COUNCILWOMAN MONICA RODRIGUEZ
SEVENTH DISTRICT

October 25, 2023

% Metro Board Administration
One Gateway Plaza
MS: 99-3-1
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Item 20, East San Fernando Valley (ESFV) Light Rail Project

Honorable Chair Bass and Metro Board Members:

The East San Fernando Valley (ESFV) Light Rail Project ("Project") is a significant light rail investment for the San Fernando Valley that should improve mobility for many transit dependent and underinvested communities in Los Angeles County. The Project was initially proposed as a singular, contiguous project from the Van Nuys "G" Line Station and terminating at the Metrolink station in Sylmar/San Fernando. However, the Project subsequently was split into two Interim Operating Segments (IOS) - Northern and Southern- when the Final EIR was released and the Record of Decision (ROD) certified. The bifurcation of the project has led to many questions about how the Project will connect to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink station and serve the communities of Sylmar and Pacoima.

Metro is currently doing an additional Shared Right of Way Study ("Study") that will evaluate how to connect the Northern segment of the project to the Southern segment and that is expected to be completed in Summer 2024. Additionally, the Board is now considering a CEQA Addendum that will allow for the construction of the Southern segment. We ask that as this project moves forward that the Board and Metro staff consider items detailed below.

Additional Pedestrian Crossings in Pacoima
The current project design has resulted in a center-running station platform at Van Nuys Boulevard and San Fernando Road however, a remaining challenge that has not been addressed are the limited pedestrian crossings across Van Nuys Boulevard between Laurel Canyon and San Fernando Road. Under the current proposed plan, pedestrians will have to walk anywhere from 4-6 long valley blocks to cross the tracks and access the station. We ask for the placement of three additional crossing points, potentially pedestrian only, to address the impacts to pedestrian access across Van Nuys Boulevard created by the project.

CITY HALL | 200 NORTH SPRING STREET, ROOM 455 | LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 | PHONE: (213) 473-7007
www.monicarodriguez.org

TPSS Locations

There are two TPSS locations in Pacoima at 13287 Van Nuys Blvd. and 13291 Van Nuys Blvd., and both properties are directly adjacent to single family homes and need to have strong mitigations and buffers. We would like to ensure the noise, vibration, and aesthetics of these structures are addressed and do not negatively impact the residential neighborhood. Mitigations should include but not be limited to, ensuring noise limitations are below 50 DBA within 50 feet of the unit, the inclusion of sound enclosures, distancing from sensitive receptors, and the implementation of landscaping and design elements to mask the structures. We ask that Metro work with a local artist(s) to provide an art element at the TPSS locations. We also need a maintenance plan for these locations to ensure they do not contribute to neighborhood blight.

Sidewalks & Bike Lanes

Negotiations between the city and Metro on how to allocate the limited space in the public ROW landed on accepting 10ft wide sidewalks (in lieu of Mobility Plan required 15ft). We need Metro's continued partnership to consult with the City on any widths that are less than 10ft. Sidewalks must be as wide as possible to support pedestrians and the small businesses who rely on foot traffic.

The project EIR committed to a replacement bike lane mitigation for the one being removed on Van Nuys Blvd. but left flexible where dependent on LADOT guidance. Since then, LADOT and relevant city departments agreed upon, and sent to Metro Terra Bella St. as the location for a replacement Class II bike lane. Metro attempted to get this paid for by the city through First/Last Mile investment, when it was clearly labeled as a mitigation measure. We need Metro commit to a like-for-like replacement of a Class II Bike Lane on Terra Bella Street.

Property Acquisition for Parking

As the originally proposed project has been significantly changed there are many questions about how Sylmar and Pacoima will be served. What was once the midpoint of the line is now the interim, or perhaps permanent, terminus. These areas are being directly impacted by the Southern segment but are not receiving the direct benefits of a station within walking distance. Metro needs to consider this and develop an acquisition or leasing strategy that supports the provision of parking through the construction of structures and leasing of lots so Sylmar and regional residents have the ability to park their vehicle and take the ESFV light rail like they would have been able to under the originally proposed plan that leveraged the Sylmar Metrolink Station Park & Ride. There also must be a plan for replacing the parking lost along Van Nuys Blvd. to support small businesses and allow their customers to patronize their establishments.

Business Interruption Fund/Outreach/Sequencing

We are also very concerned about how the Business Interruption Fund will be deployed to the businesses in Sylmar and Pacoima. They will be impacted by construction of the Southern segment yet it is unclear how they will be compensated for loss of business during construction. We ask that Metro consider at least a 2.5 mile capture area around the new station construction for mitigation measures including financial compensation, signage and direct marketing of businesses.

Additional Elements for Shared Right of Way (ROW) Study

It has come to our attention that there is an additional project alternative being studied, in addition to the completion of the Northern segment as proposed in the ESFV Light Rail Final EIR. It is our strong preference that the project be completed as originally proposed with stations being added at Paxton, Maclay and Sylmar/San Fernando however, we want to also deliver a connection to the Southern segment in a reasonable timeframe. This additional project considers abandoning the Northern segment of the ESFV Light Rail alignment, and instead relying on existing Metrolink service to connect the Southern segment and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station by establishing a new Metrolink station at the Van Nuys Boulevard/ San Fernando Road intersection. The scope of work of the Shared Right of Way Study should be expanded to consider the following critical elements:

- Headways and Travel Time: Metrolink and Metro have very different headways at both peak and non peak hours of travel. Getting a detailed understanding of how these will interact for riders transferring from Metrolink to Metro and vice versa is important information to have in deciding on a project alternative. Requiring an additional transfer than what the original project proposed will impact the projected travel times riders can expect. The headways analysis should also inform an updated understanding of total travel time for riders who will be taking the originally proposed complete route (Southern and Northern) under the newly proposed alternative.

- Cost and Subsidy Programs: Metrolink fares can range from $2.00 to $4.25 for traveling between two stations, depending on the distance between the two points, whereas Metro light rail fares are a flat rate of $1.75 and offer free transfers. A plan for how to ensure the cost does not increase from the Measure M committed version of the Project, should be documented in the study. Metrolink and Metro offer different subsidy and discount programs for students, seniors, and more. How these passes will work between these two systems should be included in the fare analysis.

- Ticketing Systems: Metrolink and Metro use different ticketing systems. Possible solutions for transferring between the train and light rail easily should be identified and included in the study.

- Parking Impacts at Van Nuys Boulevard/ San Fernando Road: In Pacoima there are many storefronts that do not have parking lots, alley access, or convenient adjacent street access. If this location is now being considered for two stations (Metrolink and Metro), it will likely significantly increase the traffic and impact on parking demand. Those with vehicles seeking to expedite their journey by cutting the new transfer might drive to the station. The study should identify mitigation measures Metro will undertake to address the parking impact, such as leasing parking facilities, constructing parking facilities, facilitating shared parking agreements, and establishing parking restrictions for segments of adjacent streets to encourage turnover.

Those of us elected to represent this corridor have been hard at work, in collaboration with Metro, to move the project forward in a way that centers around inclusivity for Sylmar and Pacoima residents and regional equity. We believe the connection to Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink station represents a vital transportation link to the western edge of the northeast valley, enabling efficient and affordable access to-and-from local educational institutions such as the Los Angeles Mission College, and job centers around our valley civic centers, and Downtown Los Angeles. We stand committed to continue our partnership with Metro to ensure this project is delivered in a timely manner that benefits all communities including Sylmar and Pacoima.

Sincerely,

MONICA RODRIGUEZ
Los Angeles City Councilwoman, 7th District

IMELDA PADILLA
Los Angeles City Councilwoman, 6th District

CAROLINE MENJIVAR
CA State Senator, 20th District

cc: Stephanie Higgins, CEO, Metro
Gregory Gastelum, ESFV Light Rail Project Manager, Metro
Ivan Gonzales, Right of Way Study Project Manager, Metro

CALIFORNIA TEAMSTERS LOCAL 911

PUBLIC, PROFESSIONAL & MEDICAL EMPLOYEES UNION, THE COUNTIES OF LOS ANGELES,
ORANGE, RIVERSIDE, SAN DIEGO, IMPERIAL, SAN LUIS OBISPO, SAN BERNARDINO, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA
9900 FLOWER STREET • BELLFLOWER • CALIFORNIA • 90706
(562) 595-4518 • Fax (562) 427-7298 • teamsters911.com
An Affiliate of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Raymond B. Whitmer
Secretary-Treasurer

VIA EMAIL swiggins@metro.net

October 25, 2023

Stephanie N. Wiggins, CEO
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Thursday, October 26, 2023, 10:00 AM – Metro Board Agenda – Item 41
METRO TRANSIT AMBASSADOR PILOT PROGRAM EVALUATION

Dear CEO Wiggins:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Teamsters Local 911 supports the Metro Board of Directors authorizing you to establish a permanent Transit Ambassador Program and transition the program in-house over the next 12 months.

As a labor union that represents in-house essential services for transit riders, Teamsters firmly stands with the Metro's mission and values that prioritize safeguarding the transit community.

It is a fact that most riders want more safety and, as the representatives of workers that help ensure the safety of the Metro transit community, Teamsters finds it appropriate to speak and advocate on this issue.

- We are committed to helping improve perception of safety and improving rider experience for the community we serve.
- We are committed to helping improve face-to-face rider interaction through essential workers who take pride in their careers and who adopt the Metro culture for the long run.
- We are committed to helping improve response times.
- We are committed to helping improve efficiency.
- We are committed to helping workers.
- We know that training, development, wages, benefits and overall improved terms and conditions of employment result in a higher retention rate in workers' careers, which impacts rider safety.
- We know most of the transit agencies in the United States have in-house ambassador programs as part of their public safety program.

It is for these reasons above that we support the approval of establishing a permanent Transit Ambassador Program and transitioning the program in-house over the next 12 months.

Sincerely,

Carlos I. Rubio
President

c: Metro Board of Directors
Raymond B. Whitmer, Secretary-Treasurer

October 2023 RBM Public Comment – Item 41

From: [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, October 22, 2023 10:25 AM
To: Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>
Subject: Item #41 - For - Oct 26 2023 - LA Metro BOD Meeting - Faraz Aqil

Hello LA Metro. My name is [redacted], and I support having the Transit Ambassadors become in-house LA Metro employees.

It's better to have their services In-Housed than outsourcing it to private companies. Reasons such as increasing the retention rate (currently at 73%), job protection, and encouraging career advancement within LA Metro will improve morale & allow for more transparency/control compared to a private company. Plus many people like me prefer Transit Ambassadors over armed security police officers and see this as a more cost efficient way of getting more eyes on the ground compared to police officers. I hope we can spend more on Transit Ambassadors and hire less Police Officers (saving LA Metro money since we currently pay over $150 million for Law Enforcement Officers). And I hope to see more Transit Ambassadors in the future.

Also I noticed a typo in attachment C (Ambassador Evaluation Survey), slide #12. In column about Favor Armed, there's a quote someone says about, "I would feel safer with Ambassadors than with law enforcement officers who carry guns." **This clearly means they don't want armed officers and instead Favor Unarmed Ambassadors.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 4:45 PM
Subject: Metro Board Meeting 10/26 Agenda Item 41 - Metro Transit Ambassador Pilot Program Evaluation
Importance: High

On behalf of Strive Well-Being Inc., I am writing to express deep concerns regarding Consent Item 41 placed on the Metro Board Meeting Agenda for Thursday, October 26. This Item relates to Metro's Recommendation to establish a permanent Transit Ambassador program and transition the program in-house.

Here are our key concerns for further consideration by the Board:

1. **Lack of Financial Feasibility Analysis**: Metro's representation that in-house delivery can be executed for under $20 Million a year authorized by the Board is not realistic when it's already cost Metro more than $23 Million just in the first year of the program.

2. **Job Loss and Displacement of Vulnerable Workers**: The current Ambassador workforce includes mostly individuals from vulnerable backgrounds, such as second-chancers, minorities, formerly unhoused, veterans, and people with disabilities who may otherwise not be employed directly by Metro due to its stringent hiring criteria. Currently, ~500 ambassadors (348 FTEs) work for the contractors (Strive and RMI).

3. **Financial Impact on Small/Minority Businesses (SBE's) and CBOs**: Metro's recommendation ignores the severe financial impact of premature contract cancellation on multiple Metro-certified Small Business Enterprise (SBE), minority-owned companies, and CBO partners. Such an approach contradicts Metro's policy to support SBE's.

4. **Premature Cancellation of Vendor Contracts.** Metro is proposing to terminate 5-year contracts with Strive Well-Being and RMI International one year into the contract. Both companies and their CBO partners have invested heavily and are directly responsible for the initial success of the program.

5. **Legal Concerns**: Terminating contracts without cause for the sole purpose of absorbing the Contractors' workforce by Metro raises serious legal, policy, moral, and ethical issues that must be addressed.

Given these concerns, we urge the Metro Board to move Consent Agenda Item 41 for more consideration. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter that impacts so many people.

[redacted]

October 2023 RBM General Public Comment

From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, October 6, 2023 12:34 PM
To: Communications <communications@bchd.org>
Cc: Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>; Jacki Bacharach <jacki@southbaycities.org>; Gorman, Karen <GORMANK@metro.net>
Subject: Public Comment Made at Metro Board Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT TO ALL AGENCIES ON EMAIL

The hillside grading and retaining wall are deferred maintenance by BCHD. The District let the hill slide unimpeded for 70 years and now a bike path budget got stuck cleaning up the mess. This deferred maintenance is not properly funded by Measure M, and it was not properly represented to Metro by BCHD.

This action of funding BCHD with Measure M funds to repair BCHD's deferred maintenance is a dereliction of oversight by both SBCCOG and Metro's Measure M Oversight Committee.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

LA County Taxpayer

From: [redacted]
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 11:05 PM
To: Board Clerk <BoardClerk@metro.net>; executiveoffice@bos.lacounty.gov
Cc: Eleanor Manzano <cityclerk@redondo.org>; cityclerk@hermosabeach.gov; cityclerk@manhattanbeach.gov; CityClerk <CityClerk@torranceca.gov>; eharbison@lawndalecity.org; Kevin Cody <kevin@easyreadernews.com>; Lisa Jacobs <lisa.jacobs@tbrnews.com>; tliu@scng.com; Garth Meyer <gmeyer@easyreadernews.com>; Gorman, Karen <GORMANK@metro.net>
Subject: Public Comment - Green Line Extension Route Survey Bias

Public Comment - Metro Board and LA County Board of Supervisors
Public Comment - Mayor and Council of Hermosa, Manhattan, Redondo Beach, Lawndale and Torrance
Notification to Metro IG of Biased Business Activity by Metro

SUBJECT: Biased Metro Green Line Survey

I have attached the memo from the Metro CEO to the Board. As an expert witness with extensive experience in polling, surveys and data analysis, I am very concerned about 2 significant topics in the Metro Green Line survey that was fielded in Lawndale, Redondo Beach, and Torrance.

First, the survey is biased to provide a greater level of familiarity with the project than actually exists. It is a well know fact from data analysis that asking a respondent how much they know about a project results in an upward bias. Just as the natural psychological response is to be agreeable and answer yes to questions, the natural bias is represent greater knowledge levels. As such, the survey needed to ask one or more specific questions to reveal true familiarity rather than stated familiarity.

Second, the survey failed to even broach the most significant issue, that of the route. The most significant issue is clearly the significant and non-mitigable damages that Metro seeks to cause to generations of families by adding two 24/7/365 rail lines in the existing right-of-way through Lawndale and Torrance. Had Metro correctly represented the 24/7/365 2-track addition through family neighborhoods vs. an elevated line down Hawthorne Blvd through a commercial area, the results could have been useful.

METRO DELIBERATELY BIASED BOTH QUESTIONS.

The survey results are largely useless due to this deliberate bias. Metro fielded a survey and sought to gain support for its project, and so Metro biased the results. The survey must be re-fielded, this time with a fact-based knowledge question(s) and a full disclosure of the routes.

[redacted]