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# Triennial Performance Review FY 2019 to 2021 Los Angeles County Transit Operators

## Executive Summary

### Legislative Mandate

The California Public Utilities Code (PUC) Section 99246, included in the Transportation Development Act (TDA), requires Metro to conduct an independent performance review of all Los Angeles County Transit Operators receiving TDA Article 4 funds, as well as operators receiving Proposition A funds in lieu of TDA funds. The review is conducted every three years, and Metro must send a Certificate of Completion to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), so that Metro may receive and allocate TDA and State Transit Assistance (STA) funds for Los Angeles County.

The three-year period reviewed is from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021 and included a review of the following:

- *Compliance* - ensuring compliance with applicable PUC and California Code of Regulations requirements.
- *Data Collection and Reporting* - verification of TDA data collection and reporting procedures.
- *Prior Review Recommendations* - reporting on implementation of the prior triennial performance review recommendations.
- *Performance Trends* - summaries of performance indicators for the review period.
- *Functional Review* - high-level review of key functional areas surveyed as part of the process of conducting the review, resulting in suggestions for operational and management improvements.

### Municipal Operators

#### *Summary of Key Findings*

The municipal operators met all applicable compliance requirements. Municipal operators' data reporting was mostly consistent with inconsistencies primarily in reporting local and auxiliary revenues and employee full time equivalents (FTEs) on Transit Performance Measurements (TPM) reports. We recommended that the operators work with Metro through the Bus Operations Subcommittee to address these reporting issues,

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to enable more consistent reporting. The municipal operators implemented or made progress toward implementation all prior triennial review recommendations

### ***Key Challenges***

The most common challenge faced by the municipal operators was associated to the COVID pandemic which began in March 2020. At the onset of this crisis, the Los Angeles County transit general managers convened a working group, representing seven transit agencies to review federal mask mandate requirements and develop common approaches for implementation throughout the region. The pandemic resulted in significant losses in transit ridership and fare revenue, as transit agencies instituted rear door boardings and suspended fare payment policies.

Municipal operators were also challenged by labor shortages, particularly within service operations employment categories.

### ***Key Accomplishments***

Each operator had their own unique set of accomplishments during the review period. Listed below are examples of key accomplishments for municipal operators:

- *AVTA* – Converted its local transit fleet to electric buses and launched an on-demand microtransit service.
- *Arcadia* -- Accepted delivery on ten ADA-accessible replacement vehicles powered by Compressed Natural Gas.
- *Beach Cities Transit* – Installed a Real Time Information System on its fixed route fleet and began construction on the Redondo Beach Transit Center.
- *Burbank* – Realigned its Pink Line, based on recommendations from its 2017 Operational Assessment.
- *Claremont* -- Updated its branding to provide greater consistency in its marketing and informational materials and launched a new website that improves customer trip planning and guides riders to the most appropriate service for their needs.
- *Commerce* -- Implemented its CC Transit App to provide real-time bus information to customers, by text or mobile devices.
- *Culver City* – Completed its Short-Range Transit Plan which set forth its strategic vision for the agency.
- *Foothill Transit* – Completed construction of the Covina Transit Center and Park & Ride Project and installed and upgraded traffic signal priority equipment to improve on-time performance in several corridors.

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- *Gardena* – Received two APTA Bus Safety Awards reflecting successful programs that reduced total accidents by 55%, preventable accidents by 51% and a reduction in workers' compensation claims.
- *Glendale* – Moved into its new transit facility in FY 2021 and realigned its entire system in November 2020.
- *La Mirada* -- Purchased and installed fareboxes on its entire fleet and placed into service four replacement vehicles in FY 2020.
- *LADOT* – Opened its state-of-the-art, LEED Platinum-certified Downtown Bus Maintenance and Fueling Facility.
- *Long Beach Transit* -- Executed a contract to expand its Battery Electric Bus (BEB) charging station capacity from 10 to 24 chargers on its LBT1 facility and purchased its third order of 20 BEB replacement buses.
- *Montebello* -- Implemented on-board cameras on its buses and installed Computer-Aided Dispatch/Automated Vehicle Locator (CAD/AVL) system on its fleet.
- *Norwalk* -- Constructed a Transit Access Pass (TAP) vending machine at the Metrolink Station adjacent to the Norwalk Transit facility in June 2021.
- *Pasadena* – Implemented a new Pasadena Transit 30 – Day Pass and obtained approval of its Job Access Reverse Commute program grant.
- *Santa Clarita* -- Awarded a contract for the construction of the Vista Canyon Bus Transfer Center.
- *Santa Monica* – Installed real-time signs and LED lights in 176 bus stops within its service area and Installed Wi-Fi technology on 19 buses
- *Torrance* – Named Transit Agency of the Year by the California Transit Association's Small Operator Committee in FY 2020 and made significant progress on the construction of the Torrance Transit Park and Ride Regional Terminal which is planned to open in 2022.

## Metro Operations

### *Summary of Key Findings*

Metro Operations met all applicable compliance requirements. Additionally, Metro's data reporting was largely consistent with minor inconsistencies likely due to timing differences in the submission of reports or noted inconsistencies in category definitions by the reporting agencies. Metro Operations implemented all prior triennial performance review recommendations.

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### ***Key Challenges***

Similar to the municipal operators, Metro Operations was forced to address numerous challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic which began in March of 2020. Some of the more notable challenges included:

- Significant drops in ridership during the initial stage of the pandemic which, while having improved over time, have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Sharp reductions in fare revenue due to reduced ridership and fare-less policies designed to encourage first responders and essential workers to continue to use bus and rail service as needed.
- Operational challenges that included:
  - Scheduling and route adjustments to adapt to reduced ridership.
  - Logistical changes in operations including shifting from front to rear boarding.
  - Supplying operators and maintenance staff with Personal Protective Equipment including face shields and masks.
- Labor shortages in operations, professional staff, and construction laborers.

### ***Key Accomplishments***

Metro Operations had a series of significant accomplishments during the review period including:

- Continued Metro's core operational services during the pandemic.
- Formed the Recovery Task Force in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and produced "A Path Forward", a report that identifies and recommends actions to respond and recover from the pandemic.
- Developed and began implementation on the NextGen Bus Plan designed to innovate the current bus system to meet the needs of current and future riders and restore transit service to pre-pandemic levels. Phase 1 of the plan focused on service changes to a significant number of routes within the system. Phase 2 will include expansion of Metro's micro-transit service (Metro Micro) and additional bus trips to improve the frequency of service.

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- Developed the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Vision and Principles study to provide a definition of BRT performance that established new standards and eligibility for Measure M Countywide funding.
- Established a Customer Experience Office with the goal of improving the overall rider experience.
- Adopted a Low-Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program to reduce ridership costs for low-income riders.
- Developed the Better Bus Program, a \$2.1 billion, five-year plan that aims to improve the bus system to address racial inequities and provide a quicker, more comfortable trip experience for riders.

### Countywide Performance

The following is a summary of system trends for Municipal Operators and Metro Operations combined. The importance of these trends is to show the general change in performance related to the overall Countywide system.<sup>1</sup> The key takeaway from these metrics is that ridership declines are impacting overall efficiency and productivity of the Countywide system.

#### Ridership

Overall, ridership for both the Municipal Operators and for Metro Operations declined over the review period. While some demand response systems and Metro's light rail system showed ridership gains, virtually all of the fixed route systems had a decline in ridership which impacted the overall system numbers. The following charts show the aggregate ridership numbers and the percentage change since the FY 2018 base year:

Municipal Operators				
Total System -- Unlinked Passengers				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
96,672,836	94,397,654	74,425,155	46,323,605	-52.08%

Metro Operations				
Total System -- Unlinked Passengers				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
394,361,657	379,718,121	305,905,401	195,547,433	-50.41%

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### Vehicle Service Hours

Overall, Vehicle Service Hours showed a small rise for Municipal Operators while Metro Operations experienced relatively stable numbers. The following charts show the aggregate vehicle service hours and the percentage change since the FY 2018 base year:

Municipal Operators				
Total System -- Vehicle Service Hours				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
4,550,981	4,593,705	4,306,482	3,782,992	-16.88%

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that these numbers reflect the “total system” for the Municipal Operators which includes both fixed route and demand response services. Likewise, the numbers for Metro Operations include fixed route, heavy rail and light rail.

Metro Operations				
Total System -- Vehicle Service Hours				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
8,030,689	8,054,992	7,299,834	6,072,876	-24.38%

### Cost Per Passenger

Cost per passenger rose sharply for both Municipal Operators and Metro Operations during the review period, a reflection of the decrease in ridership numbers experienced almost across the board by the agencies. The following charts show the aggregate cost per passenger and the percentage change since the FY 2018 base year:

Municipal Operators				
Total System -- Cost Per Passenger				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
\$5.49	\$6.03	\$7.72	\$12.18	121.94%

Metro Operations				
Total System -- Cost Per Passenger				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
\$4.51	\$5.05	\$6.00	\$8.52	89.01%

Metro Operations				
Bus Operations -- Cost Per Passenger				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
\$4.32	\$4.71	\$5.46	\$7.21	66.78%

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Rail Operations -- Cost Per Passenger				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
\$4.99	\$5.98	\$7.62	\$13.35	167.75%

### Cost Per Vehicle Service Hour

Cost per vehicle service hour rose for both Municipal Operators and Metro Operations during the review period. The following charts show the aggregate cost per vehicle service hour and the percentage change since the FY 2018 base year:

Municipal Operators				
Total System -- Cost Per Vehicle Service Hour				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
\$116.56	\$123.87	\$133.34	\$149.12	27.94%

Metro Operations				
Total System -- Cost Per Vehicle Service Hour				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
\$221.31	\$238.19	\$251.36	\$274.30	23.94%
Metro Operations				
Bus Operations -- Cost Per Vehicle Service Hour				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
\$161.03	\$170.13	\$181.09	\$192.49	19.53%
Metro Operations				
Rail Operations -- Cost Per Vehicle Service Hour				
FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	% Change
\$1360.65	\$1570.56	\$1616.52	\$1770.27	30.10%