



# Metro

## Board Report

Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation  
Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
3rd Floor Board Room  
Los Angeles, CA

---

File #: 2023-0204, File Type: Budget

Agenda Number: 2.

---

**LA SAFE BOARD MEETING  
MAY 25, 2023**

**SUBJECT: LA SAFE FISCAL YEAR BUDGET**

**ACTION: ADOPT THE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 BUDGET**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

ADOPT the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY24) budget in the amount of \$8,776,610 for the operation and administration of the Los Angeles County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (LA SAFE). This budget amount includes the annual funding allocation from the agreement with the Public Transportation Services Corporation (PTSC) for direct labor and administrative support services in the amount of \$2,308,610.

### **ISSUE**

LA SAFE was created in 1988, pursuant to California Streets and Highway Code Section 2550 et. seq. and is responsible for providing motorist aid services in Los Angeles County. To fulfill its mission, LA SAFE needs an annual budget and requires administrative support services, which are provided via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the PTSC. A summary of the proposed FY24 budget is provided in Attachment A.

### **BACKGROUND**

During Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY23), LA SAFE continued to fund, develop, implement, and operate a variety of motorist aid services, programs, and activities. These services, programs, and activities include:

- Operation and maintenance of the Kenneth Hahn Call Box system
- Review of the Kenneth Hahn Call Box system
- Operation of Southern California 511 Traveler Information System (SoCal 511) within the five-county region (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernadino, and Ventura Counties)
- Update of the Interagency Agreement with Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) for the operations and maintenance of SoCal 511, enabling additional cost sharing and collaborative opportunities

- Development of upgrades to the SoCal 511 mobile application, scheduled for release in the first quarter of FY24
- Coordination with Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California Highway Patrol (CHP), and other regional partners on the operation and development of the LA SAFE services
- Collaboration with Metro on the funding, use, and development of the Regional Integration of Intelligent Transportation Systems (RIITS) to support LA SAFE data needs
- Coordination with CHP and Caltrans for the ongoing operation of the SoCal 511 Traveler Information Center (TIC) within the Los Angeles Regional Traffic Management Center (LARTMC)
- Deployment of the SoCal 511 marketing campaign to promote public awareness and the use of SoCal 511 traveler information services

## **DISCUSSION**

For FY23, LA SAFE programs and services continue to show increases in utilization. SoCal 511 usage for FY23 is projected at about 1.4M (or about 113K users per month) for all platforms inclusive of web, phone, and social media as a result of a robust marketing campaign aimed at increasing general awareness of the SoCal 511 program.

For FY24, LA SAFE will be working on the following projects and activities:

- Continuing the operation and maintenance of the Kenneth Hahn Call Box System
- Continuing operation of SoCal 511
- Investigation, development, and deployment of improvements, new features, and services for SoCal 511 and the Kenneth Hahn Call Box System
- Launch of the updated SoCal 511 mobile application
- Continuation of SoCal 511 marketing efforts
- Development of a SoCal 511 Mystery User program in support of a positive customer experience
- Initiation of a strategic review of SoCal 511
- Collaboration with regional call box operators/agencies
- Collaboration and coordination with SoCal 511 partners and stakeholders
- Collaboration with Metro on the development and operation of RIITS to improve the quality and availability of real-time data and services provided to SoCal 511

- Collaboration with regional partners to identify and implement improvements to programs and develop new services that will enhance mobility within the region, including preparation for the Olympics/Paralympics - specifically Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), connected and automated vehicles, and integrated corridor management projects

The FY24 budget of \$8,776,610 million represents an increase of approximately \$373,124 or 4.4% compared to the adopted FY23 budget. Specifically, the FY24 budget variances for each major budget category are as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Increase/ (Decrease)</u>
Administration	\$31,000
Direct Labor	(\$307,876)
Programs & Services	\$650,000

The Administration budget covers the general administrative costs for LA SAFE and includes the budget for general office and computer supplies, insurance, training, travel/conference fees and other general administrative support. This category is proposed to increase by \$31,000 or 10% for FY24. The \$31,000 increase is associated with the cost of insurance. In FY24, LA SAFE increased the insurance budget by approximately 17% to better align the budget with past expenditures related to general and excess liability. Staff is working with the Metro Risk Management department to review all aspects of LA SAFE's insurance coverage, including cost drivers, and will ensure coverage is in line with the scope of the programs under LA SAFE.

The Direct Labor budget covers the costs for obtaining staff and associated administrative services from PTSC. This category includes the costs for direct labor, as-needed staff, allocated overhead, fringe, and other labor related costs and is proposed to decrease by \$307,876 or 12% for FY24. The FY24 budget decrease is attributable to a reduction in the as-needed allocation and associated labor allocation costs assigned by PTSC. This decrease will not impact the performance of the program. The FY23 as-needed allocation included funding to support partner programs, administrative support, and technical support that were not realized. The FY24 as-needed allocation will enable LA SAFE to continue funding existing and obtain new as-needed staff to support a variety of tasks, including quality/customer experience usage and testing, data analytics, service improvements, and other special projects as needed. The FY24 FTE allocation of 7.82 FTEs is an increase of 0.35 FTEs compared to the approved FY23 allocation due to the internal realignment of existing staff in support of program efficiencies. The allocation will enable LA SAFE to effectively manage existing services, develop and implement customer focused improvements, address emerging opportunities and technologies, engage in improved market and customer awareness, engage new stakeholders, and identify strategic initiatives to position LA SAFE to better support upcoming major events such the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympics and Paralympic games. All costs are calculated by PTSC and are consistent with Metro costs and budget. Additionally, all FTEs are consistent with and included in Metro's FY24 budget.

The Programs & Services category provides the funding to administer, operate, maintain, improve, and develop the motorist aid services provided or supported by LA SAFE. This includes funding to

---

support the continuing operation of existing services - the Kenneth Hahn Call Box System - fixed and mobile services, and SoCal 511. Funds also support the development of improvements to existing services and the research and development in support of new motorist services and projects. Funding for the Kenneth Hahn Call Box System remains stable and consistent as the system itself is projected to remain stable and constant, with some slight variability due to in-field construction impacts. Funding for SoCal 511 operations, which is included in the Traveler Information System subcategory, is increasing by \$150,000 to support the strategic review and system improvements, including the updated mobile app.

The overall budget allocation for this category is proposed to increase by \$650,000 or 12% in FY24. In addition to the \$150,000 increase in the Traveler Information System subcategory, the remaining \$500,000 increase is attributable to the following elements: market research and outreach, customer experience research and improvements, RIITS data and services improvements, and possible development/support of new motorist aid services. For example, staff is working to standardize real-time transit data through general transit feed specifications-real time (GTFS-RT), which will improve traveler information for SoCal 511 customers. Specific to marketing and outreach, the FY24 budget includes funding to continue public awareness and related efforts in support of SoCal 511. In FY23, staff initiated the deployment of a marketing campaign, including media tactics such as billboards, vehicle wraps, radio advertisements, and web banners. To date, SoCal 511 phone, website, and social media usage has increased by approximately 56% since the start of this effort in comparison to the same period last year. The FY24 budget will allow staff to continue and expand the campaign to cover more geographic areas, obtain new customer data, and continue with SoCal 511 improvements and applications. In addition, staff will continue increasing engagement with partner agencies, community-based organizations, and stakeholders to secure in-kind support for SoCal 511 through their channels (e.g., websites, mobile app links, timetables, and other related materials).

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

The budget is used to support the continued safe and reliable operation of the Kenneth Hahn Call Box System and SoCal 511. Both systems support motorists by providing a service from which motorists can request assistance and obtain transportation-related information, improving the overall safety and reliability of the transportation network.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Funding in the amount of \$8,776,610 has been included in the FY24 proposed budget in project 300209 and allocated to cost centers 2221 (Shared Mobility Executive Office), 3351 (SAFE), 4740 (Intelligent Transportation Systems), and 7140 (Marketing). The Five-Year Financial Forecast demonstrates the financial capacity of LA SAFE to use its existing fund balance and projected revenue to fully fund the proposed FY24 budget.

### **Impact to Budget**

The source of funds for this action is locally generated DMV fees dedicated to LA SAFE. It is not

eligible for bus and rail operating or capital expenditures.

### **EQUITY PLATFORM**

LA SAFE programs assist all people in Los Angeles County, including residents and visitors. Disadvantaged populations benefit from the services provided by LA SAFE. For example, SoCal 511 provides traffic and transit information within a five-county region, enabling users to make efficient local and regional transportation choices, and to support them when they need motorist assistance. Currently, this service is offered in Spanish and English via an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, and our web platform is translated into eight languages. The mobile app scheduled to launch in FY24 will be available in English and Spanish. In FY23, one of the criteria for marketing efforts is that billboard advertisements must be located in Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). In FY24, these billboard advertisements will continue and may be expanded in other EFC areas. Additionally, Spanish radio advertisements will continue to be aired in FY24. Call boxes continue to be a resource for motorists who may not have or be able to use a mobile phone, and call box locations are accessible for mobility impaired users. The call boxes themselves support communication through RTT / TTY / TDD for all customers who may be hearing impaired, deaf and/or speech impaired. Further, operators fluent in Spanish are available to support Spanish-speaking callers, and over 200 other languages are supported through contracted translation services. This ensures that the call boxes can continue to be effective and accessible for people with limited English Proficiency in communities within Los Angeles County.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board may elect not to adopt the proposed budget. This alternative is not recommended as it would result in the discontinuation of LA SAFE operations and its programs. Without the budget, LA SAFE will be unable to administer its programs and fulfill its statutory motorist aid mission.

The Board could choose to make a modification, either a decrease or an increase, to the proposed budget. This alternative is not recommended since the proposed budget was developed to ensure that LA SAFE is sufficiently funded for FY24. The proposed budget ensures LA SAFE's ability to properly fulfill its mission and comply with all existing legal and statutory requirements and is consistent with Metro's proposed FY24 budget.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval of the proposed FY24 budget, staff will begin implementation of FY24 projects and efforts. Staff will monitor the budget and projects to ensure LA SAFE meets all its requirements in a fiscally responsible manner.

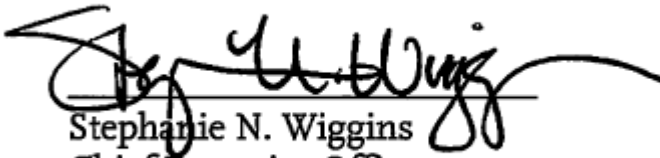
### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Proposed Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Summary

Attachment B - Five-Year Financial Forecast

Prepared by: Nancy Saravia, Sr. Director, Countywide Planning & Dev  
(213) 922-1217  
Kenneth Coleman, Deputy Executive Officer, Highway Operations, (213) 922-2951  
Shahrzad Amiri, Deputy Chief Officer of Operations, Shared Mobility, (213) 922-3061

Reviewed by: Conan Cheung, Chief Operations Officer  
(213) 418-3034



Stephanie N. Wiggins  
Chief Executive Officer