



## Los Angeles Aging Advocacy Coalition

June 16, 2016

The Los Angeles Metro Board  
1 Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Addressing the Growing Transportation Needs of Older Adults and People with Disabilities

Dear Metro Board Members,

First, on behalf of our whole coalition, we want to thank the offices of the Board members who helped develop a motion that will provide valuable indicators for monitoring Metro's responsiveness to the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. We also want to convey special appreciation for the leadership that was provided by Supervisor Kuehl and her staff. We are encouraged by the broad Board support for this policy statement which will increase Metro's accountability in serving our communities.

However, Metro has just released the Public Input and Polling Results document and the proposed Expenditure Plan and therefore we must as well convey our disappointment with both. With regards to the report on public input, we worked diligently to present our communities' case for adequate funding and services from Metro. We wrote and distributed letters, attended meetings, participated in calls. You will recall our repeated testimony to the Metro Board and our letter to Philip Washington with fifteen leading agencies on the letterhead. Yet, these efforts were not acknowledged within the report.

Still, the number one benefit that resonated most with the public in Metro polls was "to keep fares affordable for seniors, students and the disabled". This response came from hard work on the part of many of our representatives and should have been recognized within the Public Input Report. It also suggests that a program that addresses the needs and aspirations of our community would fare well with the voters.

We were also disappointed by the proposed Expenditure Plan and that our line item was not changed in any way—the two percent of revenues that was recommended in March for students, seniors and disabled remains the same today. This occurred even though we pointed out in many forums that two percent was inadequate to meet needs as the population in Los Angeles County grows older. Moreover, this category of funding does not specifically describe how much resources are allocated for students, for older adults and for people with disabilities. Given the growth expected in the older adult population, it is easy to see that much of these monies will be needed by Access Services alone in the coming years, especially if fixed route services are not delivered in a way that reduces demand for paratransit.

While throughout the Expenditure Plan, there are potential resources for seniors and people with disabilities (specifically in capital funding for bike/ped, first mile/last mile), these items are buried and difficult to find. We recommend that Metro Board ask staff to demonstrate that the two percent budget can cover all of the projected costs. If this cannot be shown, we ask that resources from general operations be allocated to cover the shortfall.

Federal requirements for ADA standards is the law for all capital projects; however, ADA compliance should be seen as the floor, not the ceiling. Metro must be aspirational, seeking to become a national leader in addressing the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities. This will often mean going beyond meeting ADA requirements.

Finally, we thank you again for your support for the motion that will shortly be in front of the whole board. Yet, we must remind you that increasing Metro accountability, as it moves to address the profound demographic change in our county, is only a first step. Reorienting the agency in this direction must be fully resourced if this institutional transformation is to occur.

Sincerely,

The Los Angeles Aging Advocacy Coalition