles County to prudently manage its long and short-term finances. In times of economic change and uncertainty, it is especially important for Metro to ensure its ability to deliver safe, quality and reliable transportation services based upon a strong and stable financial foundation. The Financial Stability Policy will provide guidance for development of the Ten-Year Forecast and Long Range Transportation Plan.

**OPTIONS**

Any portion of the proposed policy could be amended should it not meet the intentions of the Board.

**DISCUSSION**

The Board reviews and approves a set of financial standards each year as part of the annual budget and financial planning process. The proposed Financial Stability Policy incorporates revisions and additions to the existing Financial Standards Policy adopted in February 2002, including various changes consistent with the Board motion.

The Financial Stability Policy is divided into three sections: Goals, Strategies and General Fiscal Policies. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that Metro prudently manages its financial affairs, establishes appropriate cash reserves, limits the level of debt that may be incurred, ensures that the debt assumptions are based on financial parameters, similar to or more conservative than those that would be placed on Metro by the financial marketplace; is provided with a framework for developing the upcoming year's budget and other longer-range financial plans; and establishes future business targets for management to achieve.

All aspects of the Board-adopted motion have been addressed in the proposed Financial Stability Policy. Several of the points will require separate Board action as noted in the analysis. When the staff recommendation differs from what was proposed in the Board motion, a discussion is provided.

The Goals section of the policy is intended to provide Metro with financial targets that, when achieved, will provide an operating and capital financial base that is sufficient to deliver safe, quality transportation improvements and transit service that efficiently and cost-effectively meets the modal levels of demand throughout the County. The "Strategies" outlined in the policy are specific actions that staff will bring to the Board for consideration during the fiscal year as recommendations are formulated. These strategies will be revised and updated each year to provide the bases for development of the upcoming annual budget.

In addition to the Financial Stability Policy, the Board approves several planning documents that outline and agendize Metro's capital and operating investments as well as those of the Los Angeles region as a whole. These documents include annual approvals in the fiscal year budget and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), as well as longer-term approvals for Metro's Short and Long Range Transportation Plans. The Board also approves other policy documents such as Service Sector guidelines and Transit Service policies which lay out the framework for staff to ensure that service provided is safe, cost-effective, reliable, environmentally sound, attracts discretionary riders, and services the transit dependent.

Item 1 in the Board motion is to develop a reserve fund policy by fund type that includes contingency and emergency categories with percentage goals and a reasonable timeframe to meet said goals. The proposed financial stability policy states reserves will be established. Recommendations for the amounts of the reserves, allocation criteria, and timeframes will be brought to the Board for consideration after completion of the ten-year forecast and the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Item 10 of the Board motion suggests that Metro set up separate accounts for litigation and non-litigation legal activities. Because of the amount of time and effort that this proposal would entail, staff is proposing instead to present the proposed budget for the legal department with detailed information about department activities including the potential for using outside counsel. This additional detail will provide the Board with more clarity regarding Metro's legal budget and the potential use of outside counsel by County Counsel.

In addition to the Board's proposals and previously approved Financial Standards policy, there are several additional policy changes incorporated into the proposed Financial Stability Policy. These changes focus on providing a regional fare and fee structure that is tied to the

cost of providing transit service, optimizing the use of the regional system and providing transit riders with convenience, ease of use, and value for their money. These additional policy changes were either recommended by an APTA peer review panel or are recognized as best practices within the transit industry.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Adopting the proposed Financial Stability policy will provide additional safeguards and more transparency in Metro's budgetary process. When the board adopts specific actions that require additional funding, such as setting up emergency reserves, separate items will be brought to the Board with a discussion of the full financial impacts at the time of implementation.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Incorporate the concepts of the Financial Stability Policy into the budget and financial planning documents as they are developed.

### **Attachments**

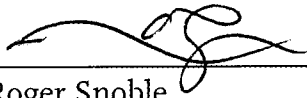
- A. Analysis of Board Motion on Fiscal Policy Improvements
- B. Financial Stability Policy
- C. Origin of Concepts in Financial Stability Policy
- D. June 22, 2006 Motion by Directors Parks and Lowenthal

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## ANALYSIS OF JUNE 22, 2006 BOARD MOTION TO IMPROVE FISCAL POLICIES

### 1. **Develop a reserve fund policy by fund type that includes contingency and emergency categories with percentage goals and a reasonable time frame to meet the goals.**

Analysis: "Fund type" is defined to mean the different sources of funding received by Metro. Certain fund types, such as Federal and State funds, cannot be set aside for later use but must be used within the prescribed time frame of the grant award or for specific projects and programs. All current grants are reimbursement grants; this means that the grant funds cannot be received until after the expenditure has been paid. Therefore, these fund types are not eligible or available to set aside as a "reserve."

Proposition A and C sales tax funds, Metro fares, and system generated revenues are the only funds that Metro can control regarding the establishment of reserves. The sales tax funds are further divided into specific categories as established in the voter approved ordinances. The "local return" portion of the sales taxes are passed through Metro to the cities and county. Staff does not recommend that Metro set aside a reserve for these funds because the municipalities are responsible for managing their own resources and setting up their own reserve funds, if desired.

Recommendations for the amounts of the reserves, allocation criteria, and timeframes will be brought to the Board for consideration after completion of the ten-year forecast and the Long Range Transportation Plan.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability policy (FSP) states the following:

(FSP-G6) Establish and maintain prudent reserves sufficient to ensure that Metro can adjust to economic downturns, extraordinary cost increases and other financial emergencies.

(FSP-S21) Maintain a prudent reserve to be used in times of significant revenue decline to preserve the region's ongoing ability to deliver safe and reliable service to the customer and to reinvest in capital.

### 2. **Require an annual investment of ~~general fund monies~~ to maintain and expand, as necessary, the agency's infrastructure.**

Analysis: Metro currently invests approximately \$200 million per year for bus replacements, bus mid-life rebuilds, and bus and rail facilities infrastructure maintenance. The funds are allocated according to plans completed by Transit Operations (Bus and Rail Fleet Plans, Bus Facilities Plan, Rail Rehabilitation Plan, Short Range Transit Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan). All plans indicate more funding is required to keep up with agency needs but are not available due to trade-offs required to fund bus and rail operations.

Historically, \$200 - \$400 million has been budgeted annually for major construction infrastructure expansion (in addition to the \$200 million discussed in the previous paragraph). These major construction projects are first identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan and are funded with debt and external grant sources which are not typically eligible for use in operating bus and rail service.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability Policy states the following:

(FSP-S11) Adopt an annual budget that includes an allocation to capital programs adequate to meet annual baseline reinvestment needs for projects and programs which are essential to ensure system performance.

(FSP-S12) Pursue grant funding for Metro capital projects pursuant to the priorities as addressed in the Long Range Transportation Plan, Short Range Transit Plan, and Five-Year Capital Improvement Program.

(FSP-S13) Use debt financing prudently to leverage local, regional, state and federal funding for major cyclical capital investments such as transit vehicles, facilities, escalator and elevators, fare collection equipment, and train control renovation and replacement.

### **3. Establish an on-going process to analyze cost recovery for all Metro services in measurable terms.**

Analysis: Metro provides many services to the public and the region. Many of the services are considered subsidies and are not intended to generate revenues for the agency or save Metro costs. For example, Freeway Service Patrol is a free service to the users provided to improve regional traffic mobility. Effectiveness is measured by cost per assist and an analysis of traffic recovery, but not by cost recovery. Other services that may lend themselves to cost recovery analysis include the employee store, filming fees charged to entities using our facilities and regional operating services such as customer information or the TAP Regional Clearinghouse.

Delivery of bus and rail service lends itself well to cost recovery measurements through key performance indicators such as “farebox recovery ratio”. Fares collected divided by cost of service provides the percent of the service that is paid for by the customer. This measurement is reported to the Board as part of the annual budget adoption and is included in the adopted budget book. The farebox recovery ratios are also provided to the federal government in the National Transit Database reporting required of all transit properties.

Currently the farebox recovery ratio for Metro bus and rail service is 25%. This means that the passenger pays for 25% of the cost of the ride. Nationally, this is the low end of farebox recovery ratio for transit properties who are peers of Metro. The staff recommendation for the financial stability policy will be for the Board to adopt a farebox recovery ratio each fiscal year as part of the budget adoption.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability Policy states the following:

(FSP-S4) New programs proposed for Board adoption will include a cost recovery analysis to determine the cost of implementing the program to the agency in measurable terms.

(FSP-S5) Departments who provide services to the public or outside entities will perform a cost recovery analysis during the fiscal year budget process and make the information available as part of budget adoption.

(FSP-S10) Regularly review productivity improvement programs and results as part of the annual budget process.

(FSP-S14) As part of the annual budget process, adopt a farebox recovery ratio that provides for an improved level of cost recovery.

#### **4. Include guidelines for the allocation of one-time revenue funds.**

Analysis: One-time revenues should be allocated to non-recurring costs. However, with the structural deficit in Metro bus operations, one-time revenues have had to be allocated to ongoing bus operating costs. Such allocations have only been recommended after considering the alternatives of reducing the level of service, reducing the cost per unit of service, deferring capital projects and/or raising fares.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability policy states the following:

(FSP-F10) ...Any allocations of one-time revenues to any Metro program or project will be identified for the Board at the time of budget adoption or budget change and will only be recommended after considering the alternatives of reducing the level of service, reducing the cost per unit of service, reducing the scope of capital projects, deferring capital projects and/or raising fares...

#### **5. Require that all short and long-term fiscal impacts be considered when Metro disposes of surplus equipment and property.**

Analysis: Prior to declaring any real property surplus, a list of potentially surplus properties is circulated to relevant departments within the Metro organization (Planning, Bus and Rail operations, Executive Management, etc.) and to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) for review and comment regarding the requirement to retain the property for future public use. If there is a short-term or long-term requirement for the property, the property will be removed from the potential surplus list. A property is declared surplus ONLY if there is a consensus from all relevant departments that the property is not needed for current or future transit or public requirements, including joint development.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability Policy states the following:

(FSP-F4) Metro shall follow detailed property acquisition and disposal procedures as required by the Federal Transit Administration and other grantor agencies and approved by the MTA Board in the Disposition of Surplus Property policy. All short and long-term impacts will be carefully considered by all departments prior to considering any Metro-owned property as surplus.

**6. Require staff to perform a fiscal impact statement that contains an identifiable funding source before Board motions are implemented.**

Analysis: After approval of a Board motion, staff will submit a report similar to the financial impact statement currently included in all Board reports identifying the funding source(s) for Board-adopted motions. Staff will not implement any motion until the financial impact is approved by full Board in the next regular Board cycle, the second month following approval.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability Policy states the following:

(FSP-F11) All Board motions will only be implemented after the Board approves the identified funding source.

**7. After the annual budget adoption, require all requests for project or program funding be referred to the appropriate committee for review and recommendation.**

Analysis: This is the current process.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability Policy states the following:

(FSP-10) The annual budget establishes the legal level of appropriation. Total expenditures cannot exceed the final appropriation adopted by the Board with the exception of unspent capital funds from the preceding year. Spending authority may be increased or decreased throughout the year through Board approved budget amendments. Any requests for project or program funding after annual budget adoption will be referred to the appropriate Board committee for Board review and recommendation...

**8. Require staff to establish a protocol for negotiation, appraisal and sale of real property and to identify the amount and dispersal of funds that result from the sale and/or disposal of real property.**

Analysis: The protocol for the disposition of surplus real property is established by the Disposition of Surplus Real Property Policy which was adopted by the Board in August



2001. The policy provides guidelines for identifying, approving, advertising, and selling surplus property. The sales price of any surplus property is based on the appraised fair market value, except that less than fair market value may be accepted if it is determined to be in the best interest of Metro to sell for a negotiated amount that is subsequently approved by the CEO or the Metro Board. The money received from the sale of surplus property is credited back to the project/fund that paid the initial acquisition of the property or is allocated to the General Fund when the original project/fund is closed.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability Policy states the following:

(FSP-F4) Metro shall follow detailed property acquisition and disposal procedures as required by the Federal Transit Administration and other grantor agencies and approved by the MTA Board in the Disposition of Surplus Property policy...

**9. Identify a specific funding plan for Metro's Capital program that includes a clear delineation of money that is allocated to the different types of public transportation.**

Analysis: Metro's capital plan includes only those assets which Metro owns. The capital plan does not include assets that are owned by other entities such as highway projects, local transportation improvements, commuter rail improvements, bus station and bus stop amenities, signal improvements, etc. These non-owned capital improvements are included in the Special Revenue Fund budget section of the budget only for the portions that are funded by Metro's sales taxes or grants that flow through Metro to sub-recipients. Full project costs/funding are detailed in the STIP.

Metro's capital plan allocates money to bus and rail transit infrastructure maintenance and improvement projects. The funding plan is included in Metro's ten-year forecast which is then included in the Short and Long Range Transportation Plans.

The ten-year forecast currently assumes that Metro will allocate \$84 million per year for bus replacements, \$96 million per year for bus facilities, bus rebuilds, systems development and other non-rail related capital needs, and \$20 million per year for rail facilities, rail vehicle maintenance, and wayside systems projects. Additional rail capital funds are set aside for rail vehicle procurements and rail infrastructure rehabilitation. These assumptions are based on historical trends for delivery capacity. More resources would be required if capital investments were increased.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability Policy states the following:

(FSP-S11) Adopt an annual budget that includes an allocation to capital programs adequate to meet annual baseline reinvestment needs for projects and programs which are essential to ensure system performance.

**10. Create a litigation account that includes the following three separate accounts: litigation, General Counsel and outside counsel.**

Analysis: County Counsel has been appointed as general counsel to Metro. Litigation matters are handled both by County Counsel and outside counsel as determined by County Counsel. County Counsel records their time by Project and Task as required by the current Metro Financial Information System (FIS) but does not currently keep track of their time on each project/task by litigation vs. non-litigation. Requiring additional record-keeping to identify litigation vs. non-litigation would require additional record-keeping by the County Counsel attorneys.

It is currently County Counsel's practice to handle all legal matters in-house unless the size or complexity of the matter requires a specialized practice and/or multiple attorneys and support staff to properly handle the massive amount of documents involved in such litigation. In addition to litigation, outside counsel will also handle complex transactional matters that require special expertise, such as federal law, trademarks, and joint development.

Of the total FY07 budget, approximately \$8.6 million is budgeted for outside counsel litigation matters and \$4.6 million is budgeted for outside counsel transactional matters. Approximately \$4.6 million is budgeted for the 14 County Counsel attorneys, 7 support staff and all administration costs such as, office supplies, court reporters, depositions and filings.

In discussions with Board staff, it was determined that the Board is interested in more visibility into the way the legal budget is developed and controlled by County Counsel. It is hoped that staff's recommendation will provide the requested information without the burden of changing the FIS system or method of tracking time in County Counsel.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability policy states the following:

(FSP-S6) The Board will adopt the proposed budget for all legal costs with detail information about department activities and whether or not County Counsel plans to use outside counsel.

**11. Develop a policy for how to balance the investment of both capital and operating funds for all public transportation modes so that Metro ensures that service is provided that is cost effective, reliable, safe, environmentally sound, attracts discretionary riders and services the transit dependent.**

Analysis: The Board approves several planning documents that set the policy for balancing both Metro's capital and operating investments and the other capital investments for the Los Angeles region. These documents include annual approvals in the fiscal year budget, the ten-year forecast, and the Transportation Improvement Program, as well as longer term approvals such as the Short Range Transit Plan, and the Long Range Transportation plan. The Board also approves other policy documents such as Service Sector guidelines and Transit Service policies which lay out the framework for

staff to ensure that service provided is cost-effective, reliable, safe, environmentally sound, attracts discretionary riders and services the transit dependent.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability Policy states the following:

(FSP-G2) Maintain an operating and capital financial base that is sufficient to deliver safe, quality transportation improvements and transit service efficiently and cost-effectively to meet the levels of demand.

(FSP-G3) Continuously improve productivity.

(FSP-F12) The LACMTA shall adopt a regional long-range (covering at least 20 years) transportation plan for Los Angeles County at least once every five years. For interim years, staff will report on changes affecting the major financial assumptions of the plan and progress toward implementation of new projects and programs. The plan update report shall also highlight Board approved actions taken during the interim period that affect the plan outcomes or schedules.

(FSP-F13) Annually, the LACMTA shall adopt a five-year short-range transit plan (SRTTP) for Los Angeles County. The plan will include service levels and ridership by mode for each of the years. The five-year plan will also identify the capital investment needs to support the existing regional system and regional service expansion. The plan will also identify key performance indicators by which to measure accomplishments of the plan's goals.

## **12. Give top priority to funding of public safety on Metro's bus and rail system.**

Analysis: The American Public Transportation Authority (APTA) hosted a peer review of Metro's security during April of 2006. One of the conclusions of the APTA peer review is that Metro spends a high percentage of its budget on security services when compared with other transit properties equal to the size and complexity of Metro. The safety and security budget in the FY07 budget exceeds the current Board policy of dedicating 5% toward these activities. To provide the Board with more visibility into Metro's safety and security programs, Staff is recommending that the detail of the programs be presented to the Board at the time of budget adoption.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability policy states the following:

(FSP-G1) Maintain public safety on Metro's bus and rail system as the top priority.

(FSP-S1) Metro gives top priority to funding of public safety on Metro's bus and rail system. The details of the safety and security budget will be presented to the Metro Board for separate approval at the time of annual budget adoption.

**13. Include a preferred incremental strategy, such as budget expenditure moratoriums, hiring freeze, or a cost allocation plan (CAP) rate, for mitigating expenditures during a fiscal year.**

Analysis: For the last 3 years it has been standard operating procedure that CEO approval is required for certain expenditures such as personnel appointments and travel arrangements. Additionally, the powerful Financial Information System prohibits expenditures that are not explicitly included in the fiscal year budget. The staff recommendation will provide a recommendation for specific steps that the agency can take during a fiscal year to reduce costs.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability policy states the following:

(FSP-S3) ...A proposed strategy for mitigating expenditures will be presented to the Board at the time of annual budget adoption...

**14. Include a hierarchy of strategies that are to be implemented when Metro's financial stability is threatened, including a prioritized list of types of budget cuts that would be necessary in various circumstances and a requirement that staff address any potential or existing structural deficit with a comprehensive plan with specific actions and a timetable for the elimination of such a deficit.**

Analysis: The ten-year forecast will provide multiple scenarios to address the required actions and timetable for elimination of the structural deficit.

The recommendation included in the Proposed Financial Stability policy states the following:

(FSP-F13) Annually, Metro shall adopt a five-year (short-range) transportation plan for Los Angeles County. The plan will include service levels and ridership by mode for each of the years. The five-year plan will also identify the capital investment needs to support the existing regional system and regional service expansion. The SRTP will incorporate the first five years of Metro's ten-year forecast which will include a hierarchy of strategies that are to be implemented when Metro's financial stability is threatened and strategies required to eliminate any potential deficit.

## FINANCIAL STABILITY POLICY

### FY20007-08 Financial Stability Policy

#### Policy Statement

Metro has an important responsibility to the taxpayers of Los Angeles County to prudently manage its long and short-term finances. In time of economic change and uncertainty, it is especially important for Metro to ensure its ability to deliver safe, quality and reliable transportation services that are based upon a strong and stable financial foundation.

The Financial Stability Policy is divided into three sections: Goals, Strategies, and General Fiscal Policies. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that Metro prudently manages its financial affairs, establishes appropriate cash reserves, limit the level of debt that may be incurred, ensure that the debt assumptions are based on financial parameters similar to or more conservative than those that would be placed on Metro by the financial marketplace and to provide management with a framework for developing the upcoming year's budget and other longer range financial plans and establishing future business targets for management to achieve.

#### Financial Goals

- G1. Maintain public safety on Metro's bus and rail system as the top priority.
- G2. Maintain an operating and capital financial base that is sufficient to deliver safe, quality transportation improvements and transit service efficiently and cost-effectively to meet the levels of demand.
- G3. Continuously improve productivity.
- G4. Preserve and maximize the regional fare revenue base, through a predictable pattern of adjustments, while retaining existing ridership and increasing the number of new riders.
- G5. Provide a regional fare and fee structure that is tied to the cost of providing transit service, optimizes use of the regional system, and provides transit riders with convenience, ease of use, and a good value for the money.
- G6. Establish and maintain prudent reserves sufficient to ensure that Metro can adjust to economic downturns.
- G7. Maintain the highest possible credit rating and reputation for prudent financial management.

## **FY2007-2008 Financial Strategies**

- S1. Metro gives top priority to funding of public safety on Metro's bus and rail system. The details of the safety and security budget will be presented to the Metro Board for separate approval at the time of annual budget adoption.
- S2. Adjust transit operating expenses as needed to reflect changes in service demand, technology, productivity and revenue availability.
- S3. Endeavor to keep growth in regional bus and operating expenses (as measured by a rolling average of growth in bus and rail operating cost per vehicle service hour) at or below the rate of inflation. A proposed strategy for mitigating expenditures will be presented to the Board at the time of annual budget adoption.
- S4. New programs proposed for Board adoption will include a cost recovery analysis to determine the cost of implementing the program in measurable terms.
- S5. Departments who provide services to the public or outside entities will perform a cost recovery analysis during the fiscal year budget process and make the information available as part of budget adoption.
- S6. The Board will adopt the proposed budget for all legal costs with detail information about department activities and whether or not County Counsel plans to use outside counsel.
- S7. Implement technology and productivity advancements designed to reduce or avoid increasing operational costs.
- S8. Explore greater efficiency, effectiveness and ways to increase ridership.
- S9. Work to increase and optimize ridership on the Metro system through partnerships that foster transit-oriented development and improve access to the Metro system.
- S10. Regularly review productivity improvement programs and results as part of the annual budget process.
- S11. Adopt an annual budget that includes an allocation to capital programs adequate to meet annual baseline reinvestment needs for projects and programs which are essential to ensure system performance.
- S12. Pursue grant funding for Metro capital projects pursuant to the priorities as addressed in the Long Range Transportation Plan, Short Range Transit Plan, and Five-Year Capital Improvement Program.
- S13. Use debt financing prudently to leverage local, regional, state and federal funding for major cyclical capital investments, such as, transit vehicles, facilities, fare collection equipment, and train control renovation and replacement.

- S14. As part of the annual budget process, adopt a farebox recovery ratio that provides for an improved level of cost recovery.
- S15. Align fares with CPI-based cost growth.
- S16. Consider small, regular fare increases tied to CPI-based cost increases or other major cost factors and to factors such as significant change in other revenues and productivity.
- S17. Consider small surcharges tied to capital needs, such as rehabilitation or seismic retrofit.
- S18. Consider a peak premium and/or distance-based fares at some point in the future when ridership is growing, tied to the need to optimize off-peak system use and to fund core system capacity improvements.
- S19. Increase customer satisfaction, when economically and technologically feasible, by developing new inter-operator and inter-agency partnerships to increase transit access, developing innovative partnership programs with major employers, educational institutions and other rider generators, and using time-limited passes to market Metro special events, weekend, and families, evaluating the impact on ridership of each pass program.
- S20. Increase revenue from other sources such as advertising, parking, concessions, and joint development while meeting customer needs and providing safe, reliable service.
- S21. Maintain a prudent reserve to be used in times of significant revenue decline to preserve the region's ongoing ability to deliver safe and reliable service to the customer and to reinvest in capital.

### **General Fiscal Policies**

- F1. Complete and accurate accounting records shall be maintained in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles as promulgated by the Government Accounting Standards Board. The fiscal year-end for financial reporting purposes shall be June 30.
- F2. An independent certified public accounting firm shall perform an examination of Metro's consolidated financial statements (including Single Audit requirements) and retirement plan financial statements on an annual basis. The goal is to receive an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and an opinion that Metro is in compliance with Federal Single Audit requirements in all material respects and to receive the government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) award for excellence in financial reporting.

- F3. Funds shall be invested within the guidelines of the Board's approved Investment Policy and in compliance with applicable state law, California Government Code Section 53600 et seq.

In accordance with the Investment Policy, the Board shall approve the Financial Institutions Resolution that designates the LACMTA officials empowered to open, close, or authorize changes to accounts and authorizes LACMTA officials to designate individuals as Official Signatories for financial accounts.

- F4. Metro shall follow detailed property acquisition and disposal procedures as required by the Federal Transit Administration and other grantor agencies and approved by the MTA Board in the Disposition of Surplus Property policy. All short and long-term impacts will be carefully considered by all departments prior to considering any Metro-owned property as surplus.
- F5. An annual actuarial analysis shall be performed on all LACMTA self-administered retirement plans. The LACMTA shall make annual contributions that, when combined with employee contributions, fund actuarially computed costs as they accrue.
- F6. Appropriate insurance coverage shall be maintained to mitigate the risk of material loss. For self-insured retentions, the LACMTA shall record the liabilities, including losses incurred but not reported, at 100% of the net present value.

The goal is to maintain restricted cash balances in amounts equal to the present value of estimated liabilities but in no event less than the next year's projected cash outflows. An actuarial review of self-insured liabilities will be made annually.

- F7. Since sales taxes are received on a monthly basis, the allocations among the various ordinance categories shall also be recorded monthly.

Expenditures against appropriations are limited to cash actually on-hand during the fiscal year.

- F8. Sales tax collections received during a fiscal year that are in excess of the sales tax budget for that year shall be reported as unreserved, designated fund balances in the Special Revenue Fund. Excess Local Return monies are disbursed when received. Any other excess balances may only be expended pursuant to Board authorization. Such funds are generally available for appropriation in the subsequent budget cycle in accordance with their ordinance designations.
- F9. The fiscal year shall end on June 30 of each year. By December of each fiscal year, the Board shall review and approve the Financial Stability Policy that will be used by management as a framework for developing the following year's budget. By February, the Board will establish Business Planning Parameters including farebox recovery ratio, sales tax growth assumptions, and other key performance



measurement goals to provide detailed guidance for development of the upcoming annual budget. The Board shall approve the budget by June 30 of each fiscal year.

F10. The annual budget establishes the legal level of appropriation. The budget shall include operating, capital, regional funding and other components necessary to implement the policy directions contained in the Financial Strategies Section of the Financial Stability Policy, previously Board adopted longer-term plans such as the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Short Range Transit Plan. Appropriations for the operating budget lapse at the end of one year. Appropriations for the capital and regional funding budgets are approved on a life-of-project basis. Any allocations of one-time revenues to any Metro program or project will be identified for the Board at the time of budget adoption or budget change and will only be recommended after considering the alternatives of reducing the level of service, reducing the cost per unit of service, reducing the scope of capital projects, deferring capital projects and/or raising fares. Any requests for project or program funding after annual budget adoption will be referred to the appropriate Board committee for Board review and recommendation. The budget shall be prepared in a fashion to clearly describe the projects and programs contained therein and to receive the GFOA award for excellence in budgetary presentation.

F11. All Board motions will only be implemented after the Board approves the identified funding source.

F12. Metro shall adopt a regional long-range (covering at least 20 years) transportation plan for Los Angeles County at least once every five years. For interim years, staff will report on changes affecting the major financial assumptions of the plan and progress toward the implementation of new projects and programs. The plan update report shall also highlight Board approved actions taken during the interim period that affect the plan outcomes or schedules.

F13. Annually, Metro shall adopt a five-year (short-range) transit plan for Los Angeles County. The plan will include service levels and ridership by mode for each of the years. The five-year plan will also identify the capital investment needs to support the existing regional system and regional service expansion. The SRTP will incorporate the first five years of Metro's ten-year forecast which will include a hierarchy of strategies that are to be implemented when Metro's financial stability is threatened and strategies required to eliminate any potential deficit.

The plan will also identify key performance indicators by which to measure accomplishment of the plan's goals.

F14. Metro shall maintain a cost-effective system of internal control to adequately safeguard assets. In assessing the internal control system, management must weigh the cost of control against the expected benefit to be derived from its implementation.

Management will develop a risk assessment and an audit plan each year prior to the adoption of the annual budget. The Board's Executive Management and Audit Committee (EMAC), as the audit committee for Metro will provide input and approve the audit plan. Furthermore, completed internal audits will be submitted to the Board under separate cover as they are distributed to the Chief Executive Officer.

Recommendations for improvements to the system of internal controls are requirements of the various regularly scheduled and specifically directed audits that are performed in accordance with Generally Accepted Governmental Auditing Standards, the Institute of Internal Auditors Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and Information Systems Audit and control Association Information Systems Auditing Standards, where appropriate. These recommendations, management's action plans and progress toward implementation will be periodically reported to the Board under separate cover.

F15. The Board will review and update the Debt Policy annually to ensure that debt assumptions used in financial planning are based on financial parameters similar to, or more conservative than, those that would be placed on Metro by the financial marketplace.

F16. Retiree Medical Liabilities – The Government Accounting Standards Board has adopted Statement #45 (GASB 45) that is effective for Metro's fiscal year ending June 30, 2008. As defined in the standard, a significant liability recognizing the past and future costs of providing medical and related benefits, other than pensions, to its retirees is required to be recorded. Annually, the actuarially required contribution (ARC) is required to be recorded as an expense. The ARC recognizes the cost of the retiree benefits earned by current employees during the period and amortization of the unfunded past liabilities. GASB 45 does not mandate an entity's approach to setting aside cash to provide the future benefits.

It is Metro's policy to fully fund the ARC, i.e. set aside and restrict the cash. However, since this amount is significantly greater than the current amount needed for these expenditures on the "pay as you go" basis, a separate discussion of this issue will be brought to the Board in setting the parameters for each upcoming budget year. A greater accounting liability will result when setting aside less cash than the ARC amount.

### Origin of Concepts in Financial Stability Policy

Identification Number	Name of Concept	Board Motion	Financial Standards	New Statement
Goal 1 – G1	Maintain public safety on Metro’s bus and rail system as the top priority.	Item 12		Ongoing CEO direction
Goal 2 – G2	Maintain an operating and capital financial base that is sufficient...	Item 11		
Goal 3 – G3	Continuously improve productivity.	Item 11		
Goal 4 – G4	Preserve and maximize the regional fare revenue base...			Industry best practice
Goal 5 – G5	Provide a regional fare and fee structure...			Industry best practice
Goal 6 – G6	Establish and maintain prudent reserves...	Item 1		
Goal 7 – G7	Maintain the highest possible credit rating...		Debt Policy	
Strategy 1 – S1	Metro gives top priority to funding public safety on Metro’s bus and rail...	Item 12		Ongoing CEO direction
Strategy 2 – S2	Adjust transit operating expenses as needed to reflect changes in service, demand, technology and productivity.			Industry best practice
Strategy 3 – S3	Keep growth in costs at or below the rate of inflation...A proposed strategy for mitigating expenditures...	Item 13		Industry best practice
Strategy 4 – S4	New programs...will include a cost recovery analysis	Item 3		
Strategy 5 – S5	Departments who provide services to the public...will provide a cost recovery analysis...	Item 3		
Strategy 6 – S6	The Board will adopt the budget for all legal costs...	Item 10		

Origin of Concepts in Financial Stability Policy (con't)

Identification Number	Name of Concept	Board Motion	Financial Standards	New Statement
Strategy 7 – S7	Implement technology and productivity advancements designed to reduce or avoid increasing operational costs.			Industry best practice
Strategy 8 – S8	Explore greater efficiency, effectiveness and ways to increase ridership			Ongoing Board direction
Strategy 9 – S9	Work to increase and optimize ridership...			Ongoing Board direction
Strategy 10- S10	Regularly review productivity improvement programs and results...	Item 3		Industry best practice
Strategy 11 – S11	Adopt an annual budget that includes an allocation to capital programs...	Item 2 Item 9		
Strategy 12 – S12	Pursue grant funding for Metro capital projects...			Ongoing Board dir SRTP LRTP
Strategy 13 – S13	Use debt financing prudently to leverage local, regional, state and federal..		Debt Policy	
Strategy 14 – S14	...adopt a farebox recovery ratio that provides for an improved level of cost recovery.	Item 3		APTA Peer Review panel
Strategy 15 – S15	Align fares with CIP-based cost growth.			APTA Peer Review panel
Strategy 16 – S16	Consider small regular fare increases tied to CPI-based cost increases or other major cost factors...			APTA Peer Review panel
Strategy 17 – S17	Consider small surcharges tied to capital needs such as rehabilitation or seismic retrofit.			APTA Peer Review panel
Strategy 18 – S18	Consider a peak premium and/or distance based fares...tied to the need to optimize off-peak use...			APTA Peer Review panel

Origin of Concepts in Financial Stability Policy (con't)

Identification Number	Name of Concept	Board Motion	Financial Standards	New Statement
Strategy 19 – S19	Increase customer satisfaction when ...feasible by developing new...partnerships to increase transit access...			Industry best practice
Strategy 20 – S20	Increase revenue from other sources, such as advertising, parking, concessions and joint development...			Ongoing Board direction
Strategy 21 – S21	Maintain a prudent reserve...	Item 1		
General Fiscal – F1	Complete and accurate accounting records...		G1	
General Fiscal – F2	An independent certified public accounting firm...		G2	
General Fiscal – F3	Funds shall be invested within the guidelines of the Board's approved investment policy...		G3	
General Fiscal – F4	Metro shall follow detailed property acquisition and disposal procedures...	Item 5 Item 8		
General Fiscal – F5	An annual actuarial analysis shall be performed on all LACMTA self-administered retirement plans...		G4	
General Fiscal – F6	Appropriate insurance coverage shall be maintained...		G5	
General Fiscal – F7	Since sales taxes are received on a monthly basis, the allocations among the various ordinances shall also be recorded monthly.		G6	

Origin of Concepts in Financial Stability Policy (con't)

Identification Number	Name of Concept	Board Motion	Financial Standards	New Statement
General Fiscal – F8	Sales tax collections received during a fiscal year that are in excess of the sales tax budget for that year...		G7	
General Fiscal – F9	The fiscal year shall end on June 30 of each year...		G8	
General Fiscal – F10	The annual budget establishes the legal level of appropriation...	Item 4 Item 7	G9	
General Fiscal – F11	Board motions will only be implemented after the Board approves the identified funding source.	Item 6		
General Fiscal – F12	Metro shall adopt a regional long range...transportation plan...at least once every five years...	Item 11	G10	
General Fiscal – F13	Annually Metro shall adopt a five-year (short range transit plan...	Item 11 Item 14	G11	
General Fiscal – F14	Metro shall maintain a cost-effective system of internal control to adequately safeguard assets...		G12	
General Fiscal – F15	The Board will review and update the debt policy annually...		Debt Policy	
General Fiscal – F16	Retiree medical liabilities...			GASB 45