

**Board Report**

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**REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
JULY 22, 2021****Motion by:****DIRECTORS SOLIS, BUTTS, NAJARIAN, DUPONT-WALKER, AND SANDOVAL****Expanding Metro's Eat Shop Play Program to Support Economic Recovery and Restore Ridership**

Small businesses have been disproportionately impacted by the public health measures that were put in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 over the last year. Thousands of small businesses in California have closed either temporarily or permanently. Many small businesses that rely on in-person services to sustain themselves have low cash reserves and lack the online presence possessed by more sophisticated businesses, especially in disadvantaged communities of color. This is of particular concern in Los Angeles County where 93 percent of businesses have less than 20 employees.

With an \$8 billion annual budget, Metro has the resources to accelerate recovery within the small business community while pursuing the goal of restoring ridership. Metro already has existing programs that support businesses during construction of megaprojects. Programs such as "Eat Shop Play" can be expanded to support businesses through recovery and to encourage those businesses' visitors to take transit. Eat Shop Play can be extended to existing rail and high-quality transit corridors in communities that have been most impacted by the pandemic, which are also often communities with many transit-dependent households. Metro can explore strategies such as enhancing businesses' internet presence, developing walking maps that feature businesses and how to access them via transit, and launching social media and email marketing promotions which will activate station areas and encourage transit ridership. Low-income communities need targeted assistance as they continue to experience higher unemployment as a direct result of the pandemic relative to high-income communities. Expansion of Eat Shop Play will not only assist local businesses in hard-hit communities, but it will also rebuild Metro ridership by activating Metro station areas and attracting more riders.

**SUBJECT: EXPANDING METRO'S EAT SHOP PLAY PROGRAM TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RESTORE RIDERSHIP****RECOMMENDATION****APPROVE** Motion by Directors Solis, Butts, Najarian, Dupont-Walker, and Sandoval that the Board of

Directors direct the Chief Executive Officer or her designee to provide a report back in November 2021 that includes recommendations to expand the Eat Shop Play program to support small businesses in communities that have been most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report should consider the following:

- A. Focusing on small businesses located near existing major transit stops in communities who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Communities should be identified by referencing factors including, but not limited to, number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, economic impacts, household income, transit dependency, pollution burden, and race/ethnicity, and other resources such as redlining maps;
- B. Developing additional strategies to assist small businesses through recovery including, but not limited to, developing walking maps that showcase destinations near transit lines, creating promotional videos for businesses, and supporting businesses' online presence; and
- C. Potential funding sources such as American Rescue Plan Act funding.