



# North Los Angeles County Transportation Coalition

Date: April 13, 2020

To: Governing Board Members of the North Los Angeles County Transportation Coalition (NCTC) JPA

From: Arthur V. Sohikian, Executive Director

**Subject: NCTC Executive Director Update Report**

In lieu of the **April 20, 2020 NCTC Governing Board meeting cancellation**, NCTC staff provides the following update on current transportation items of interest to North Los Angeles County.

## **Federal Funds On The Way. CA Legislature Reconvening in June**

The recent Federal CARES Act included funding for the nations transit providers for the loss of revenue. On April 3, 2020, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the release of funds through FY2020 formula allocations with Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) receiving \$47.85 million and Santa Clarita Transit receiving \$20.86 million. CA transit agencies received \$3.74 billion and Metro reports roughly \$810M in direct payment for the loss of fare box revenue and sales tax revenue.

Governor Newsom and CA Legislative Leadership are discussing reconvening the Legislative Session to pass the State budget by the June 15 state constitutional deadline. The budget should include the traditional “May Revise” numbers that are likely to reflect a “keep the CA government working budget.” The Governor and Legislature are discussing a virus response package which should include infrastructure spending.

The following is an April 3 excerpt from Metro CEO Phil Washington communication to the Metro Board:

*“Since Congress adopted and the President signed into law H.R. 748 - the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act last week – the House and Senate have continued discussing the need for additional federal legislation to address the COVID- 19 pandemic. Earlier this week, Speaker Nancy Pelosi began to discuss the idea of advancing a major infrastructure package as a part of the next COVID-19 stimulus bill. Specifically, Speaker Pelosi and House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio laid out a plan to advance their Moving Forward Framework for the People initiative - which includes a comprehensive strategy for investing in infrastructure. This proposal includes a mobility element, along with funding for broadband, community health centers and water infrastructure. Metro’s advocacy team is fully engaged with members of the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation in the event an infrastructure plan advances in either the House or Senate. Our agency is well positioned in this regard in that the Board has already approved a set of policy proposals outlined in the Rebuilding America program.” Metro CEO Washington.*

NCTC will continue working with our funding partners for timely delivery of North LA County projects.

## **Measure R 10-year Amendment Update**

Metro is considering changes to Measure R, which may impact currently planned projects, and is seeking input from key stakeholders to help inform this process. The potential changes involve a transfer of funds designated for highways to transit uses, or vice versa, and the creation of new projects or adding funds to existing projects. The Metro Board is scheduled to hear the Measure R Amendment in June/July 2020.

NCTC will continue to advocate that funds in subregion stay in subregion (reflected in Draft Amendment) and monitor the flexibility to transfer between transit and highway funds (vice versa).

The Draft Metro Measure R Amendment follows:

## Section 18.0 TRANSFERRING NET REVENUES BETWEEN SUBFUNDS

a. Net Revenues not to exceed \$[A] shall be transferred from the Highway Capital Subfund to the Transit Capital Subfund no later than January 2030 for use on eligible Transit Capital Projects within the South Bay subregion. The amount of Net Revenues for the "Interstate 405, I-110, I- 105, and SR-91 Ramp and Interchange Improvements (South Bay)" project on line 33 in Attachment A is reduced from \$906,000,000 to \$[B]. The "[South Bay Transit Investments]" project is added to the Transit Capital Projects as shown in Amended Attachment A.

b. Any surplus Net Revenues under Section 7(d)(4) may be transferred from the Transit Capital Subfund to the Highway Capital Subfund no later than January 2030 for one or more Highway Projects within the same subregion as the completed Transit Project.

c. Any surplus Net Revenues under Section 7(e)(4) may be transferred from the Highway Capital Subfund to the Transit Capital Subfund no later than January 2030 for one or more Transit Projects within the same subregion as the completed Highway Project.

### **Measure M Multi-Year Subregional Program (MSP) and Measure M Equity Funds Update**

The NCTC approved the Measure M MSP Annual Update on January 24, 2020. The Metro Board is tentatively scheduled to vote on the NCTC Annual MSP Update at the Metro Board of Directors meeting on April 23, 2020. Measure M Equity Funds meeting with NCTC members and Metro CEO/staff is scheduled for June 22, 2020.

### **Antelope Valley Line Capital and Service Improvement SB1 Grant Update**

Metro and Metrolink jointly submitted the Antelope Valley Line (AVL) Capital and Service Improvements SB1 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) grant request for \$90.05M for the four capital projects that are matched with \$116.35M in NCTC funds. The total for the four AVL capital projects is \$210.85M. The grant request also seeks \$10M for the Zero Emissions Multiple Unit Pilot Program. The NCTC helped gather 43 letters of support that were included in the application. Grant awards could be included in larger CA virus response.

### **SCAG Connect SoCal**

SCAG, as the lead agency, has prepared a Proposed Final PEIR for Connect SoCal in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Proposed Final PEIR is available for review at:

<https://www.connectsocial.org/Pages/Connect-SoCal-Final-Plan.aspx>.

According to SCAG, a Regional Council meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2020 to consider certification of the Proposed Final PEIR and adoption of the Proposed Final Connect SoCal. The NCTC will continue to monitor the Connect SoCal approval process to ensure member jurisdiction projects are included in the final plan.

### **CA High Speed Rail – Bakersfield to Palmdale Project Section DEIR Update**

The Bakersfield to Palmdale Project Section DEIR comment period began on February 28, 2020.

HSR extended the DEIR comment period to **April 28**. A Bakersfield to Palmdale section DEIR virtual Public Hearing will be held on April 23 from 3-8pm.

The DEIR public hearing will include a webcast and moderated call-in number for the public to submit oral comments. Comments provided will be recorded by an official court reporter. Info can be found at the CA HSR website at: [https://www.hsr.ca.gov/programs/environmental/eis\\_eir/draft\\_bakersfield\\_palmdale.aspx](https://www.hsr.ca.gov/programs/environmental/eis_eir/draft_bakersfield_palmdale.aspx)

The NCTC has a support position on the Bakersfield to Palmdale Project Section that can be found at: <https://northcountytransportationcoalition.org/nctchsr-support-letters> Currently, Lancaster and Palmdale are assessing the DEIR to provide comment prior to the April 28 deadline. NCTC will continue working on DEIR comments with member jurisdictions, Metrolink and Metro.

### **NCTC Funding Snapshot and Analysis**

At the October 21, 2019 NCTC JPA Board of Directors meeting, staff was directed to prepare a funding analysis of the transportation funds received by NCTC member jurisdictions from federal, state, and local sources with a Fund Listing and Eligibility Chart. The NCTC Funding Analysis was scheduled for the April 20 Board meeting and depicts the transportation funds allocated to the NCTC region via formula and discretionary grants included in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) FY2019-24. Staff will continue working on the Funding Analysis report for presentation to the July 20, 1pm NCTC Board meeting at AVTA.

### **NCTC FY2018/19 Audit Complete – Clean Opinion**

A state mandated NCTC JPA audit for FY2018/19 was conducted in conjunction with the Department of Auditor-Controller, County of Los Angeles who contracted with independent firm Simpson & Simpson CPAs. The completed audit found no internal control deficiencies or exceptions noted and the NCTC was issued a clean opinion. The complete audit report will be distributed and available on the website.

### **NCTC FY2020/21 Budget Update**

As of March 31, 2020, the NCTC Ending Cash Balance is \$106,892.87 trending toward a fiscal year-end June 30, 2020 surplus. NCTC staff is formulating the FY2020/21 Budget using the revenue and expense framework from the current fiscal year.

### **NCTC Transportation Partners**

Our transportation partners at Metro, Caltrans and Metrolink continue planning, construction and operation during the Safer At Home CA and LA County orders.

**Metrolink** provided the following update to NCTC on April 13, 2020:

#### **COVID-19 Update**

Safety is foundational at Metrolink. During the COVID-19 public health pandemic, Metrolink is committed to providing lifeline services for essential service employees that rely on Metrolink to get to work. Due to the recommendations of federal, state and local health officials to shelter in place at home, Metrolink ridership declined more than 80 percent systemwide. As a result of the declines in ridership, Metrolink began a temporary service reduction effective March 26, 2020. Metrolink developed this temporary schedule to ensure essential service during peak times and maintain as many connections as possible.

Metrolink continues to maintain the cleanliness and social distancing that is required to combat the spread of the virus. That includes hand sanitizers on all trains and additional porters to provide touchpoint cleaning throughout the day such as doors, restrooms, head and armrests, handrails, tables and trash areas. Metrolink has temporarily postponed events in response to the health pandemic. To ensure timely communication to passengers, Metrolink will continue to update Metrolinktrains.com with the latest information. For more information on schedule changes, please text “ML19” to “333777” to receive a link to the Metrolink website. We appreciate the support of our local partners in ensuring public transit operators have the resources they need to provide critical services.

#### **Federal COVID-19 Relief Legislation – the CARES Act**

On March 27, the President signed H.R 748 – the CARES Act – into law, a \$2 trillion stimulus package providing relief to Americans and across broad sectors of the economy. In addition to direct cash disbursements to most Americans in amounts of \$1200 per adult, the Act allocates \$25 billion nationally for public transit and transportation, apportioned thru the existing FTA formula programs for urbanized areas, rural areas, State-of-Good-Repair, and Growing/High Density States. California will receive approximately \$3.75 billion of these funds; Metrolink is presently determining the estimated amounts it generates and will receive from these formula apportionments through a sub allocation process initiated by SCAG and passed through the member agencies to Metrolink. This will proceed on an expedited basis to transmit the funding as quickly as possible.

### State Relief Following the Federal CARES Act

The state legislature is in recess until May 4 and possibly longer, but the state is expected to pass a budget by the June 15 Constitutional deadline, however the economic shutdown from the COVID-19 crisis is expected to significantly reduce state revenues. Recently the state senate has created a Senate Special Budget Subcommittee on COVID-19 Response that will examine the responses the state may take to address the COVID crisis when the legislature resumes session. The subcommittee will hold its first hearing on Thursday, April 15, 2020 at 2 PM which is expected to be informational in nature with no votes to be taken.

The California Transit Association is developing proposals for the state legislature to consider augmenting CARES Act provisions to help public transportation. CTA estimates transit agencies will experience \$2 billion or more of lost revenue and increased operating expenses due to the crisis in the coming year. Among the proposals CTA is developing are statutory changes to allow Low Carbon Transit Operations Program dollars to be used for all operating expenses associated with COVID-19 relief, and STA-State of Good Repair dollars to support all capital expenses associated with COVID-19 relief, instead of the more limited use of these funds presently provided in statute. Other proposals considered include temporary suspension of financial penalties associated with Transportation Development Act's requirement that transit agencies obtain certain fixed percentages of their operating budgets from passenger fares; and postponing audits of TDA and SB 1 reporting requirements. These efforts are ongoing and will likely change and seek to augment the relief provided in the federal legislation once these impacts are more accurately assessed.

### Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) Capital Program

Metrolink is working to deliver critical infrastructure projects that improve passenger rail service across Southern California. On March 25, 2020, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved the allocation of \$19,766,000 in funding previously awarded to Metrolink in 2018 under the state's Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP). The funding will be used for early improvements related to Link Union Station – a critical capital project that delivers regionally significant benefits. This project will modernize tracks and signals in the throat segment leading into Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS). The associated improvements will increase rail service capacity and throughput.

In addition to the projects funded by the state's 2018 TIRCP award, Metrolink was recently awarded \$10.7 million from the United States Department of Transportation Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program to improve rail safety in the corridor between Burbank and Los Angeles Union Station. The project will improve safety features and crossings at the Burbank Airport – South, Burbank Downtown and Glendale Stations and at the Burbank Junction. Improvements can support increased passenger train speeds from 35 MPH to 45 MPH through the corridor, which is needed support future service goals along Metrolink's Antelope Valley Line.

### Tier 4 Locomotives

On March 25, 2020, Metrolink celebrated a milestone in accelerating a zero-emissions future. Metrolink decommissioned the last Tier 0 locomotive from service and replaced it with a Tier 4 clean diesel locomotive. Tier 4 locomotives are compliant with the last United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emissions standards and reduces particulate and nitrogen oxide emissions by up-to 85 percent compared to Tier 0 locomotives. Tier 4 locomotives are the cleanest diesel locomotives in the nation, providing environmental benefits for the region. Metrolink is on schedule to complete the deployment of 40 Tier 4 locomotives this summer, each new locomotive replaces an older locomotive.

### NCTC Transit Service Providers

Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) <https://www.avta.com/>

Santa Clarita Transit <http://santaclaritatransit.com/>

**NCTC Southern California Transportation Partners Websites**

**Metro** <https://www.metro.net/>

**Caltrans District 7** <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-7>

**Metrolink** <https://metrolinktrains.com/>

**SCAG** <http://www.scag.ca.gov/Pages/default.aspx>