

**Metro**

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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**FINANCE, BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
APRIL 15, 2015**

SUBJECT: FY16 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC OUTREACH

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

This is a receive and file a report in response to a letter by Mayor Garcetti (Attachment A) on steps to be taken to engage the public in Metro's FY16 budget development process

ISSUE

Metro has the duty and responsibility of spending nearly \$5.5 billion in an effective, efficient, and transparent manner. Therefore, we should proactively engage the public in a discussion of Metro's budget priorities for next fiscal year. We are actively soliciting input through various means to provide and gather key information on Metro's transportation programs.

DISCUSSION

We have prepared an extensive public outreach program on the FY16 budget to ensure the greatest level of engagement from the public and key stakeholders. Using public forums, communication tools and technology advances, we have numerous options and opportunities for informing and engaging the public.

We have already initiated the outreach process by providing information on "Budget Basics" at all five Service Councils, The Source/El Pasajero, other social media including Facebook, Twitter, and a podcast, and will continue to provide budget updates on key topic areas through these channels.

Soliciting meaningful input from the public and stakeholders is important. To ensure greater participation, the times and locations of public forums are being advertised through multiple channels, including the Metro website, "Take Ones" on board vehicles, newspaper advertising, message on hold, and Metro Briefs. The following are highlights of the forums that have and will be scheduled to engage the public and receive their input:

- Metro Service Councils – In February, 2015 a presentation was made to Service Councils located throughout the County on Budget Basics which outlined the “building blocks” for the FY 16 budget. A budget workshop is scheduled with these Service Councils in April 2015 to solicit their input on the draft budget.
- Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) – A meeting is scheduled with the CAC in April 2015 to review the FY15 budget to actual variance and to solicit their input for the proposed FY16 budget.
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – A meeting will be scheduled with the TAC to solicit their input for the proposed FY16 budget.
- Bus Operations Subcommittee (BOS) – A meeting will be scheduled with the BOS to solicit their input for the proposed FY16 budget.
- Public Budget Forum – A public forum on the FY16 budget has been scheduled for April 25, 2015 to be held at Metro's Gateway building. To maximize participation, the forum will be held on a Saturday and is centrally located and transit accessible.
- Public Hearing – A public hearing on the FY16 Budget is scheduled for May 20, 2015 for the Board to receive public comments.

While public workshops and forums are good for people who can afford the time to participate, other media channels are being used to provide multiple opportunities for the public to learn about the FY16 budget and process:

- The Source/El Pasajero/Facebook/Twitter – This year staff is using Metro's Social Media outlets to inform the public throughout the budget development process. Three stories have already been posted to the Social Media accounts (stories on budget basics, the capital program, and the operating budget), and additional stories will follow with each budget update to the Board.
- Podcast – Staff will be recording and posting a podcast in late March-early April 2015 on various budget themes and issues.
- Interactive Budget Tool - Given the lead time necessary to develop an interactive online tool, staff proposes to administer the tool in December 2015. The input received will help in any mid-year budget adjustments that would be made as well as providing input into the FY17 budget.
- Budget Website – A Budget Website has been developed for the public to access that outlines the budget process, presents budget details, and provide an opportunity for the public to comment.

- E-mail – budgetcomments@metro.net has been established to allow the public an opportunity to comment without having to attend a public forum.
- Performance Based Budgeting - In addition to these efforts, A performance based budgeting process is under development to use key performance indicators as a management tool to guide expenditures towards the core agency goals and properly allocate resources to what needs to get accomplished. We anticipate reporting agency and department performance quarterly, starting second quarter of FY16, which will provide input into the FY17 budget development.

We will continue to explore innovative tools to build on Metro's public engagement program.

NEXT STEPS

Comments received from all public outreach forums and media channels will be summarized and presented to the Board as input prior to the FY16 Budget adoption.

Attachments:

- A. Letter from Mayor Garcetti dated February 27, 2015

Prepared By:

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Nalini Ahuja

Nalini Ahuja
Executive Director, Finance & Budget

Arthur T. Leahy

Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

February 27, 2015

Mr. Art Leahy
Chief Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

RE: Public Engagement in the Fiscal Year 2016 MTA Budget

Dear Mr. Leahy:

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is responsible for nearly five and a half billion dollars of public funds, including more than two and a half billion dollars of sales taxes, fare revenue, and toll revenue that come directly from Los Angeles County residents and stakeholders. MTA has a duty and responsibility to spend these funds in an effective, efficient, and transparent manner.

MTA should proactively engage the public in a discussion of MTA's budget priorities for the next fiscal year. The residents of Los Angeles County must have an opportunity to give meaningful and public input into MTA's Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) budget.

Specifically, MTA take the following steps to develop its FY16 budget:

- Solicit input from the Citizens Advisory Council and Service Advisory Councils;
- Develop an interactive online tool that allows for direct public input;
- Conduct at least one public budget forum; and
- Report to the MTA Board on the agency's outreach efforts at the April 2016 Board meeting.

Mr. Art Leahy
February 27, 2015
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You and your staff are also encouraged to recommend additional innovative ways to engage the public on the development of next fiscal year's budget.

Public confidence and trust in MTA is crucial to the agency's success. Proactive engagement with the public on MTA's budget will go a long way toward that end.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Garcetti". The signature is stylized and includes a horizontal line extending to the right.

ERIC GARCETTI
Mayor

cc: MTA Board of Directors
Michele Jackson, Board Secretary
Charles Safer, County Counsel
Karen Gorman, Inspector General/Ethics Officer