



December 8, 2021

Dear LA County Delegation,

As we close out another year of historic challenges, we are grateful for your work in ensuring that California continues to deliver on critical priorities, especially regarding transportation, climate change, and equity. We look forward to continuing our work with you on the FY 2022-2023 budget, as we believe the current budget surplus presents what we consider a **golden opportunity** to improve mobility and quality of life for California residents. We would like to thank the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation and Governor Newsom for enacting key environmental reform measures, including SB 288 (Weiner) and SB 44 (Allen), as well as AB 917 (Bloom) which will support enforcement of bus only lanes.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board of Directors and our partner organizations urge you to continue your momentum by investing existing State budget surplus funds in LA County mobility projects. Coupled with the investment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), these funds will allow Los Angeles to significantly advance the nation's most comprehensive transit system expansion, while addressing long-standing inequities by bringing transit to disadvantaged communities.

We are executing a long-term strategy to transform Los Angeles County, creating a true regional transportation system supporting the mobility of the future. In the coming years, we will host some of the largest, most complex events held anywhere in the world, including Super Bowl LVI, the Major League Baseball All-Star Game in 2022, and the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. Los Angeles County's infrastructure will need to accommodate tens of thousands of visitors from around the world for these events, while ensuring Angelenos can continue to navigate the region without significant disruption. Each of these events represents an opportunity to create legacy benefits for the residents of LA County: climate, equity, and workforce development. Our infrastructure also will need to position local businesses to meet the demand for commerce and tourism, realizing an important boost for our region's continued economic recovery.

At this historic moment, the future is now. We have the opportunity not just to complete individual projects, but to connect communities across our region, especially those who have been historically marginalized. Our coalition has worked to put a system in place that is greater than the sum of any of its parts. Metro's 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan estimates that our 30-year capital investment program, in combination with equity-focused

polices, will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 19%, increase transit trips by 81% and create more than 1.8 million high-road construction and indirect jobs. The transit investment alone will dramatically expand regional access to high-quality travel options. After implementation, the number of county residents and jobs located within a 10-minute walk to high-quality bus and rail more than doubles.

While Metro may build a project in one area and expand a rail line in another, all of these projects combine to create benefits not just in one sub-region but throughout the county. For example, the completion of the Metro Eastside Extension and the Metro Exposition Line created an opportunity for people who live on the Eastside to take transit to the beach. Completing the Metro Orange Line across the San Fernando Valley allowed people to take transit from the western end of the San Fernando Valley to Downtown Los Angeles.

Our coalition is focused on mutual priorities and urges the State to allocate at least \$16.5 billion to transportation infrastructure in the upcoming budget. We believe an appropriate investment strategy is the following **Golden Opportunity Package**:

1. \$10 billion for Public Transit capital projects. Funding could be matched with local resources, as well as resources from IJIA. Leveraging State funds with local and federal dollars would multiply the positive impact of the State's investment and create tens of thousands of jobs.

Projects that could be funded from this allocation include the following key Metro priorities:

- Bus Rapid Transit/Bus-Only Lanes Countywide Expansion
  - East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor
  - Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2
  - Foothill Extension of the Metro Gold Line
  - Green Line Extension to Torrance
  - Inglewood Transit Connector Project
  - Sepulveda Transit Corridor
  - Strategic State of Good Repair Investments such as Metro Green Line Rehabilitation
  - West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor to Downtown LA
2. \$2.5 billion for projects that support the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. These funds could be allocated through the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP). However, these funds should be subject to controlling criteria separate from the regular TIRCP. With the world watching us, Southern California has an audacious goal for the Olympic and Paralympic Games: we want to enable all ticketed spectators to access competition venues by public transit, walking, or cycling. To ensure we provide a world-class user experience for these visitors and their

tourism revenue, we must improve and expand our core system to enhance speed, reliability, and connectivity. Projects that would achieve this goal include, but are not limited to:


- Adding capacity at key transit stations and transit system bottlenecks
  - Expanding bus-only lanes on major arterial streets countywide
  - Investments in zero emissions charging infrastructure
  - Optimizing access to major venues and activity centers
  - Planning and design activities for these projects
3. Increased allocation of up to \$500 million for the Active Transportation Program. These funds would help address the backlog of planned projects and link housing and transit in underserved communities. These linkages ensure that people who use transit can walk on safe sidewalks, ride bicycles on streets with proper bike facilities, and find their way around the county safely without using a car. Projects that could be funded out of this category include, but are not limited to:
- First Mile/Last Mile connectivity
  - Modernizing bikeways to provide enhanced safety features
  - Rail to River
4. \$1 billion for a new California Next Generation High Speed Rail Program. This funding would support Metrolink's SCORE program – helping to achieve the California State Rail Plan, Antelope Valley Rail Line improvements, and CA HSR Phase 1A projects in Los Angeles County. This category could fund projects such as:
- Capacity and safety enhancements on Metrolink's entire system
  - Double tracking on key corridors such as the Antelope Valley Line
  - Palmdale to Burbank Tunnel
5. At least \$1 billion for Transit Customer Service, Resiliency and Fare Reduction programs. Over the past year, Metro's ridership has steadily recovered. We must maintain our momentum by investing in initiatives that will provide a safe, clean, and affordable system. Los Angeles County is also served by a network of municipal bus operators. This funding would also help to address similar needs on those systems. This program could fund key customer improvements such as:
- Improved bus stop lighting
  - Providing shade at exposed bus stops
  - Supporting reduced and free fare programs, such as the Fareless System Initiative
6. \$1 billion for the deployment of zero emission buses. Metro is leading the State in this effort, as we aim to convert the State's largest bus fleet to zero emission 10 years ahead of the State's requirement of 2040. We have already completed the conversion


of the Metro G/Orange Line to zero emission, and we are currently converting the Metro J/Silver Line. Zero emission buses continue to be significantly more expensive to procure than traditional CNG buses. The high cost of the charging infrastructure is also a significant challenge. This funding should be made available to purchase vehicles, install the necessary charging infrastructure, including support for the conversion of the municipal transit fleet to zero emission buses, as well as workforce development training. We also look forward to an ongoing commitment to funding both zero emission buses and trucks.

7. \$500 million for the Trade Corridors Enhancement Program and critical projects such as the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments' Montebello and Turnbull Canyon Grade Separation Projects to address the supply-chain infrastructure. Los Angeles County is the epicenter of goods movement in California, with 40% of the nation's container shipments coming through its ports and ending up on trucks that use the Southern California freeway system and on trains that traverse our region. The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have outlined significant investments that would help to relieve this backlog. This crisis also points out the need to maintain a strong State commitment to investing in goods movement-related infrastructure.

We appreciate your consideration of our proposal. We have a once-in-a-generation, **golden opportunity** to make these truly impactful and equitable changes in transportation for the Southern California Region. We look forward to achieving these goals together, working cooperatively with the legislature and the Newsom Administration throughout the budget process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact Stephanie Wiggins, Chief Executive Officer, at 213-922-7555.

Sincerely,

  
Hilda L. Solis,  
Metro Board Chair

  
Ara Najarian  
Metro Board 1st Vice Chair

  
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Metro Board 2nd Vice Chair

  
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cc:

Governor Gavin Newsom

Senator Toni G. Atkins, President pro Tempore,

Assembly Member Phil Ting, Chair Assembly Budget Committee

Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair Senate Budget Committee