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January 26, 2021

Mr. Phil Washington  
Chief Executive Officer, LA Metro  
1 Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Washington,

I was very encouraged to see the formation of Metro's Recovery Task Force in April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and pleased to see the quick work, comprehensive analysis, and recommendations in the Task Force's draft final report. It is my hope that the implementation of the report's recommendations help us achieve a more robust recovery and a more equitable Los Angeles.

In the last month, Los Angeles County has seen the number of COVID-19 cases increase by more than 400,000 – a number it took 10 months to reach starting in March of last year. One in five Angelenos are testing positive for coronavirus, and a recent report from Los Angeles County Health Services estimates that one in three Angelenos has been infected with Covid-19. This week the Countywide number of cases surpassed 1 million since the beginning of the pandemic and a Los Angeles resident is dying from COVID-19 every eight seconds.

These figures are staggering and require us to do more to stem the surge of infections. As the Task Force pointed out, the pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color. Our low-income and minority communities, many of whom are frontline and essential workers, continue to suffer the human and economic brunt of the health crisis. These residents, many of whom are transit-dependent, have returned to using Metro buses and trains in order to get to and from work. Many are also our senior residents who make up a significant share of Metro's ridership, and they are extraordinarily susceptible to COVID-19.

Equally important, COVID-19 has had a major impact on transit workers. These are the frontline workers who have kept Los Angeles running, and it is incumbent upon us to keep them safe by all means necessary. The Recovery Taskforce's report and recommendations are a good start, but Los Angeles is in a different place than we were in April 2020, when this work began. Education, information, and our deferral to voluntary compliance with health orders are no longer sufficient.



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Therefore, I would like to recommend the following:

1. In addition to distributing masks and allowing for mask vending, wearing a mask on public transit should be mandatory. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's "*Safer at Home*" Executive Order requires the "wearing [of] a cloth face-covering whenever there is or can be contact with others who are non-household members in both public and private places." This would be consistent with similar recommendations and actions taken by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, County Department of Public Health, and President Biden's Jan. 21 Executive Order on Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel which mandates the use of masks on intercity bus services, and all forms of public transportation as defined in section 5302 of title 49 of United States Code, and they should be enforced throughout the system.
2. Increased ventilation can be achieved by bus operators opening windows on vehicles and adopting enhanced innovative cleaning procedures is a welcome improvement. But, I would encourage Metro to also consider ultraviolet lighting UVC solutions to assist with disinfection in real-time. According to the US Food and Drug Administration, UVC radiation is a known disinfectant for air, water, and nonporous surfaces, and has effectively been used for decades to reduce the spread of bacteria, such as tuberculosis. UVC radiation has been shown to destroy the outer protein coating of the SARS-Coronavirus, ultimately leading to the inactivation of the virus.

Additionally, air cleaners and HVAC filters which are designed to filter pollutants or contaminants out of the air can help reduce airborne particles containing viruses. On its own, air cleaning or filtration is not enough to protect people from exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19, but when used alongside other practices recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, filtration can be part of a plan to reduce the potential for airborne transmission of the virus.

Los Angeles is experiencing an unprecedented health and economic crisis that is going to require a thoughtful, creative, concerted approach to weather. But the crisis has also provided policymakers with an opportunity to reimagine a Los Angeles that is safer, cleaner, and more equitable. I would like to request that Metro move forward with the recommendations included in the Recovery Task Force's report, but also view it as a springboard for innovative solutions that can make Los Angeles a better place to live, work and be in the long-run.

Thank you for your consideration and please don't hesitate to contact Greg Martayan, my Director of Public Safety, if you have any questions: [gregory.martayan@lacity.org](mailto:gregory.martayan@lacity.org)

Sincerely,



Cc: Metro Board of Directors