



January 27, 2026

The Hon. Fernando Dutra  
Chair, LA Metro Board  
Office of Board Administration  
1 Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-3-1  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

## **RE: Statement on Metro Board Vote on the C/K Line Extension**

Dear Chair Dutra and Members of the LA Metro Board:

Representing nearly 2,000 members and volunteers, Indivisible South Bay LA, Inc., strongly condemns the LA Metro Board's decision to abandon the staff-recommended and Board-approved Right-of-Way (ROW) / Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) alignment for the C/K Line Extension. This decision was not only wrong on the merits, but also it was made through a process that was deeply troubling, highly irregular, and fundamentally unfair to the public.

For years, Metro staff, technical experts, and the Board itself treated the ROW Hybrid as the preferred alignment. That decision was formalized in May, 2024, when the Board voted to adopt the ROW Hybrid as the Locally Preferred Alternative.

Last Thursday, January 22, 2026, the Board was expected to certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) based on that selection.

Instead, Supervisor Holly Mitchell introduced a last-minute amendment less than a week before the scheduled vote. That amendment revived the Hawthorne Boulevard option, an alignment Metro staff had already characterized as higher-cost and higher-risk. The amendment did not go through the public committee process and was not vetted through the same transparent review as the ROW/LPA. It blindsided advocates, community members, and, by all appearances, Metro staff themselves.

Despite clear warnings from Metro staff, the Board voted unanimously in favor of the amendment. Staff stated that this change would add more than \$700 million in costs, delay the project by six or more years, and introduce significant risks that could jeopardize the project altogether.

The way the meeting was structured only compounded these concerns. The amendment was introduced without advance public notice, after many members of the public had already prepared or

delivered comments, limiting the public's ability to meaningfully respond. During the meeting, multiple Board members acknowledged that their positions had changed weeks earlier, yet no new public technical analysis, environmental findings, or cost information were presented to explain that shift.

Taken together, these facts create the appearance that key decisions may have been made before the public had a meaningful opportunity to weigh in, raising serious questions about when decisions were made, what information drove them, and whether public input meaningfully shaped the outcome.

Equally troubling was the Board's discussion of selling portions of the publicly owned rail ROW. Public rail corridors are rare and difficult to replace. Selling the ROW would limit future transit options, make it impossible to return to the lower-risk alignment if Hawthorne approvals fail, and significantly increase the likelihood that this project is lost altogether.

This vote was taken without any new technical studies, no new environmental findings, and no new cost estimates. Even after Metro staff warned the Board about the added costs, delays, and approval risks, those warnings were not disputed, yet the Board moved forward anyway.

The consequences are severe. By Metro's own analysis, this decision places the project on a far more precarious path and one that faces a larger funding gap, additional approvals, longer delays, and a greater risk of stalling or cancellation. The South Bay has waited decades for rail. This decision did not bring that goal closer. It pushed it further away.

That leaves basic questions unanswered:

- Why was a Board-approved alignment overturned at the last minute?
- Why was staff analysis set aside without new public evidence?
- Why were cost, delay, and approval risks acknowledged but accepted without dispute?
- What information or considerations drove this change?

Indivisible South Bay LA supports transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and meaningful public participation. What happened at this Metro Board meeting violated all three.

We call for:

- Immediate transparency from Metro Board members about how and when this decision was made
- A public presentation outlining the obstacles this change creates, the steps Metro plans to take to address them, and a realistic timeline for doing so
- A public review and comment process following that presentation
- A commitment that the Board will take public action before any irreversible steps are taken, including any sale or disposition of the publicly owned right-of-way or major scope changes

The Hon. Fernando Dutra and LA Metro Board Members  
January 27, 2026  
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- Accountability from Board leadership for overriding staff analysis without presenting new public evidence
- A renewed commitment to preserving publicly owned rail right-of-way
- Serious reform of Metro's governance structure so decisions of this magnitude cannot be hijacked at the last minute by political pressure

The LA South Bay deserves rail that is real, deliverable, and worthy of public trust. What happened here undermined all three.

Sincerely yours,

**Indivisible South Bay LA, Inc., Board of Directors**

Kenneth Johnson, President  
Constance Koehler, Secretary  
Linda Suomi, Treasurer  
Ellen Gorbunoff, Director  
Virginia Jenkins, Director  
Umesh Ketkar, Director  
Ruth Presslaff, Director



**January 27, 2026**

Los Angeles City Council  
Ad Hoc Committee on the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: Council File 15-0989-S47 – Community Concerns Regarding the Scope and Long-Term Effects of the Olympic and Paralympic Planning and Zoning Exemption Ordinance**

Honorable Councilmembers,

I am writing as President of the Arts District Community Council LA to express concerns regarding the scope and long-term implications of the proposed Olympic and Paralympic Planning and Zoning Exemption Ordinance.

The Arts District is a community shaped by adopted plans, overlays, historic resources, and long-standing land-use agreements. Residents and businesses here operate within a clearly defined planning framework and understand that deviations from that framework carry lasting consequences. For this reason, the breadth of the ordinance is concerning.

**Scope of the Exemption**

The ordinance relies on a state exemption intended to facilitate temporary Olympic-related facilities. However, the language of the ordinance extends beyond what is reasonably understood as temporary. It allows permanent projects to proceed under the same framework and permits projects initially approved as temporary to later seek permanent status.

From a community perspective, this creates uncertainty about what will remain in place after the Games conclude. Once infrastructure is installed—particularly large-scale structures—removal is the exception rather than the rule. The ordinance does not provide sufficient assurance that projects approved under a temporary framework will, in fact, be temporary.

**Digital Advertising and the Arts District**

These concerns are especially significant with respect to digital advertising and signage. The Arts District has long-standing prohibitions on digital signs and off-site advertising as part of its adopted planning



controls. These regulations exist to protect the area’s historic character, pedestrian environment, and mixed-use fabric. We are aware that many other Los Angeles communities share similar concerns, and we fully support their efforts to protect hard-won community planning regulations.

Digital billboards and similar advertising structures introduce lighting, visual clutter, and operational impacts that directly affect surrounding residential, historic, and creative uses. Allowing such installations under a temporary Olympic exemption, particularly where a pathway to permanence exists, would directly conflict with established Arts District regulations and community expectations.

In practical terms, this approach bypasses adopted sign controls and shifts long-term land-use decisions away from public review and into administrative processes after physical impacts are already in place.

### **Planning and Process Implications**

**All communities, including the Arts District, rely on predictability and transparency in planning.** The ordinance’s approach—approving broad categories of projects while deferring decisions about permanence—reverses that expectation. It places neighborhoods in the position of responding to changes rather than participating meaningfully in decisions before they occur.

This structure increases the risk that Olympic-related approvals will be used to justify permanent conditions that would not otherwise be supported through standard planning processes.

### **Requested Revisions**

**We ask the Committee and City Council to:**

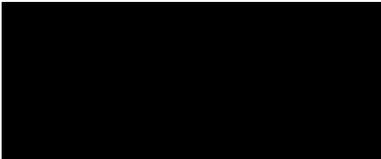
- **Amend the ordinance to apply only to projects that are demonstrably temporary and directly necessary for Olympic and Paralympic Games operations**, with clear removal and site restoration requirements.
- **Eliminate any provision that allows projects approved as temporary to later seek or obtain permanent entitlements**, whether through administrative action or future discretionary approvals.
- **Respect and preserve existing community plans and sign regulations**, including the Arts District’s prohibition on digital signage and off-site advertising, by limiting Olympic-related signage to on-site, temporary, non-commercial uses.
- **Ensure that Olympic-related approvals do not override adopted plans, overlays, or community-specific land-use protections** without full public review.



## Conclusion

Preparation for a temporary global event should not result in permanent changes to neighborhoods that have spent decades establishing clear planning rules. We urge the City Council to revise the ordinance accordingly.

Respectfully,



Laura Velkei  
President  
Arts District Community Council LA  
ADCCLA

## February 2026 RBM General Public Comments

**From:** Liam Walsh [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 25, 2026 10:29 PM  
**To:** Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>; Metro, CLine <metrocline@metro.net>  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) C/K Line Torrance Extension Follow-Up

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Dear Metro Board of Directors,

I was pretty disappointed and also confused by the outcome of last week's meeting about the C (now K) line extension to Torrance. I live in Redondo Beach and ultimately really want to see this project built. While I thought the staff recommended LPA made sense and responded to concerns, seeing that the vote has changed the alignment to Hawthorne Blvd, sure - let's just please get it built! However after listening to the meeting I came out with more questions than answers.

At one point one of the Directors made a comment to sum it up, saying that on one hand there was the community that wanted one way (Hawthorne Blvd), and on the other hand there were "activists" from across the county who wanted it the other way (Hybrid LPA). I am a renter in North Redondo Beach - do I count as part of the "community"? Or rather am I merely a young impressionable activist who doesn't know the true needs of the *real* community?

How are the needs of the community met? In last week's meeting the main discussion centered around the needs of property owners - whether homeowners backing up the right-of-way, or business owners on Hawthorne Blvd. I believe Metro has a responsibility not only to those who own property within earshot of a project, but more broadly to the general population of LA County, current and future transit riders, voters and taxpayers - to improve upon and deliver a world-class transit system. I am a voter. I am a transit rider. I pay taxes. How will my needs be met by delaying this project by at best 5 years, at worst forever? This more broad constituency may not find the time to attend meetings during 9-5 on weekdays. I couldn't make last week's meeting because I had work, though it seemed like everyone's mind was already made up so taking time off work to bring my "activist" talking points likely wouldn't have made any difference.

What I am not asking for is another decade or so of "community engagement," which seems to only exist to provide legal cover against potential lawsuits from property owners.

I sincerely want this project to happen, and acknowledge that no alignment is perfect. Now that the vote has been had and FEIR certified, I want to see it built expeditiously. What confused me was how this decision was made and with what information. During the discussion with Metro staff, at one point Chair Dutra began to approach some critical questions such as whether CalTrans would approve of a lateral encroachment to the 405, and timelines for FHA and NEPA reviews. There was a lot of uncertainty with this, which I understand is part of why staff had recommended the LPA.

Now that the board has voted against that recommendation, I really want to see that uncertainty cleared up over the next month or so. This project is too important to live in limbo for years. When people ask why projects like this take decades to just get off the drawing board, this is the kind of dilemma that worries me as a perfect example of further delay. Apologies to Director Hahn but "By God it will get done" is not reassuring to me at all. I want to see detail and fact-oriented transit planning, not faith-based planning.

So could you please quickly bring certainty to these areas of uncertainty, and keep the community (both the "real" community and the "activists") appraised of what is next on this project? What are the next milestones pertaining to review and approval of other agencies (e.g. CalTrans, NEPA, FHA, local jurisdictions), and what other steps should we expect before shovels can get in the ground? Who can I ask to move faster? With so many involved parties I am concerned this will end up with a lot of finger-pointing across agencies that do nothing but delay this promise to the people of LA County.

I want to believe that we can build these ambitious projects to connect communities with convenient, safe and sustainable transit. These developments make it really hard to keep that faith. But I shouldn't need faith if responsible planning and execution can happen.

Sincerely,  
Liam Walsh  
Redondo Beach



**From:** Jay Jacobson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 20, 2026 12:55 PM  
**To:** Crenshaw North <CrenshawNorth@metro.net>; Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>; Crenshaw North <CrenshawNorth@metro.net>; CommunityRelations <CommunityRelations@metro.net>  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) K Line Northern Extension Opposition

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K Line Northern Extension Opposition

To Whom It May Concern:

I have serious concerns about the proposed K Line extension, particularly on the west side of West Hollywood.

This area sits atop a large aquifer. Since the city began allowing subterranean construction requiring dewatering, homes and businesses across the area have experienced cracking walls, shifting foundations, and doors and windows that no longer function properly. These problems have continued to worsen as dewatering has increased in our small city.

Constructing a subway here would require extensive dewatering, with potentially devastating consequences for hundreds of homes and businesses. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority was made aware of these risks during the public comment period, and conditions have only deteriorated since then. **I urge you not to cause further damage to our community.**

For a city that is less than two square miles, **three stops is excessive** — especially given the risks to residents, businesses, and property.

Aside from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and the Beverly Center, which are not located in West Hollywood, the proposed stations near Beverly, La Cienega, and San Vicente would primarily serve residential neighborhoods. Combined with current state housing mandates, placing a subway adjacent to these neighborhoods would dramatically intensify development, fundamentally altering community character and displacing renters, rent-stabilized tenants, homeowners, retirees, and residents with disabilities.

West Hollywood already has substantial public transportation. Adding three stations would be excessive and would primarily benefit developers while harming residents and small businesses.

I respectfully urge you not to extend the subway into West Hollywood, particularly where significant dewatering would be required.

I sincerely hope you will take these concerns to heart.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jay Jacobson  
West Hollywood resident

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 20, 2026 3:55 PM  
**To:** Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) General Comment

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Hello Metro Board,

I'm writing to ask about an issue I've observed during the evening commute in downtown Los Angeles. A Foothill Transit Silver Streak bus is frequently parked in the bus-only lane in front of the Circa Hotel, typically with no driver visible and no passengers on board.

Because of this, the J Line bus I'm riding is forced to merge into the general traffic lane and then merge back into the bus lane shortly after. This seems to defeat the purpose of having a dedicated bus lane intended to improve efficiency and reliability for transit riders.

Could you please clarify whether this is an authorized layover location? If so, is there a reason it regularly blocks active service in the bus lane during peak commute hours?

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Shaun

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2026 6:57 PM  
To: Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>  
Subject: (EXTERNAL) 217 frequency

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Please stop pretending the 217 has anything but 30 minute headways. I just spent another night waiting 40 minutes for the 217 to get me to Hollywood, ghost bus after ghost bus, turning a four mile journey into a 90-120 minute long ordeal yet again. On a night when there is almost no traffic. I don't even want to talk about what this trip is like on a night with traffic because CD10 refuses to implement bus lanes.

For the third time in the last few weeks, I am once again missing an event in Hollywood because of this unless I want to spend \$40 on rideshare. I can't take my bike either, because any bike trip to Hollywood through CD5 will involve at least 5 near death misses, which I experienced last night when I tried to make this same journey. Shoutout CD5 for implementing zero safe streets infrastructure whatsoever.

Can you people for two seconds get it together long enough to make this system functional? Of course, none of you would know that this system isn't functional because none of you actually use this system. The contempt with which the Metro Board holds its riders is truly a world record of some kind. I'm not even sure why any of you are on this Board if you don't care whatsoever about the system it governs working.

I guess it's gotten to the point where the Metro Board just doesn't think anyone from Mid City, Pico Robertson, or Culver City needs to go to Hollywood, spend money there, eat at restaurants, or see movies, so I guess this will be my final attempt at trying to visit for the foreseeable future.

From: Alexanderra C Tutz [REDACTED]  
Sent: Sunday, February 22, 2026 6:19 PM  
To: Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>; Crenshaw North <CrenshawNorth@metro.net>  
Cc: info@whamrail.com  
Subject: (EXTERNAL) Support for the San Vicente-Fairfax Route for the K Line Extension!

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Dear Metro Board Members,

I live in West Hollywood, and am writing to express my strong support for selecting the San Vicente-Fairfax route as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Metro K Line Northern Extension project. Of the three routes under consideration, the San Vicente-Fairfax route would serve more residents and businesses as well as more of the regional destinations and job centers in Central Los Angeles and West Hollywood.

The San Vicente-Fairfax route best serves the needs of our communities by serving new areas in Mid City, West Hollywood, and Hollywood while connecting Metro equity-focused communities to key regional destinations, major employers, schools, healthcare facilities, cultural centers, as well as four Metro rail lines

This route has received overwhelming public support and is projected to attract nearly 100,000 daily trips, offering fast, reliable transit and meaningful benefits for low-income and transit-dependent communities. If the San Vicente-Fairfax route is selected, nine much-needed K Line North stations would come within walking distance of three times as many jobs and six times as many residents when compared to the La Brea route.

In addition, this route would expand access to LACMA, Museum Row, Miracle Mile, the Grove, the Original Farmers Market, CBS Television City, the Beverly Center, WeHo's Rainbow District, and Pacific Design Center, and a range of underserved communities and job centers along the way. This route is also the only one to expand access to critical healthcare resources with its proximity to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

I urge the Metro Board to prioritize community input and long-term regional benefits by selecting the San Vicente-Fairfax route as the Locally Preferred Alternative.

Thank you for considering public input on this important decision.

--

Blessings and best,

Alexanderra C Tutz (they/them)

**From:** Jonathan Torres [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 5:16 PM  
**To:** Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>; Crenshaw North <CrenshawNorth@metro.net>  
**Cc:** info@whamrail.com  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) Support for the San Vicente-Fairfax Route for the K Line Extension!

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Dear Metro Board Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for selecting the San Vicente–Fairfax route as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Metro K Line Northern Extension project. Of the three routes being considered, the San Vicente–Fairfax alignment would serve the greatest number of residents and businesses, along with more regional destinations and major job centers in Central Los Angeles and West Hollywood.

The San Vicente–Fairfax route best addresses the needs of our communities by reaching new areas in Mid City, West Hollywood, and Hollywood, while linking Metro equity-focused communities to key regional destinations, major employers, schools, healthcare facilities, cultural institutions, and four Metro rail lines.

This alignment has garnered overwhelming public support and is projected to generate nearly 100,000 daily trips, providing fast and reliable transit while delivering meaningful benefits to low-income and transit-dependent communities. If selected, the nine proposed K Line North stations along this route would be within walking distance of three times as many jobs and six times as many residents compared with the La Brea route.

In addition, this route would expand access to LACMA, Museum Row, Miracle Mile, The Grove, the Original Farmers Market, CBS Television City, the Beverly Center, West Hollywood's Rainbow District, and the Pacific Design Center, as well as numerous underserved communities and employment hubs along the corridor. It is also the only option that improves access to critical healthcare services through its proximity to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

I respectfully urge the Metro Board to prioritize community input and long-term regional benefits by selecting the San Vicente–Fairfax route as the Locally Preferred Alternative.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of public input on this important decision.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Torres  
West Hollywood and Miracle Mile

**From:** Agustin Valenzuela [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 2:38 PM  
**To:** info@metro-oig.net; Customer Relations <CustomerRelations@metro.net>; Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>  
**Cc:** jprevo211@gmail.com; tony21lb@aol.com  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) Formal Complaint | Ongoing C Line Delays and Lack of Accountability

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Dear Metro Leadership,

I am writing to formally express my serious frustration and disappointment regarding the prolonged power line upgrades affecting the C Line. It is unacceptable that nearly a year has passed and riders are still dealing with significant service disruptions and wait times of up to 30 minutes for a train. For a transit agency that receives billions of dollars in funding, this level of delay and inefficiency raises serious concerns about project management, oversight, and accountability.

Equally concerning is the lack of clear, transparent communication about realistic completion timelines. Riders deserve honest updates, not vague projections that continue to shift without explanation. Many of us rely on Metro daily to get to work and meet essential obligations. Extended wait times and inconsistent service are not minor inconveniences they directly impact our livelihoods.

As a taxpayer and daily rider, I expect better!! I expect responsible use of public funds, competent project execution, and reliable service that reflects the scale of investment Metro receives. I doubt Metro is even ready for the 2028 Olympics!

The current situation is unacceptable, and riders deserve immediate corrective action.

**I look forward to your prompt and substantive response. DO BETTER METRO!**

Sincerely,  
Agustin Uriarte

**From:** m.c. guerry [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 25, 2026 3:14 PM  
**To:** Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) 2/26 Metro Regular Board Meeting - general public comment

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Dear Metro Board,

Your vote to switch to the Hawthorne alignment for the K Line to Torrance was not based on sound planning. Instead, it showed that the Board members do no care about transit systems and what they need to function properly. It is an example of why Los Angeles transit is so deficient.

Furthermore, your actions at the January 22nd meeting weaken the public trust in elected officials. It shows disregard for Metro staff, planning professionals, engineers, and hundreds of South Bay residents who wanted the right-of-way path. It ruins years of technical work and public engagement. Your decision will cost taxpayers billions of dollars.

There is a real possibility that the Board's actions have killed the line to Torrance completely. I urge the Metro Board to take action to make sure that it is not the case.

Hence, I ask for including but not limited to:

- progress reports at every meeting on the project including clear timelines and transparency regarding regulatory approvals
- commence construction of the portion south of 190th immediately
- involve South Bay transit riders and advocacy organizations in your outreach efforts

Lastly, Metro Board promised this project by 2036. I and other transit riders will be holding all Board members accountable to this date.

Sincerely,  
mc guerry  
Los Angeles

**From:** p brown [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 25, 2026 4:55 PM  
**To:** Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) Comment for 2/26 Board - General Comment

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METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY BOARD  
Email: [BoardClerk@metro.net](mailto:BoardClerk@metro.net)

Re: February 26, 2026 Board Meeting  
SUBJECT: GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Dear Board Members,

I write to express concern with the Board's action at its January 22 regular meeting to oppose SB 677 (Wiener) - Housing development: transit-oriented development. I am fortunate to live two blocks from an A Line station in Pasadena.

It makes little sense for a transit agency to oppose the construction of additional housing near transit. Taxpayers have spent billions to construct a transit system, and continue to massively subsidize its operation. Why wouldn't Metro want to bring additional riders to the system? Why wouldn't Metro want to encourage greater residential development around and near transit stations?

We hope our political leaders have the courage necessary to champion common sense ideas, even if sometimes those ideas may be controversial. Stand up for what is right.

Thank you for your service,

Respectfully,

P.A. Brown  
Pasadena

## February 2026 RBM Public Comments – Item 5

**From:** p brown [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 25, 2026 4:36 PM  
**To:** Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) Comment for 2/26 Board - Agenda Item 5 - Support (with comment)

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METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY BOARD  
Email: [BoardClerk@metro.net](mailto:BoardClerk@metro.net)

Re: February 26, 2026 Board Meeting  
5. SUBJECT: SAN GABRIEL VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS' 2025-0844  
JUMP START AND MID TERM CAPITAL PROJECTS

Dear Board Members:

I write as a Pasadena resident and in support of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Government's jump start and mid term capital projects, which includes a much-needed proposed Rapid Bus Priority corridor near our apartment.

I do comment with concern that the timetable (e.g., environmental clearance only by Fall 2029) is too long, as it is for too needed many capital projects in California.

Metro needs to revise its operating procedures to be able to move much more rapidly to implement projects once approved. Political relevance depends on delivering benefits to citizens quickly.

Thank you for your service,

Respectfully,

P.A. Brown  
Pasadena

## February 2026 RBM Public Comments – Item 23

**From:** Luka Peharda <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 2:48 PM  
**To:** Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) Commentary for Agenda item 23

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To whom this may concern,

My name is Luka Peharda, and I am a resident of the City of Los Angeles on the Westside. My comments for Board Agenda item 23 at the Regular Board Meeting scheduled on 1/26/26 at 10am are as follows:

### **Agenda Item 23:**

I hope that the following comments will be picked up by Directors Yaroslavsky and Hahn in particular, as they have championed electrification at Metro. I am in support of a 'Yes' vote on this item.

While I am not claiming to be an expert on the status of the bus industry and Metro's planning efforts, I can research, make claims, and back them up with sources.

In summary, while Metro Staff have seemingly chased excuses and obstacles to bus fleet electrification, and while it is true as their staff report notes, that many agencies across North America are struggling with electrification goals, there are many agencies thriving with growing zero-emissions bus fleets, particularly here in the LA area.

### **Local Comparisons and Metro's Prior Experiences**

To be fair and give credit: albeit too slowly, Metro has deployed and begun deploying a substantial amount of electric bus charging, including at Harbor Gateway, El Monte, LAX/MTC and Divisions 9, 18, and 7, with NoHo expansion planned. However, Metro seriously lacks in the bus acquisition and deployment category. As an example, AVTA operates a completely electric fleet, both locally and for their commuter express services. Since Summer of 2025, both Big Blue Bus and Long Beach Transit have each individually operated more battery electric buses in revenue service every single day than Metro has with the exception of the few days in Fall 2025 when the J line operated with at least a handful of electric buses and Division 2 operated a few daily trips with BYD buses painted in a local color scheme. During this time, the only electric buses operated were on the G

line, which never peaked at more than approximately 30 buses in use at any given moment. Staff statements at the Operations Committee meeting proceeding this Board Meeting claiming challenges with BYD electric buses on freeway usage are inherently misguided and flawed for a few reasons:

- While Metro may have issues with its own battery electric buses running on the freeway, BYD buses equipped for local service could be operating under less extreme environments on service blocks where freeway deadheading is not part of the block
  - Additionally, there has been no substantial accountability for BYD, as it seems even with liquidated damages, quality and reliability issues persist, on top of massively delayed delivery timelines
  - It also seems there has been no accountability on Staff for failing to award a contract for the Bus procurement they were paid years of their taxpayer-funded salaries for working on
- Long Beach Transit operates its BYD motor coach fleet on the freeway every school day at UCLA to provide commuter express service from Long Beach to Westwood
- LADOT operates the largest local fleet of BYD buses in the US, despite known quality and reliability issues with BYD, with well over 100 in revenue service every single weekday
- Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus operates its any one of its 34 Gillig battery electric buses on their R10 DTLA-Santa Monica express commuter route on a regular basis, where buses deadhead on the freeway all the way from BBB's Downtown Santa Monica depot all the way to Union Station
  - Almost every single battery electric bus owned by BBB is in revenue service every single weekday, despite only having 20 depot chargers, on a wide range of routes and block lengths
  - Metro still can't achieve anything similar, even with the investment in on-route charging technology, which, while worthy and important, isn't needed for every single service block, as Metro staff themselves have said
- Metro operates battery electric buses on the G line at speeds—albeit lower than the J line—that are substantially higher than what normal local service would demand of buses
- In addition to the agencies that operate an absolute greater number of electric buses in revenue service per day, more agencies operate more battery electric buses daily when measured as a proportion of their total active daily buses, and an example of one such agency is Gtrans of the city of Gardena

BYD has won an unacceptable number of bus purchases from Metro. The G line operates, almost 100% of the time, with a fully electric bus fleet, made up of predominantly New Flyer buses. Neighboring agencies have also not awarded BYD contracts going forward, and even LADOT is seeking to purchase new electric buses from MCI and Gillig going forward, as indicated in their RFP Q&A for purchased transportation services. Metro also

had similar issues requiring entire fleet grounding in 2015/2016 with the first ever deployment of electric buses, which were made by BYD and based out of Division 1.

*While Metro staff keep seeking excuses and finding comparisons with agencies struggling with electrification, there are many agencies that are actively making progress, especially here locally in the LA area. It is my opinion that their time would be better spent learning lessons from those agencies who have managed to make do with much lower purchasing leverage and zero on route charging.*

The J line has been way overdue in its electrification goal, and given that Metro electrified the G line 5 years ago now, questions should be asked about the competence and effort of staff in delivering this program.

Additionally, the motion that required quarterly ZEB updates to improve accountability that was passed by the Board also indicated the requirement for updates on Hydrogen fueling infrastructure and buses to bridge the gap for service blocks Metro cannot meet with BEBs. In their last report, Metro staff said they anticipate finalizing the location of hydrogen fueling infrastructure and deciding between divisions 8, 15, or a contracted division by the end of 2025. In this February 2026 report, not only was there no decision announced, but Staff were in complete violation of the Motion requirements by failing to mention anything related to Hydrogen infrastructure or buses at all. The accountability for failing to meet this mandate seems lacking.

*Metro staff have let timelines slip, and each year, introduce revised program timeline estimates that squash deadlines together to unrealistic turnaround times. Metro's predecessor, SCRTD, and LA Metro itself have a history of operations staff opposing the move to cleaner bus technologies because they like what they know and what is proven at the time. It took twenty years for diesel buses to be replaced in favor of CNG buses, which is significantly longer than the time we have left before being out of compliance with the state CARB mandate. Operations' "comfort" with the status quo cannot come at the expense of air quality, the environment, a current and reliable bus fleet, and the future for Angelenos. Other agencies have proven that progress is doable and realistic.*

### **Lane Transit District Bus Donation**

While it is good to see that Metro is looking to use various available avenues to acquire new buses, these buses might be subject to similar challenges with extreme heat in the Los Angeles area, where temperatures can increase the need for HVAC, drain the battery, and result in issues nearly identical (but opposite in temperature) to the ones experienced in Oregon that led to the removal of these buses from service. Additionally, *these buses were not equipped with on route charging capability* which would have been a critical asset to Metro in using these buses on any number of service blocks, and maximizing flexibility. This also means these buses can only use plug-in charging at bus Divisions, the spots for which will be substantially more limited than the full build out of overhead chargers Metro is planning at its bus divisions. Metro staff should be sure that their "Make-ready" project

for these buses retrofits, if possible, these buses with the required conductive railings for on route charging that sit on the roof over the front axle of every electric bus at Metro.

While one would hope this consideration would automatically be taken by Metro staff, it is clear that staff haven't been running through all the necessary checkboxes on prior electric bus deployments, so a Board interjection may be helpful in ensuring Metro can actually take advantage of these buses.

### **American Bus Manufacturing Industry Status**

Metro continues to argue that the zero-emissions bus manufacturing industry is nowhere near mature enough to deliver the product that Metro needs. Those same neighboring agencies deploying substantial numbers of electric buses, such as Long Beach Transit or Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, have ordered and received more buses in the last two years than Metro, and these buses have entered service. Not just sat on the lot at their Maintenance Facilities, as Metro's BYD buses have a tendency to do.

While it is true the number of manufacturers in the US Market for ZEBs has declined, Metro Staff manage to inflate the challenges with the industry much more than reality warrants. New Flyer and Gillig are manufacturing, selling, and continually delivering 40-foot zero-emissions buses which would come very near to Metro's 250-mile range requirement. Polish busker Solaris is setting up shop in New York at parent company CAF's facility to manufacture exclusively zero-emissions buses with substantial battery capacity that exceed many American product offerings up until now; these buses have won awards in Europe for reliability, technological innovation, and battery capability. Ebusco, despite being plagued with reliability and financial issues, is also looking to set up shop in the US, as indicated by Metro staff at the most recent Operations Committee Meeting.

BYD's quality control issues are apparent to all, and given restrictions on Federal Funding for BYD purchases moving forward, it would be a very stupid move to either procure buses from them through the State Contract Purchase Metro is seeking for up to 40 new buses, or award them either of the two currently in-progress RFPs for bus purchases that could cover the entire remainder of Metro's bus fleet until the fleet is completely electrified.

State contracts have proven to be invaluable assets for neighboring agencies looking to procure new buses, whether electric or otherwise. Metro needs to consider using these contracts in the long run, and not just once, now, to procure buses as it fails with RFPs.

### **The state of Metro's current bus fleet and risks of service impacts during critical events such as Olympics**

Metro staff have said in recent ZEB Program Updates that the oldest buses in the fleet have CNG storage tanks that will begin to expire in September 2028 and that those buses will need to be replaced by then. That is ~2.5 years away, despite average lead times for new bus orders' first units beginning to arrive being 18-24 months. Additionally, poor maintenance of articulated buses has resulted in capacity issues on high passenger

volume lines such as the 720, 761, 4, 204, and 754 when 40-foot buses are run to replace service blocks that would normally be filled by 60-foot articulated buses. This directly harms the overall passenger experience, and will decrease rider satisfaction and disincentivize people to ride transit if riding transit means they'll be packed like sardines in buses with insufficient capacity. Additionally, most of the articulated fleet makes up the oldest group of Metro buses. On top of that, 45-foot models also sit at the closest end of the bus replacement necessity timeline, and Metro's newest CNG buses delivered in 2022 comprise less than 400 of the total 2100-strong bus fleet.

The vast majority of the bus fleet currently in operation were delivered by 2018, which means by the Summer 2028 Olympics when Metro will need as many buses as it can get, the vast majority of buses will be at least 10 years old, out of their designed 12-year lifespan. That means that only ~800 buses of the current fleet (assuming the rest of the BYD buses on order enter service by then) will be less than 12 years old by the Olympics. That means that 62% of Metro buses will have passed their useful design life by the 2028 Olympics, while Metro is depending on these buses to build a critical, high-capacity bus network to transport attendees and officials for the '28 Olympics. Metro has invested so much time and money on other Olympics-ready efforts, that this would be a massive gaping hole. That 62% of the bus fleet being beyond its design lifespan means the likelihood of breakdowns and other service interruptions will increase drastically for those buses, while we are putting them through their paces and depending on them the most. We will likely see some buses running 20-hour days due to the fact that Metro has only secured 650 bus lease commitments for the supplemental bus fleet as of July 2025. This number is nowhere near the Metro-required 2700 buses that would be utilized to more than double the existing fleet. Metro staff have repeatedly said that the average age of the bus fleet is increasing, and we've had no replacements coming in for years, with the exception of the BYDs which are, practically speaking, useless.

### **Environmental implications**

Delaying the transition to a zero-emissions bus fleet places air quality improvements at risk. Los Angeles consistently has some of the worst air quality in the nation, and while Metro bus emissions comprise a small amount of LA County transportation emissions, it all adds up. If everyone took the philosophy of their impact being insignificant, then no one would make any change or any progress. Many climate scientists are already of the opinion that we have eclipsed the 2°C warming threshold, a point of no return, and that limiting our heating to 1.5°C is no longer realistic. This is all the more reason to make an impact, and set an example for other agencies across the country. As the largest transit fleet in California, we have the ability to demonstrate that it is possible. And as a transit agency in California, we have access to resources and technology that do enable this transition and numerous agencies across the state and even the larger LA area have demonstrated that substantial progress is possible, as noted above.

### **Solutions and Recommendations, plus considerations for a future Motion**

Metro staff attributed the cancellation of the latest 2024 bus procurement due to three main issues, namely safety, cost, and timeline concerns. Two of those three issues can be addressed by continually pursuing the Washington state purchase agreement for transit buses, and the other can be addressed by utilizing local and in-house resources.

As a matter of safety and the need for operator barriers, the issue excessive customization, while ideal in a perfect world, likely bars Metro from being able to incorporate a dedicated operator compartment or emergency exit window. However, Metro staff have so far been very vocal about the success of the current operator barrier retrofit program, which reduced violent assaults by 100%. Less extensive customization is more likely to appeal to transit bus manufacturers, and if they are unable to provide the full barriers Metro has installed in its existing fleet, Metro can leverage in-house and local external manufacturing as it did for the retrofit project, to ensure these buses are equipped with full barriers before delivery, even if a fully separated compartment is unrealistic. Metro has a history of utilizing local resources for everything from paint, to seat materials, to these retrofit kits, that it is likely to be a realistic and proven approach to closing critical gaps between important Metro specifications and what transit bus manufacturers are willing to offer. Since each bus is delivered through CMF before its assigned division anyway, it would not be too much of a hardship to implement those retrofits at CMF, especially if the rate of bus deliveries on an overall daily basis remains low.

Regarding the issues of cost and timelines, a way to ensure bus replacements continue, and consistently so, would be to pass a board-sponsored Motion directing *staff to stick to a consistent and steady timeline of bus deliveries on a monthly basis between now and 2035 (and because buses take time to manufacture and deliver, Metro cannot assume they will just be available when needed, or all at once). The solution is to include in this motion, a board-mandated timeline for bus deliveries to start in 2027 over the next 8 years with (as an example) at least 20 buses per month, every month, through 2035 as long as funding is available, with the stipulation that if staff are unable to pursue the RFP avenue to meet each delivery number goal for a given number of months at a time or unable to negotiate affordable prices, they must continue utilizing the available state contracts to purchase buses for every month going forward until they can seamlessly transition to a custom bus order via an RFP (or other procurement avenue such as pilot) at a certain future month.* This process would correspond to the electrification schedule of bus divisions, and ensure that divisions are electrified with capacity as bus deliveries begin. It would take 13 months starting in 2027 to receive enough buses to completely electrify Division 9's bus complement, and the NoHo to Pasadena BRT and North SFV bus improvements project, which will have adequate infrastructure by then. Following that, Divisions 18 and 7 will be largely completed, allowing for the next buses to be split between them as certain chargers begin to come online. This process can be continued as bus divisions complete the construction of their charging infrastructure throughout the rest of the project timeline and into 2035. Metro additionally has restrictions on the rate of bus deliveries allowed on a weekly basis at CMF, so increasing this restriction to allow for more buses per week would be an effective way to combat the issue. Metro needs to replace approximately 2000 buses

over the next 9.5 years, and any bus purchase conducted immediately may have 18 or more months of lead time, due to the state of the bus industry.

To increase accountability, it is also worth considering passing a motion to increase the frequency of Staff's required updates to the Ops committee on ZEB progress from quarterly to every other month, or even monthly.

There are solutions to these issues, and the Metro board has the ability to influence operating protocols to make these achievements material, instead of just planned.

If any Board members so far have gotten to the end of this, truly thank you for your time.

— End of comments —