



July 31, 2020

Dr. Joshua Schank
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Chair, COVID-19 Recovery Task Force
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

SUBJECT: Metro's COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Progress Report - COMMENTS

Dear Dr. Schank,

On behalf of the Valley Industry & Commerce Association (VICA), we are pleased to submit this comment letter on the latest Progress Report of the Metro COVID-19 Recovery Task Force. While we commend the work by Metro to continue its operations and maintain service access to riders, we have concerns with some of the recommendations by the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force.

For the most part, VICA appreciates the efforts and ideas included in the latest Progress Report. VICA understands that equity is an important consideration for any plan that Metro adopts in order to bring people back to the transit system.

In the San Fernando Valley, many workers and families rely on Metro's service to get to work and for essential needs, especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, despite the San Fernando Valley containing 15 percent of the County's population, it is served by only two Metro Rail stations out of the over 100 stations in the Metro system. With equity placed at the forefront for VICA and the San Fernando Valley, we have strong concerns with Recommendation 17: Reimagining Projects.

VICA is strongly opposed to any "reimagining" or "reexamining" of capital projects that would result in delaying capital projects in the San Fernando Valley. We are particularly concerned that any shifting of resources or changes to planning might negatively impact progress on the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor light rail project (ESFVTC) and phase one of the Orange Line improvements project (Orange Line).

The support of Valley voters was critical to the passage of Measure M in 2016 and VICA was proud to be a strong advocate of the initiative. VICA sold Measure M to San Fernando Valley voters with the premise that the ESFVTC and the Orange Line would be at the head of the Measure M schedule, which would start to correct the lack of investment in rapid transit projects by the Metro Board over the past decades.

VICA has strongly supported the ESFVTC because it will serve communities of color and transit-dependent populations. VICA and the coalition that was built in the Valley to support Measure M made the construction of the ESFVTC at the front of the Expenditure Plan schedule a condition of that support.

VICA, of course, understands that the COVID-19 crisis means that not everything that is being worked on can continue full speed ahead at this time given the unprecedented reduction in Metro's revenues. However, VICA is strongly opposed to using the crisis to allow any project to jump the queue, especially given the timeline in the Expenditure Plan adopted as part of Measure M.

VICA would see pushing other projects, which are neither under construction nor scheduled to be opened in the Expenditure Plan before 2028, ahead of the ESFVTC and the Orange Line as a betrayal of promises made to all voters in Los Angeles County, but especially in the San Fernando Valley. Further, significant expenditure of planning resources on such projects will only serve to delay the construction of the ESFVTC and other Valley projects. This is both inequitable and unacceptable.

VICA strongly urges Metro's COVID-19 Recovery Plan to reaffirm the integrity of the queue as adopted by the voters in 2016.

Sincerely,



Brad Rosenheim
VICA Chair



Stuart Waldman
VICA President