

54 ORGANIZATIONS AND 276 INDIVIDUALS SUPPORT 7 KEY CHANGES IN METRO'S FY22 BUDGET - MAY 2021



compiler la



TO: Metro Board of Directors
CC: Phil Washington, CEO, Los Angeles Metro
DATE: May 25, 2021

Dear Metro Board of Directors,

We, the undersigned individuals and organizations, have reviewed Metro's proposed FY22 budget and identified several concerns with the proposal as it stands. The Los Angeles region is only just beginning to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has devastated the lives of Angelenos for more than a year. Metro's core ridership consists overwhelmingly of working class Angelenos, and particularly those from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, whose lives and livelihoods have been imperiled to a disproportionate degree.

We are grateful that the Board of Directors, as the governing body of the county's largest transportation provider, has repeatedly invoked Equity and a Just Recovery as important priorities for Los Angeles County in the months and years to come. However, we firmly believe that this rhetoric must be backed up with financial commitments and changes to pre-existing spending priorities if it is to have the material impact on the lives of Angelenos that we know it can.

Unfortunately, the proposed FY22 budget bears all too many hallmarks of the pre-pandemic "old normal" to suggest that Metro intends to be an active partner for Angelenos hoping to "Build Back Better." Restoring the old status quo would not only be insufficient, it would be a tone deaf response to the needs of Metro's riders, for many of whom the last 12 months have been the most difficult of their lives. Metro occupies a position of unique power to advance regional equity, but it cannot do so through passive, unambitious budgets or by questing after so-called "choice" riders.

It is past time for Metro to be visionary: Angelenos deserve nothing less than the world's best bus network, right here in Los Angeles. It is only through this vision that Angelenos will choose to Join The Movement onto transit in significant numbers.

As representatives of a broad coalition of transit advocacy groups, community leaders, policy analysts, and members of the riding public, we are hopeful that the Board of Directors will give serious consideration to the points discussed below and act to address our concerns in this year's budget.

1. Expand bus service to meet existing needs.

Metro says that without federal support, "restoring transit services to pre-pandemic levels would not be possible." We do not accept this to be true. In fact, Metro had sufficient funding from sales tax receipts to restore bus service during the FY21 budget year, but declined to do so despite multiple direct orders from the Board of Directors.

It is troubling to hear Metro falsely suggest that federal aid is required to return to the pre-COVID baseline, especially given the poor service quality that was widespread before the pandemic began. Bus service has become so degraded over the last 20 years that Metro would have to provide 8.6 million service hours in FY22 to serve the same number of miles that its fleet served in 2000. That is 1.5 million service hours more than are budgeted in FY22. An hour of bus service simply is not what it used to be.

We believe the highest priority for Metro in the upcoming budget year needs to be building trust with existing transit riders and improving the quality of bus service on city streets. That means Metro should use federal stimulus money to begin the first true expansion of bus service since the end of the federal consent decree. Restoring the previous baseline is simply not good enough for our bus riders.

2. Accelerate and prioritize bus capital improvements:

Metro's bus network is caught in a vicious cycle. As riders depart due to the slow, unreliable service the agency provides, they frequently begin driving alone, contributing to traffic that makes buses slower and less reliable. Metro alone can break this cycle, but the proposed FY22 budget fails to address bus speeds.

Metro has identified \$1 billion in key capital projects (like bus only lanes and all-door boarding) that would help resuscitate bus speeds. Despite that, Metro proposes to spend just \$8.2 million on these projects in FY22. At this rate, it would take more than a century to implement NextGen's speed improvements.

Over the past few years, Metro's Transportation Infrastructure Development (TID) budget has grown exponentially, while allocations for the bus network have remained flat. We would like to see bus capital improvements funded as part of the TID program and added to Metro's short and long term plan documents. Metro should plan specific bus capital spending projects and aggressively pursue federal grants and loans to implement them as quickly as possible.

3. Replace armed police with unarmed Metro personnel and social workers.

Metro's policing contract has proven to have dramatic shortcomings. Security costs on board the system have more than doubled in the last 8 years, driven in part by more than \$100 million in cost overruns that were incurred without Board approval. Add to this that Metro has remained reliant on the presence of armed police officers on buses and trains, and it is clear that Metro has fallen considerably behind in reimagining public safety for transit riders.

We are tentatively encouraged by the convening of Metro's Public Safety Advisory Committee, however, we remain concerned about the continuing conflation by Metro of rider safety and security concerns with the need to keep police on transit. Riders want and deserve a safe riding experience, but we know that armed police are not well equipped to keep all riders safe. Black, brown and unhoused

riders on transit are exposed to discriminatory enforcement, trauma, incarceration, or worse with the continued presence of police on buses and trains.

Consequently, we are not content for Metro to wait until the end of the current bloated policing contract to start making changes. Metro should act immediately to increase its spending on social workers and unarmed Metro employees working as attendants inside stations and on buses.

4. Commit to fare free bus service through FY22.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro has not been collecting fares on board its buses. Although this change was enacted primarily for health reasons, it also benefited Metro's predominantly low income bus riders. As Los Angeles begins its economic recovery, Metro should commit to helping bus riders not to fall further behind by keeping buses free throughout FY22.

We believe that the positive impact to bus riders in keeping the bus system free throughout the upcoming year far outweighs the revenue loss that will be experienced by the agency, where ridership and fare collection are already down. Metro has budgeted for \$73 million in fares for FY22, which is less than \$.01 of every dollar that the agency expects to receive. With \$769 Million in budgeted but yet-to-be expended Federal CRRSA Act Resources, and at least \$1 Billion in operations-eligible funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Metro has the moral obligation to use these pandemic recovery funds to help those who need bus and rail service the most--low-income families and essential workers.

Metro needs to build trust with transit riders. For far too long, the agency has been letting down its constituents with poor service quality and repeated failures to show that it understands what life in this city is like for them. Metro can begin to establish that it is willing to put the needs of bus riders first by committing to keep buses fare free in FY22.

We stand in solidarity with the Bus Riders Union, SAJE, ACT-LA and others in no means testing and fare free transit for all.

5. Prioritize Equity Focused Communities in the expenditure of federal stimulus money.

In March 2018, Metro adopted the Equity Platform, and, in June 2019, the agency adopted a definition of Equity Focused Communities. However, we have yet to see these tools result in the prioritization of meaningful resources for these communities. Equity cannot wait - and it cannot be successful unless it is used by Metro to steer funding.

It is long overdue for Metro to target resources for our high need communities. We would hope Metro would make use of the close to \$2 Billion dollars that it will receive in federal funding for COVID relief to accelerate projects in Equity Focused Communities. In particular, funds should be used to improve bus stops, increase service, and make the riding environment more accessible.

6. End support and planning for freeway widening projects.

In FY22, over half of the budget for highway spending is allocated to the study or construction of freeway widening projects. It is unfathomable that with all we now know about climate change, with the increasingly dire projections of the Environmental Protection Agency, and with air quality continuing to worsen, that Metro could still be promoting freeway widenings as an acceptable course of action for our region.

Metro has a responsibility to the communities it oversees to put a halt to all plans for freeway expansion. These air-choking projects cut against the agency’s mandate to improve public transportation and achieve Los Angeles’s climate goals. Any funding designated for freeway expansions should be redirected to transit and active transportation in Metro’s Equity Focused Communities.

If this Board and Metro are truly committed to addressing greenhouse gas emissions caused by single-passenger vehicles, freeway expansion or widening should not be funded. In addition, Metro has budgeted for Interstate 710 North and/or “early action” projects when Caltrans has announced the project will not be moving forward.

7. Allocate resources to ensure greater procedural equity in FY23 budget-making.

Prior to the release of the FY22 budget draft, Investing in Place [submitted a letter to Metro](#) requesting that the agency introduce procedural equity into the budget-making process. Procedural equity includes supporting the ability of groups most affected by Metro initiatives to engage with decision makers and to impact the decision making process.

As Metro deemed it too late in the process to implement several of our requests, we would like to reiterate their importance for the FY23 budget year. This is an opportune time to develop a process for FY23 budget and to work with communities to create a more inclusive timeline and strategy for next year’s budget process.

For follow up on this letter, please contact Jessica Meaney at jessica@investinginplace.org.

Sincerely,

Organizations:

ACLU, Southern California, Clarissa Woo Hermosillo

ActiveSGV, David Diaz

ACT-LA, Laura Raymond

Beverly-Vermont Community Land Trust, Kasey Ventura

Bus Riders Union/Labor Community Strategy Center, Channing Martinez

Calif - Communities Actively Living Independent and Free, Cynde Soto

California Walks, Caro Jauregui

Climate Resolve, Bryn Lindblad

Community Nature Connection, Marissa Llanes
Compiler LA, Vyki Englert
Community Power Collective, Carla de Paz
Day One, Christy Zamani
Democratic Socialists of America, Los Angeles Chapter, Olga Lexell
East Valley Indivisibles, Suju Vijayan
Food and Water Watch, Jasmin Vargas
Happy City Coalition, Alex Contreras
Inclusive Action for the City, Rudy Espinoza
Independent Living Center of Southern California, Natalie Schleifstein
Institute for Transportation and Development Policy,Carolynn Johnson
Investing in Place, Jessica Meaney
Jobs to Move America, Hector Huezo
KIWA Workers for Justice, Alexandra Suh
LA Forward, David Levitus
LA River Communities for Environmental Equity, Christine Louis Mills
Long Beach Environmental Alliance, Sokha Ny & John Kindred
Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, Kevin Shin
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, Tori Kjer
Los Angeles Sunshine Coalition, Adrian Riskin
Los Angeles Walks, John Yi
Maternal and Child Health Access, Lynn Kersey
Move LA, Eli Lipmen
Nature for All, Belen Bernal
Natural Resources Defense Council, Carter Rubin
Pacoima Beautiful, Veronica Padilla-Campos
Parent power network, Alma Solano
revolucion de padres, Ana Garcia
Parent Power Network/Parent Revolution, Mehul Patel
People for Mobility Justice, Maryann Aguirre
Prevention Institute, Manal Aboelata
Public Counsel, Doug Smith
Safe Routes Partnership, Jonathan Matz
SEACA, Southeast Asian Community Alliance, Sissy Trinh
Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SCRS-IL), Hector Ochoa
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE), Maria Patiño Gutierrez
Streets for All, Michael Schneider
Social Eco Education (SEE-LA), Martha Camacho-Rodriguez
Thai CDC, Chancee Martorell
The River Project, Melanie Winter
Transit Coalition, Bart Reed

Thrivance Group, Destiny Thomas
Transit Center, Jessica Cruz
Toberman Neighborhood Center, Darlene Kiyari
Venice Community Housing, Becky Denison
Willowbrook Inclusion Network (WIN), Reginald Johnson
WORKS - Women Organizing Resources Knowledge and Services, Channa Grace

Individuals:

Aaron Stein-Chester, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Aaron Sugiyama, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Adam Conover, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Adam Romney, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Aimee Mingus, Long Beach
Alejandro Caro, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Alex Shannon, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Alexander Mullenix, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Alexander Poulton, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Alexander Sherman, West Hollywood
Alexandra Roy, Pasadena
Alexis Lantz, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Alfonso Directo, Jr., Los Angeles, Council District 5
Allan McLeod, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Allie Gjesdahl, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Alyce de Carteret, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Amanda Begley, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Amelie Cherlin, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Andres Gonzalez, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Andrew Beale, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Andrew Bleitch, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Andrew Bruntel, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Andrew Jarnagin, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Andy Freeland, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Angelica Arnold, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Anne Tobin, Santa Monica
Antara Murshed
Anthony Alexander, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Anthony Dixon, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Armando Tapia, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Arturo Gomez, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Aryeh Cohen Los Angeles, Council District 13

Ashley McClendon, Oak View
Austin Brown, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Azad Amir-Ghassemi, Los Angeles, Council District 8
Aziz Fellague Ariouat, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Ben Creed, Los Angeles, Council District 2
Ben Hatcher, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Brandon Huang, Newport Beach
Brian McCain, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Brooks Dunn, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Bryan Rucker, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Bryant Odega, Los Angeles, Council District 15
Caesar Nunez, Los Angeles, Council District 6
Caitlin Blake, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Caleb Mayer, Pasadena
Caleb Morgan, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Cameron Jones, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Candace Cable, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Carly Lopez, Long Beach
Carolyn Canterbury, Los Angeles, Council District 8
Carolyn Fasone, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Caryn Mandelbaum, Unincorporated Los Angeles County, Second District
Charissa Morningstar, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Charles Hankins, Los Angeles, Council District 2
Charles Morris Los Angeles, Council District 4
Chase Engelhardt, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Cherish Campos, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Chloe Pascual, Long Beach
Chris Schaper, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Christal Cody, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Christina Dunbar-Hester, Long Beach
Christopher Laubacher, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Colin Bogart, Pasadena
Connor Finney, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Corey Arterian, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Craig Smith, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Cyndi Otteson, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Dan Neilan, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Daniel Chun, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Daniel Melling, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Daniel Saunders, South Pasadena
Daniel White, Los Angeles, Council District 11

Danielle Singer, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Danny Cohen, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Daria Nishchenko, Los Angeles, Council District 4
David Choi, Los Angeles, Council District 4
David Lopez, Los Angeles, Council District 2
David Roachford, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Deanna Day, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Deborah Murphy, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Derek Holzauer, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Diana Bradbury, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Diana Chang, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Domenic Kelly, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Dorothy Wong, Altadena
Dorji Babak, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Dustin Bennett, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Dwayne Okpaise, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Edwin Sun, Monterey Park
Elizabeth Huff, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Elizabeth Harmon, Culver City
Elizabeth Medrano, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Elizabeth Owen, San Francisco
Elizabeth Thompson, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Emily Han, Los Angeles, Council District 9
Emily McMillan, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Emily Sedlacek, West Hollywood, Council District 5
Emma Suchard, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Eric James, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Eric Lawler, Los Angeles, Council District 8
Eric Leman, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Eric Schwartz, Los Angeles, Del Rey
Erik Abriss, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Erik Felix, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Erin Mauffray, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Esther Welland, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Euthymios Logothetis, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Evan Bruetsch, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Felipe Escobar, Glendale
Gary Doran, Pasadena
George Karam, Los Angeles, Council District 12
Gillian Singletary, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Graham Jenkins, Gardena

Grant Blakeman, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Gregory Crowder, Downey
Griffin Rowell, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Hannah Gibson, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Hannah Kreiswirth, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Hilda Rodriguez-Guzman, Los Angeles, Council District 9
Hollie Kamphues, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Ian C, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Ian Rose, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Iñaki Gorbeña Talavera, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Jacklyn Valenzuela, Winnetka, Council District 3
Jackson Baugh, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Jacob Wasserman, Los Angeles, Council District 4
James Groleau, Long Beach
James Rogers, Inglewood
James Saucedo, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Jamie Patterson, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Jason Damas, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Jayme Rosenquist, Calabasas
Jay Williams, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Jeff McLaughlin, El Segundo
Jen Wang, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Jeremy Bowditch, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Jeremy Marks, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Jessi Knippel, Pasadena
Jessica O'Malley, Sherman Oaks Council District 4
Jody Liu, Los Angeles Council District 13
Joel Mandelkorn, Los Angeles Council District 11
John Buckley, Los Angeles, Council District 4
John Delshadi, Culver City
John Perry, Pasadena
Jonathan Castillo, Downey
Jonathan Hagar, Glendale
Jonathan Peltz, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Jonathan Rincon, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Jorge Madrid, East Los Angeles
Josh Androsky, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Josh Cretella, Los Angeles
Joshua Smith, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Juan Matute, Santa Monica
Julia Griffin, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Julia Griswold, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Julia Pak, La Crescenta
Julian Hicks, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Junue Millan, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Katherine Eiler, Sierra Madre
Katherine Morgan, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Kaycee Felton-Lui, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Kelly Pangell, Pasadena
Kelsey McRiley, Glendora
Kelsey Stefanson, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Ken Pisani, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Kendall Mayhew, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Kenny Uong, Glendale
Kevin Dieterle, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Kevin Takahashi, Los Angeles, Council District 12
Kim Stewart, Long Beach
Kris Miranda, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Kriseira Lamas, Los Angeles
Krystle Yu, Arcadia
Kyle Gregory, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Lara Nielsen, Los Angeles
Lauren Harper, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Lena Redford, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Leslie Forehand, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Liona Avery, Gardena
Lisa Holtke, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Logan Rapp, Los Angeles, Council District 2
Lorenzo Mutia, Los Angeles, Council District 6
Lupita Huerta, El Monte
Lyndsey Nolan, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Maddie Dugan, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Madelaine Frezza, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Madeline Brozen, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Maia Armaleo, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Manar Jarban, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Mandee Johnson, Los Angeles Council District 11
Marcel Flores, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Marcus Steidler, Los Angeles Council District 14
Mario Blanco, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Mark Azali, Los Angeles, Council District 3
Mark Edwards, West Hollywood

Mark Harrison, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Mark Larson
Mark Masaoka, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Martha Camacho-Rodriguez, Downey
Martin Minjarez, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Matt Crowley, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Matthew Kirk, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Matthew Tinoco, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Matthew Wehner, Redondo Beach
Max Himelhoch, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Megan Riley, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Mehmet Berker, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Melissa Lai, Temple City
Michael Konik, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Michael Hagerty, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Michael Lopez, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Michael MacDonald, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Michael Yannow, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Milo Smolin, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Nancy Leon, Glendale
Naomi Martell, Los Angeles
Nataly Rios, West Hollywood
Nenetzin Rodriguez, Alhambra
Niall Huffman, Pasadena
Nick Andert, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Nicolas Burrier, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Nicolas Gonzalez, Los Angeles, Council District 15
Noah Poole, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Omar Alcover, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Oscar Vazquez, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Patricia Pipkin, Altadena
Perias Pillay, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Peter Nelson, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Rachel Lu, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Richard Rowe, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Rogelio Pardo, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Roger Carnow, Los Angeles, Council District 2
Roland Pacheco, Whittier
Rusteen Honardoost, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Ryan Coelho, Los Angeles, Council District 8
Ryan Egan, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Ryan Hitchcock, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Ryan McCabe, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Ryan O'Toole, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Sam Range, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Sam Weinberg, Los Angeles, Council District 3
Sara Daleiden, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Sara Steffan, Los Angeles, Council District
Sarah Ginsburg, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Sarah Goldstein, Los Angeles Council District 4
Sarah Lancaster, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Sarah Mozal, Los Angeles Council District 13
Sarah Syed, Pasadena
Sasha Kassab, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Scott Frazier, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Sean McSweeney, Los Angeles, Council District 2
Shayne Stronks, Whittier
Sherin Bennett, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Siona van Dijk, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Sophia Benoit, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Sophie Strauss, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Stephen Jones, Culver City
Steven Massey, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Taylor Fife, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Thurmon Green, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Tieira Ryder, Los Angeles, Council District 11
Till Stegers, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Tom Bellino, Los Angeles, Council District 1
Tommy Atlee, Los Angeles, Council District 4
Tori Schachne, Los Angeles Council District 4
Uri Niv, Los Angeles, Council District 2
Vanessa Carter, Los Angeles, Council District 10
Wade Detamore, Los Angeles Council District 2
Will Beyer, Los Angeles, Council District 13
Will Witwer, Glendale
Yves Nuno, Los Angeles, Council District 14
Zachary Elgart, Los Angeles, Council District 5
Zachary Lizer, Pasadena
Zack Frederick, Los Angeles Council District 4
Zennon Ulyate-Crow, Topanga
Zirwat Chowdhury, Culver City