

BEFORE THE
METRO EXPRESSLANES PROJECT TEAM

Public Hearing in the Matter of:)
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METRO EXPRESSLANES)
_____)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Gardena, California

Saturday, March 22, 2014

Reported by:

MARCENA M. MUNGUIA,
CSR No. 10420

Job No. :
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2 METRO EXPRESSLANES PROJECT TEAM

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16 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken at
17 Gardena City Hall, Council Chambers,
18 1700 West 162nd Street, Gardena, California,
19 commencing at 10:15 a.m., on Saturday,
20 March 22, 2014, heard before the Metro
21 ExpressLanes Project Team, reported by
22 MARCENA M. MUNGUIA, CSR No. 10420, a Certified
23 Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of
24 California.
25

1 APPEARANCES:

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3 Executive Director
4 Metro

4 Facilitator: BRONWEN KEINER
5 Senior Community Relations Officer
6 Metro

6 Spanish Interpreter: ALEX VARELA

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1 Gardena, California, Saturday, March 22, 2014

2 10:15 a.m.

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5 MS. KEINER: Welcome, everyone. Thank you for
6 joining us here. My name is Bronwen Keiner. I'm a
7 Senior Community Relations Officer with Metro and I'd
8 like to welcome you to the public hearing on Metro
9 ExpressLanes.

10 Today we're going to hear from
11 Stephanie Wiggins, Executive Director with Metro, a brief
12 presentation, and then we'd like to hear from you. So
13 thank you again very much for coming, and we'll get
14 started.

15 MS. WIGGINS: Can you go over the instructions on the
16 comment cards and also how much time they get to speak?
17 Can you give those instructions so people know?

18 MS. KEINER: Sorry about that.

19 I forgot to add the instructions for today's
20 comments. Everyone has two minutes to speak, if you'd
21 like to speak.

22 MS. WIGGINS: It's three minutes.

23 MS. KEINER: I'm sorry. Three minutes to speak, if
24 you'd like to speak, and we'll be calling names after
25 Stephanie's presentation.

1 So if you haven't done so already, please fill
2 out a comment card to speak, this blue speaker card
3 (indicating), and give it to Christian at the back.

4 If you'd like to make a written comment, you can
5 fill out this comment card (indicating).

6 MS. WIGGINS: Thanks, Bronwen.

7 I'd just like to add again good morning. My
8 name is Stephanie Wiggins with Metro.

9 I just wanted to add as well Marcena here is
10 transcribing all of the comments made today that are made
11 orally, including my presentation. So if you choose to
12 testify, we will have a transcription by the court
13 reporter, and all of these proceedings will be presented
14 to the Metro Board at its April 24th Board meeting. I
15 just want to make sure everyone's aware of that as well.

16 Okay. I think I'll stand here. It's a little
17 awkward. Sorry about that.

18 All right. So the intention of our public
19 hearings -- and this is the first of seven public
20 hearings that we're holding throughout the 110 corridor
21 and the 10 corridor as part of our formal pilot program.
22 This was a one-year pilot program, one year meaning we
23 had to operate the 110 and the 10 concurrently for
24 12 months. That's the pilot period. And as part of the
25 pilot period, we need public feedback on this program.

1 Today, as part of my formal presentation -- and
2 it's the same presentation I'm going to give at the
3 remaining six public hearings -- and if you'd like a list
4 of the rest of the public hearings, they're available at
5 the reception desk. But I'm going to give you background
6 on why Metro and CalTrans originally joined together to
7 move this pilot forward, some of the very preliminary
8 results, and then talk about the next steps related to
9 the public comment/public feedback period.

10 So I want to take a step back and discuss why
11 High Occupancy Toll lanes, or HOT lanes, which are
12 branded or known as ExpressLanes, why Metro and CalTrans
13 about six, seven years ago even decided to look at this
14 type of congestion-reduction tool.

15 They did it for a couple of reasons. First of
16 all, the traditional revenue sources that are used to pay
17 for keeping up our roads and maintaining our roads has
18 continued to decline over the past few decades.

19 Typically, we're used to, as taxpayers, paying
20 into the gas tax, but the gas tax has not been raised by
21 Congress for more than two decades and it hasn't been
22 raised by the State for almost an equivalent amount. At
23 the same time, as you all know in your everyday lives,
24 prices go up. So just like the prices of goods and
25 commodities go up and fuel goes up, the costs of

1 maintaining our roads and infrastructure goes up.

2 So increasingly, what we have to do when we're
3 in an environment where we don't have enough revenue, we
4 are looking at how can we make better use of the existing
5 assets and roads that we have today. All right?
6 In addition, we can't build enough lanes to accommodate
7 all of the population that we have. Today in L.A. County
8 alone, there are 10 million people and growing and we
9 just can't build enough freeway lanes to accommodate all
10 the continued growth.

11 The other opportunity we had seven years ago
12 when we were looking at what could we do to help manage
13 congestion, because traffic is just part of L.A.'s
14 culture, the issue is, How do we better manage it,
15 knowing that it's here? And we looked at our carpool
16 lane network. L.A. County has one of the largest, if not
17 the largest, carpool lane network. It's the largest in
18 the state and I would submit it's probably the largest in
19 the country. But on certain carpool lanes in L.A.
20 County, if you traveled on them and think about them,
21 like the 405, the 210, portions of the 10 and 110, they
22 actually are not getting what the federal -- their travel
23 speed benefits that the federal government requires.

24 So in 2007, Federal Highway Administration sent
25 a letter to CalTrans -- and CalTrans is the state

1 department that is responsible for the construction and
2 operation of our freeways and carpool lanes. They sent
3 them a letter that said the federal government had
4 observed what they called degraded performance, and
5 degradation is defined as your average travel speeds
6 during the rush-hour period have fallen below 45 miles
7 per hour for more than 10 percent of the time; and they
8 said to CalTrans in 2007, You need to identify for us
9 what are you going to do to try to improve that
10 condition.

11 One of the things you can do is increase the
12 minimum carpool occupancy requirement. What that means
13 is today some carpool lanes have a requirement of two or
14 more people. Well, if they get too full, one tool that
15 CalTrans has available to it is just to increase the
16 minimum occupancy requirement, meaning it would go from
17 two to three people. Right?

18 Other things you could do is you could exclude
19 hybrids or alternative fuel vehicles from the lanes. You
20 could build more lanes and you could look at converting
21 the carpool lanes to HOT lanes.

22 And so because there was a grant, a federal
23 grant opportunity, on the table, we worked together and
24 submitted an application to look at converting the
25 carpool lanes to HOT lanes.

1 While this concept is new to L.A. County -- and
2 as you know, we implemented it as a pilot program because
3 it was so new -- it's not new to the rest of Southern
4 California and it continues to grow across the country.
5 Some of you may be familiar, but in Orange County and in
6 San Diego county, they've actually had ExpressLanes in
7 operation for more than a decade; and in the Bay Area
8 over the last five years, they've actually opened up some
9 ExpressLanes and now they're committed to doing a whole
10 network of ExpressLanes.

11 So these are the first HOT lanes. HOT lanes is
12 the technical term. High Occupancy Toll lanes is the
13 technical term. For the rest of the presentation, I'll
14 just refer to them as the brand name, ExpressLanes,
15 because that's what the federal government requires all
16 of the signage on the freeway to state. So you'll see
17 that consistently throughout the state and other parts of
18 the country. Where they have these types of lanes, the
19 signage is all going to refer to them as ExpressLanes.

20 Our goal is to move more people, try to better
21 manage the traffic congestion that we have today by
22 basically making better use of the existing space. So
23 what that means is when we looked at our carpool lanes,
24 at certain times of the day there is space in the carpool
25 lanes. The concept here is when we allow solo drivers

1 the opportunity to buy into those lanes when space is
2 available, we make better use of the overall existing
3 space that we have, the limited space that we have.

4 We competed in 2007 and in 2008. We competed on
5 a national scale and we were awarded a \$210 million grant
6 by the federal government, CalTrans and Metro. We also
7 partnered in that grant with Torrance Transit, Gardena
8 Transit and Foothill Transit.

9 We decided to take a multimodal approach to
10 improving traffic on the 110 and 10. What that means is
11 it wasn't just about allowing people who are driving
12 alone the choice to pay a toll to get into the lanes, but
13 we also wanted to provide more quality options so that
14 people would take a look at taking transit.

15 So we've invested over -- we purchased over 59
16 new buses to operate on the 110 and 10 ExpressLanes, we
17 made improvements along the stations on both the 10 and
18 the 110, and we also wanted to promote more vanpool
19 formation.

20 So when we talk about how we are going to
21 evaluate the performance of this pilot -- because this is
22 a very strict pilot, the examination. There has not been
23 a commitment at the local Board level or at the State
24 level to make this a permanent program. Throughout the
25 rest of the state where it operates in Orange County and

1 San Diego County and in the Bay Area, they do have
2 permanent programs, but this one as it's currently
3 constituted is not a permanent program. It's a pilot or
4 a demonstration program -- there are three key areas we
5 look at. One, did we help reduce congestion? Two, did
6 we actually help -- help develop something that's
7 sustainable? And three, do we have public acceptance?

8 So from a congestion reduction standpoint, we're
9 looking at measurements that let us know whether or not
10 we actually improved travel times along the corridor. We
11 look at since we made a significant investment in
12 transit, we look at whether or not we were able to
13 increase transit ridership. We set out an original goal
14 to form 100 new vanpools, both of the corridors, and our
15 definition of a vanpool for this demonstration is a van
16 that carries five or more people during rush hour.

17 From a sustainability perspective, we look at
18 three key areas of sustainability. One, from an
19 environmental perspective, does it help reduce poor air
20 quality and greenhouse gas emissions? Second, from an
21 economic perspective, if we operate these lanes, will it
22 require an ongoing public subsidy, meaning does it pay
23 for itself? And third, from sustainability, is we look
24 at social equity. Is it accessible to everyone
25 regardless of income?

1 And then the third key area of evaluating this
2 project is public acceptance. As many of you may be
3 aware, the concept of tolling is not a popular one.
4 While it's been in operation in Orange County and
5 San Diego County, it's not popular there either. So
6 fundamentally, even if we were fortunate to meet metrics
7 in criteria of congestion reduction and the criteria of
8 sustainability, projects like this don't go ahead if we
9 actually don't have public acceptance. So public
10 acceptance is a key criteria that the Board will be
11 evaluating.

12 And when we look at public feedback and public
13 acceptance, there are a couple of key things we look at.
14 We look at how many accounts we have open with
15 transponders distributed as an indication of public
16 acceptance and then we look for public feedback, both
17 with surveys, online surveys, license plate surveys of
18 people who travel in the general purpose or the
19 mixed-flow lanes and then the public hearings just like
20 this one.

21 So all of that will be factored in to evaluating
22 the program.

23 So I'm going to move to the next -- the second
24 portion of the presentation and share some preliminary
25 results. I should state these are preliminary; these are

1 not final.

2 As part of the evaluation, since we did receive
3 a federal grant, the Federal Highway Administration is
4 conducting its own independent assessment and we should
5 have the results of -- their early results of the 110 in
6 particular by early next month. So we'll have that
7 available. And we'll also -- if you sign in, we'll make
8 sure you get a copy of that as well.

9 But through the latest available data that we
10 have collected, which covers through December 31st, a
11 couple months ago, the combined number of vehicle trips
12 between the 110 and 10 ExpressLanes exceeded 25 million.
13 The preliminary toll revenue that had been generated is
14 more than \$30 million. FASTRAC accounts, we had over
15 197,000 accounts opened, almost 250,000 transponders
16 issued. And for our equity plan, which I'll discuss in a
17 minute -- it's our discount for low-income commuters --
18 we had over 4,000 L.A. County households enrolled in that
19 program.

20 The average toll on the 110 during the peak
21 period -- and our area of measurement looks at the peak
22 period or the rush-hour periods, and the rush hour is
23 defined as 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Monday through Friday
24 and then 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

25 So the average toll in the morning, which is the

1 most congested time of the day, as many of you are aware,
2 the average toll if you were taking the ExpressLanes for
3 the entire 11-mile trip was about almost \$6.54 and the
4 average toll on the 10 if you were taking the entire
5 14-mile trip was \$4.75.

6 So it's important to note that the 110, which
7 actually travels between the 91 Freeway and Adams
8 Boulevard, is 11 miles in length, so the average toll
9 would have been about 58 cents per mile, and the 10
10 ExpressLane is a slightly longer ExpressLane than the
11 110. So that's why you see the 14 miles. And again, if
12 you take that whole 14-mile trip, it was averaging about
13 34 cents per mile.

14 The average travel speeds during the morning
15 rush-hour periods between the ExpressLanes and the
16 general purpose lanes on both corridors, it's about a
17 15-mile-per-hour travel advantage if you take the
18 ExpressLanes over the regular lanes.

19 What we saw when we turned on the ExpressLanes
20 both on the 110 and the 10 is what we expected to happen,
21 because we were changing the way we used the lanes;
22 right? So when we first turned on the ExpressLanes on
23 the 110 and the 10, we actually saw trips decline in the
24 former carpool lanes and trips increase in the general
25 purpose lanes. So the general purpose lanes got slower.

1 We saw a bump-up in the ExpressLanes.

2 So why would that happen? That's part of a
3 natural ramp-up that has happened in Atlanta when they
4 did their I-85 ExpressLanes and in Miami when they did
5 their I-95 ExpressLanes, and as a result, it's what we
6 expected here because of two things.

7 Number one, we changed the way we used these
8 lanes. On the 110, the carpool lane had operated that
9 way that you only needed two or more people in your car
10 for more than 15 years. So when you change those rules,
11 people are going to have to adjust to that.

12 So how did the rules change? Number one, now
13 everyone who wanted to use those lanes, because this toll
14 system was an automated system, they needed to have a
15 FASTRAC transponder, and we now had the presence of
16 dedicated CHP during rush hour where you didn't have a
17 visible presence of enforcement when it was a carpool
18 lane.

19 So we saw the trips start out lower than they
20 were before, but during the ramp-up period, as more
21 people became aware, were less confused about the
22 program, gradually we saw trips increase in both the 110
23 and the 10 ExpressLanes, and then of course they have
24 some decline, but that tracked with what we typically
25 experienced with travel behavior on the freeway when

1 school is out of session. As you all know, the travel on
2 the freeways improves a little bit because there's a
3 decline, fewer people on the freeways, and then of course
4 with any federal holidays, we always saw a decline just
5 like you would when more people are off work.

6 Congestion reduction: When we looked at the
7 preliminary results provided by CalTrans this past
8 spring, the average travel speeds during the peak period
9 in the ExpressLanes improved on both the 110 and the 10
10 when we compared from before for that four-hour period:
11 on average, about five-mile-per-hour improvement on the
12 110 in the northbound direction in the morning and on the
13 10, almost threefold improvement, almost 16 miles per
14 hour.

15 The big difference between the 110 and the 10,
16 on the 10 before when it was a carpool lane, there was
17 just one carpool lane in each direction. Well, with this
18 program, we were able -- just through restriping, we were
19 able to add in another lane. We took a buffer lane that
20 separated the general purpose lanes from the carpool lane
21 and with the support of CalTrans and CHP, we repainted it
22 and opened it up for nine miles of the new lane. So
23 there's a lot more capacity than that corridor
24 experienced than on the 110.

25 Average travel times in the regular lanes, once

1 we got through that ramp-up period, we're seeing average
2 travel time improvement of three to six minutes between
3 those two corridors; and then the average travel times
4 for people who were driving alone previously and now have
5 chosen to move over into the ExpressLanes, they're
6 reporting on average a 30-minute travel time savings for
7 their trip.

8 When we look at transit ridership growth, we see
9 a 14 percent increase in boardings between the two
10 routes. More than 10 million boardings are occurring on
11 the 110 and 10 over the last year.

12 The Metro Silver Line is kind of the flagship
13 route that operates on both ExpressLanes. Our project
14 funded 41 new buses that actually started operating on
15 the 110 in June of 2011, more than a year before we
16 started the ExpressLanes. And from June 2011 to December
17 of 2013, we saw our ridership double.

18 When you look at just what happened since we
19 turned on the ExpressLanes, we also conducted an on-board
20 survey, and we have those results, the riders on the
21 Silver Line are saying that after the toll lanes started,
22 at least a third of them were influenced by the
23 conversion of the carpool lanes to the ExpressLanes, and
24 almost half of those riders, transit riders, say that
25 they believe their experience has improved.

1 From a sustainability perspective, we have been
2 able to keep the average speeds above 45 miles per hour
3 at least 90 percent of the time. That's the optimal
4 speed for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We also
5 invested in green-friendly materials and equipment when
6 we made improvements at the transit stations along both
7 routes.

8 From an economic perspective, we are actually
9 generating net toll revenue. That means we have
10 generated enough revenue to not only cover the operations
11 and maintenance costs of operating the system, but we now
12 have additional revenue left over for reinvestment in the
13 corridor, so we would not require an ongoing subsidy.

14 From a social equity perspective, I mentioned
15 that we have a number of households enrolled in the
16 program. The value of our Equity Plan through December
17 is about \$108,000 in toll credits that we had issued.

18 For those of you who may not be familiar, the
19 way our Equity Plan program works, first to be eligible,
20 you have to be an L.A. County resident. You have to have
21 a household income of less than twice the federal poverty
22 threshold. So for a family the size of three on average,
23 that's starting at around 40,000 household income or
24 less.

25 The way our Equity Plan works is when you open a

1 FASTRAC account with Metro, instead of opening up with
2 \$40 that serves as your prepaid toll deposit, if you
3 qualify for our Equity Plan, you only have to put down
4 \$15 as a prepaid toll deposit and Metro adds \$25 of toll
5 credit onto your account. So you start out with \$40 in
6 prepaid tolls. That's how that program works, and almost
7 60 percent of the trips of the Equity Plan account
8 holders are occurring during the peak period.

9 So what happens to the net toll revenue? Well,
10 by local and state law, whatever's generated along the
11 110 has to be reinvested in the 110, in the communities
12 and transportation-related projects along the 110.
13 Whatever's generated along the 10 has to be reinvested in
14 transportation improvements in the communities along the
15 10. That means whatever's generated on the 110 can't go
16 to the Westside, can't go to another subregion; similar
17 circumstance with the 10.

18 And so the Board this past fall has approved
19 guidelines on how the money will be reinvested. We are
20 forecasting about \$19 million will be available for
21 reinvestment. We will set aside money off the top to
22 continue the transit service. We saw a couple of slides
23 before of a transit service which is the culmination of
24 59 new buses operating on those routes. That includes
25 four new buses for Torrance Transit, two new buses for

1 Gardena Transit and 41 buses for Metro Transit and 12
2 buses for Foothill Transit. We would take funds off the
3 top from the net toll revenues to ensure that we could
4 keep operating those buses for at least the next
5 12 months, and then the remainder will be allocated to
6 additional transit use. So it could go for new buses,
7 new operating subsidies. It could help pay down fares
8 for seniors. Another 40 percent can go to what's known
9 as active transportation, which means bicycle/pedestrian
10 improvements and highway uses, any improvements there.

11 Right now we are in the midst of accepting grant
12 applications. They're due on May 30th and there is
13 information at the table about our net toll revenue
14 program if you want to find more details about the
15 application and the evaluation criteria, but right now
16 it's scheduled to go before the Board in July to actually
17 finalize the expenditure plan, how the money would be
18 reinvested based upon the types of project applications
19 we receive.

20 Often we are asked, "Why? Why reinvest the
21 money this way?" What we know is because we are so
22 congested, we've got to look at multiple ways to improve
23 traffic. And the idea is to encourage people to not
24 drive alone but to invest in better quality options or
25 alternatives to driving alone, like express bus transit

1 or vanpools or making it easier to form a carpool, making
2 sure our Park & Rides have enough space; and in doing so,
3 we want to improve the quality of the options and also
4 reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

5 So when you look at the transponders, we have
6 exceeded our original goal. Our original goal was
7 100,000 transponders to be issued. We exceeded 100,000
8 back in February of last year. As I mentioned on the
9 earlier slide, we were over 244,000. We are now over
10 250,000.

11 As you can imagine here, with this slide, it
12 shows a map. The heavier green are the higher areas
13 where there are account openings; and for the 110 in
14 particular, the South Bay/Gardena area -- and I'll note
15 Gardena since we're at Gardena for this public hearing.
16 Gardena is in the list of the top 15 cities and I think
17 in order it would be 12th, 12th on this list.

18 Also, what has been a surprise to us is that
19 there's interest beyond L.A. County. This map is a
20 continuation of the map of L.A. County, but it shows in
21 Southern California the areas identified in gray are Zip
22 codes where people have opened accounts with us. And
23 then further beyond Southern California, there's interest
24 statewide. Of the 58 nonL.A. counties, 45 of them have
25 accounts with us.

1 The number one county with accounts with us
2 outside of L.A. County is San Bernardino County and we
3 think that's driven by the interest for the 10. You have
4 a lot more longer-distance travelers. Similar with the
5 makeup of the carpool lane, typically it attracts people
6 who are traveling much longer distances.

7 Some of our preliminary customer demographic
8 profile, people who have accounts with us: Four out of
9 ten are Caucasian, three out of ten are Asian, about
10 17 percent Hispanic, 6 percent African-American,
11 1 percent Native American.

12 We looked also at household income distribution.
13 What we took is the Zip code information of our FASTRAC
14 account file and we looked at the census information that
15 corresponds with those Zip codes. That is what makes up
16 the other bars on the graph, the bottom half of this
17 graph. The blue bars compare those income categories to
18 L.A. County census information as a whole for those same
19 Zip codes. So you see if we look at the orange brackets,
20 there's a balance distribution among various household
21 incomes of account holders.

22 What's important to note is this data does not
23 include Zip code information from the transit riders who
24 are also traveling on this route. This is just from the
25 FASTRAC account holders.

1 When we talked to our customers about their
2 primary reason for getting a transponder, not a surprise,
3 it's primarily for work. They find the greatest benefit
4 of the ExpressLanes time savings. Overall they give us
5 high marks for their experience, either excellent or
6 good. Almost 90 percent rate it either excellent or
7 good. And would they recommend to friends and families?
8 80 percent say yes.

9 When we asked what we could do to improve their
10 experience, the number one response was no improvement.
11 Second was expand or continue the program. Third was to
12 reduce the toll amount. Tied for fourth was to have more
13 entry or exit points and improve customer service. And
14 then fifth was to waive the maintenance fee, make that
15 permanent.

16 And that leads me to what we believe -- at least
17 the feedback we received during the pilot about the most
18 common viewpoints for people who are opposed to the
19 program.

20 People felt that tolls are unfair to people with
21 limited incomes. We also heard that before the program.
22 That's why we designed the Equity Plan program. I would
23 say -- I should say, for the record, our Equity Plan
24 program is the first of its kind in the country. No
25 ExpressLane in the country offers any type of discount

1 for low-income commuters.

2 And these aren't in any priority order, but the
3 second common viewpoint received for those who opposed
4 the program is they feel tolls are double taxation.

5 As I mentioned earlier, first, the amount of
6 taxes we pay does not keep up with maintenance
7 requirements for the roadway.

8 Secondly, however, those who are paying the toll
9 are solo drivers, people driving alone who now choose to
10 pay the toll by shifting out of the regular lanes and
11 going into the ExpressLanes. If you are a carpooler with
12 a FASTRAC, with two or more people in your vehicle on the
13 110, then you're not charged a toll. And since I'm doing
14 this also for the 10, the public hearings, I just want to
15 add for the record, on the 10, their occupancy
16 requirement is different than the 110. The 10 operated a
17 certain way for 39 years, and for 39 years you had to
18 have three or more people in your car when it was a
19 carpool lane during rush hour. So when we converted it,
20 we now opened it up to not just solo drivers but also
21 two-person carpools. They are charged a toll during rush
22 hour on the 10 corridor because when it was a carpool
23 lane, they did not have access to those lanes. And then
24 during off peak on the 10 corridor, carpools with a
25 FASTRAC are allowed to travel toll free.

1 And then the other most common viewpoint of
2 opposition we've heard during the pilot period after we
3 turned it on was dislike of the monthly account
4 maintenance fee for infrequent users.

5 The way our system works, at least when it
6 started out, was that if you had four -- less than four
7 one-way trips on the ExpressLanes, either the 10 or the
8 110 or a combination, you would be assessed a \$3 monthly
9 account maintenance fee. The maintenance fee can be
10 waived if you have four or more trips. Those trips can
11 be all transit trips. They can all be carpool transit
12 paid. They don't have to be paid trips. It's waived if
13 you have four or more of those trips. It's also waived
14 automatically if you are enrolled in our Equity Plan.

15 What happened in April of last year, based upon
16 feedback that we received, our Board implemented a waiver
17 for L.A. County residents. So no L.A. County resident
18 with accounts with us was assessed a maintenance fee.
19 It's automatically waived. So it's currently waived
20 right now, and of course if the program continues,
21 they'll take that up again.

22 So just to close, the last couple of slides,
23 lessons learned: With projects of this type that are new
24 to the area, you need political champions to allow
25 agencies to try to experiment to see what we can learn

1 from these types of tools.

2 It's very important to address social equity
3 issues early in the planning process. We conducted
4 assessment during our planning process before we
5 finalized our Environmental Document. To assess the
6 impact on low income commuters, we had it peer reviewed
7 by academics at UCLA and USC and a representative from
8 the Environmental Defense Fund.

9 It was also important that we -- when you're
10 introducing tolling, that you offer quality nontoll
11 options like improving transit and making it more
12 attractive.

13 And then a project of this type requires a lot
14 of outreach to let people know what the project is, that
15 it's coming. Prior to launch, over the five years prior
16 to launch, we held over 500 community briefings. In an
17 area of this size of 10 million people, that's not
18 enough, but it's a significant effort because you don't
19 get to everyone and not everyone is aware of how the
20 program's supposed to operate. And of course that's what
21 we experienced post-launch, a lot of confusion, a lot of
22 misunderstanding about the rules and how the lanes would
23 work.

24 What we heard loud and clear from motorists who
25 were traveling on the facility and from California

1 Highway Patrol from their field observations is we needed
2 to improve signage, and that's been a constant challenge.
3 We're still working with partners based upon continuous
4 feedback from motorists that our signage still isn't
5 clear enough, but within the first few weeks of the 110
6 conversion in November of 2012, we heard loud and clear
7 that our signage was not clear. So we worked to put up
8 additional signage that indicated that people could not
9 cross the double white lines. That was a new requirement
10 that came with our conversion.

11 Most of us are familiar that the carpool lanes
12 are traditionally separated from the general purpose
13 lanes by double yellow lines. That's what we all know.
14 Well, there was a new state law that took effect a couple
15 of years ago that requires those double yellow to be
16 double white, and so we were required to start with the
17 double white. Well, a lot of motorists just felt, Well,
18 if it's double white, then that means I can cross it.
19 They did not understand that it has the same level of
20 enforcement as a double yellow, meaning a minimum \$491
21 citation. It's a moving violation, safety hazard. So we
22 really had to work to try to improve that communication.

23 And California Highway Patrol representatives
24 are here. They're in the Q and A. You can ask them
25 questions about that as well.

1 Also, to make sure carpoolers understood that
2 they needed to have a transponder as well because the
3 toll system is automated and without it, then it triggers
4 a violation notice.

5 And then we have to invest in providing
6 outstanding customer service. When people are providing
7 you their money, they expect guaranteed value,
8 reliability and responsiveness and continued education
9 and marketing campaigns and enforcement improvements.

10 Initially when we rolled it out, because we
11 anticipated this would be a big change -- remember on the
12 110, when you operate a certain way after -- for 15
13 years, people don't automatically understand that now
14 it's going to change. So to try to anticipate that,
15 there was a 60-day grace period. Well, initially we
16 started out with 30 days and then based upon the needed
17 feedback about the confusion from the signage and
18 motorists, we extended it to 60 days; and then based on
19 that feedback, we were able to start out the 10 a couple
20 months later with the 60-day grace period in effect.

21 Those are just some ways we tried to address
22 public feedback.

23 My final slide is on our recent actions and next
24 steps. As I mentioned at the beginning, our formal pilot
25 period has completed, completed in February. Let me just

1 take a couple seconds to explain that, why that was an
2 important milestone.

3 When we received that \$210 million grant from
4 the federal government in 2008, it came with some key
5 requirements, and one was that we had to operate the 110
6 and the 10 ExpressLanes concurrently for 12 months. If
7 we did not do it for 12 months and we interrupted it, we
8 would have to repay the \$210 million grant. So having
9 met that hurdle, we don't have to repay the \$210 million
10 grant.

11 So the Board can decide in April -- they can
12 decide not to continue with the program. Our tolling
13 authority expires January 2015. If the Board decides not
14 to continue, we are able at least to keep the buses and
15 keep the infrastructure investments we made in the
16 stations, but the importance of completing that formal
17 pilot period is we no longer have an obligation over our
18 head to repay the \$210 million to the federal government.

19 On February 24th, per State law, since we had
20 completed our formal pilot period with the grant, we now
21 allow white sticker and green sticker alternative fuel
22 vehicles with the transponder the availability to use the
23 ExpressLanes toll free. During the formal pilot period,
24 those vehicles were charged a toll when they were driving
25 alone. So now they're allowed to travel toll free. It's

1 probably going to be about a \$600,000 revenue loss to the
2 system, but we know there were people who wanted to be
3 able to travel toll free with their green and white
4 sticker.

5 So I think I've talked a lot. We're in our
6 public comment period March 1st through April 7th. Today
7 is not the last day. You can still attend meetings or
8 e-mail. You can e-mail us. We're collecting comments
9 also electronically through e-mail. You enter "It's
10 About Time" in the subject line and of course your
11 written comments today.

12 The Board will consider your public input,
13 feedback, and all of this information on Thursday,
14 April 24th at 9:00 a.m. But, again, the intention is
15 that the transcription from today's hearing as well as
16 the rest of them will be part of the information packet
17 that the Board has before them before they make their
18 decision.

19 So now I'm going to stop talking and I'll turn
20 it over to Bronwen and she's going to start the
21 testimony.

22 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Stephanie.

23 And now it's time to hear from you. We have
24 seven comment cards. Each of you will have three minutes
25 to speak. And as Stephanie said, you're welcome to

1 submit a public comment card today to speak or a written
2 comment card that looks like this (indicating).

3 So when you come up to the front, there is going
4 to be a timer here that shows three minutes and then
5 you'll know how much more time you have.

6 I'm going to also ask that you state your name
7 for the record.

8 I'm starting with the first speaker, Irella
9 Ruiz, followed by Renee Anderson, followed by Ken.

10 MS. RUIZ: I'll spell my name. I-r-e-l-l-a. Last
11 name is Ruiz, R-u-i-z, as in zebra.

12 Thank you, Stephanie, for your presentation. We
13 finally have some answers to the questions as to how much
14 money has this project generated and where is it going.

15 My main concern is we -- I'm a part of a
16 carpool. We carpool from the Transit Center into
17 Hollywood. So we use the 110 every day, five days a
18 week, morning and evening, and what we have experienced
19 is quite opposite to what the presentation says. We have
20 noticed that in the last six months -- we have two
21 transponders, three cars, and we switch our transponders
22 every week.

23 So we did what was asked of us from Metro. We
24 went and got our transponders, we set up our accounts, we
25 continued to meet at the Transit Center, and yet last

1 week we left the Transit Center, which is located on
2 182nd and Vermont, at about 7:10 and we did not make it
3 to our work until 8:00, which is unusual because the
4 speeds were -- they were not 45 miles per hour. I'm
5 sorry. The 110 starts backing up at the 105 and then we
6 slow down. Then it picks up a little bit and then it
7 backs up again on Slauson to USC, which by that time the
8 carpool has already ended.

9 So, you know, depending on what happens to this
10 project, what we want as daily commuters and users is the
11 ability to have, you know, that 45-mile-per-hour speed,
12 not 20 miles per hour, because if it's 20 miles, I might
13 as well stop my carpool and join the regular lane.

14 You know, we've seen people without
15 transponders. How do I know that? Because I generally
16 sit on the driver's seat and I call myself the Metro
17 police and we're always constantly looking. We see solo
18 drivers without transponders. We've seen people cross
19 the double yellow line. We saw one guy who went after
20 the cameras, had already passed the cameras, and before
21 Slauson he exited. He waited until after the cameras and
22 he came back into the carpool lane, a solo driver, no
23 transponder. That's unfair to us.

24 We have followed all the rules and we're not
25 seeing the benefits in terms of speed.

1 I'm not necessarily talking in terms of where
2 the money is going. It's great that it's being
3 reinvested in communities that need it, but for us, it's
4 important to have reliability in terms of speed. That's
5 all I have to say.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

8 Next speaker is Renee Anderson, followed by Ken,
9 followed by Milly Yamada.

10 MS. ANDERSON: My name is Renee Anderson.

11 And now, most of the time I ride the 110, but I
12 do it on the weekends and so that's not during the time
13 and so I was not going to get a transponder because it's
14 me by myself going to church, back and forth to church;
15 but because, you know, you transitioned, the majority of
16 the people on the weekend is riding in the regular
17 traffic lane and so, you know, I can't get to church. So
18 I had to end up buying a transponder just so that I could
19 get to church on time if I'm running late. And so I
20 don't think that -- you know, I didn't think that I
21 needed to.

22 I also really didn't think it was fair that they
23 put it on the 110. For one thing, the 110 is just not
24 that long. It's only up until Adams, you know, and most
25 of the people in that area is in a low-income bracket and

1 so to start charging people the right or left freeway, I
2 think -- I just thought it was a terrible thing to do.

3 And the other thing is getting on and off the
4 freeway when you're in those carpool lanes, the lanes --
5 I mean, they have them so far in between, so you
6 miss that. You miss spots. And then they have the white
7 line. You know, you don't know when you can get in and
8 when you can get out because of the way they've got it
9 with the buses running in and out. So if you're getting
10 off at Manchester -- you know, I'm trying to get off so I
11 can get off at El Segundo. Then if I'm not in the right
12 lane, then I can't get over; and even if I do get over at
13 Manchester, I've got to go way over the lanes. So the
14 gap is too far in between for allowing people to get out.

15 And I think it's also on the 105. And I know
16 like at Crenshaw, if you get on from the Harbor Freeway,
17 you've got to go way past Crenshaw before you can even
18 get off the freeway. Regardless of whether that's part
19 of your study or not, you know, it's just -- the gaps are
20 far in -- too far in between.

21 But I'm going to write down some of the things
22 because I have a lot more that you addressed that I
23 really wanted to get into, so I'm going to write it down.
24 But I just think that it was -- it was just a silly idea
25 in the first place to do that.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

3 Next we have Ken, followed by Milly Yamada,
4 followed by Ray Yanagita.

5 KENNETH: Hello. My name is Kenneth, shortened to
6 Ken.

7 First thing, I just generally support the idea
8 of Metro ExpressLanes. I am a user of Metro
9 ExpressLanes.

10 Some of the facts was that the original estimate
11 was it was going to generate about 16 to 18 million
12 dollars in annual revenue. We actually very well
13 exceeded over that. We have over 30 million, as we saw
14 on the slide. It actually went up to 20 million at the
15 end of October. However, I think this is all just
16 somewhat contributing to the fact that we have waived the
17 monthly maintenance fee for \$3, whether you use it four
18 times or not, but I just want to make a comment that --
19 to everyone to let you guys know that there is actually a
20 motion by Supervisor Director Gloria Molina saying that
21 the Board eliminates the waiver of the monthly
22 maintenance fee for all L.A. County residents at the end
23 of the pilot period and implements a flat monthly
24 maintenance fee for \$1 per all account users. Metro
25 estimates that a \$1 monthly fee per account would

1 generate about \$2.3 million annually.

2 I think this is ridiculous. This motion is
3 actually going to be taken up on the April 24th Metro
4 Board meeting and it might undermine the whole project,
5 because we're actually doing much better right now
6 without the monthly maintenance fee. We're generating
7 over \$30 million by December where an original estimate
8 was only 16 to 18 million dollars annually.

9 At a dollar, Supervisor Molina says that it's
10 going to cost \$2.3 million in revenue to help pay for
11 these account maintenances. I would say if it's already
12 generating \$30 million by the end of December last year,
13 \$2.3 million is a cost of doing business. Don't pass
14 that along to account holders.

15 Remember, it's going to cost -- if this motion
16 passes, it's going to cost you a dollar a month whether
17 you are a carpool user, whether you don't use it, whether
18 you use it. There's no four-minimum count. They're just
19 going to want to charge you a dollar more per month.

20 I just want to put that onto my statement that I
21 am against Ms. -- Supervisor Molina's motion and that
22 monthly maintenance fees should be zero for all account
23 users.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

1 Next we have Milly Yamada, followed by
2 Ray Yanagita, followed by Skip Graves.

3 MS. YAMADA: Good day. Thank you for being here, the
4 people from Metro and staff, but I also have to disagree
5 with your presentation.

6 I do not find that FASTRAC, Metro's whatever,
7 has really not really had any congestion reduction, not
8 when I am traveling at 12 miles per hour in the lanes.
9 Then I see, Oh, it's almost \$13 to get in. When you put
10 up the signs saying It's \$13, almost \$13. Well, my
11 goodness. I get into the FASTRAC lane and guess what?
12 Half a mile down the road, the number one, two, three,
13 four lanes are going faster than I am, at 60 miles an
14 hour or whatever. Here I'm going about maybe 20 miles
15 per hour.

16 I for one do not like and I oppose the fact that
17 you are charging us and giving us a false sense of amount
18 and congestion when there isn't any. To me, there is no
19 cap on how much you at Metro or FASTRAC are charging the
20 average person driving a vehicle. That is so wrong and
21 it should be changed. I hope that whoever is overseeing
22 the prices and congestion pricing, there will be a cap to
23 this nonsense that you are creating.

24 If you actually think about it, I think that
25 your money would have been better spent at putting maybe

1 a parking structure, increasing the increase over at the
2 like Harbor Gateway, because when I came there at
3 lunchtime one day, there's no parking at Harbor Gateway
4 Transit. There's hardly anything left. There should
5 have been more money spent for increased parking.

6 You can also put one of the new buses -- you can
7 put it just for maybe people who want to ride and use a
8 bicycle. You can put in a new car on the Blue Lines for
9 just people who are wanting to use bicycles. I think
10 that would have increased better and usage of the moneys
11 that were given to Metro, CalTrans, and the FASTRAC
12 people.

13 Thank you very much.

14 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

15 Next we have Ray Yanagita, followed by
16 Skip Graves, followed by Roy Gemser.

17 MR. YANAGITA: Hello. That's Ray Yanagita.

18 I was coming here today to complain, because I
19 have a natural gas car with a white sticker. If I did
20 not come today, I wouldn't realize that I could now ride
21 the ExpressLane for free, so now I feel much better.

22 The only question I have now, since it started
23 on February 24th, was it, will I get a refund for not
24 realizing that it had changed and why was I not sent an
25 e-mail or some sort of information so that I'd realize

1 that I could use the ExpressLane for free? So the refund
2 is what I'm looking for now. That's my complaint. Will
3 I get it?

4 MS. WIGGINS: Talk to me afterwards.

5 MR. YANAGITA: Okay. Thank you.

6 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

7 Next we have Skip Graves, followed by Roy
8 Gemser.

9 MR. GRAVES: Hello. My name is Skip Graves.

10 Mainly, I have questions more than a statement.

11 One of my questions is how much revenue has been
12 generated from fines by CHP officers in photo violations?

13 The second question is has signage been posted
14 stating that a transponder is required, and where are
15 they located on the Harbor Freeway?

16 The third question is I noticed in the statement
17 that you stated that it was supposed to eliminate single
18 drivers, but it seems like to me the main purpose of the
19 program is to allow single drivers to drive in the
20 carpool lane, so I don't see how that's reducing traffic.

21 But that was pretty much about it. It's just
22 more questions.

23 MS. WIGGINS: I can talk to you afterwards.

24 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

25 And next we have Roy Gemser.

1 MR. GEMSER: Okay. The name is Roy Gemser.

2 It seems like everybody is positive on the
3 carpool lane. I'm not. I happen to have been stuck on
4 the carpool -- on the 110 Freeway one day and I was
5 waiting for AAA to come and show up. It took them about
6 45 minutes, 15 minutes more than the 30 minutes required.
7 And as I was sitting there, I was watching traffic in the
8 carpool lane completely empty, okay, in the FASTRAC lane.
9 Everything else was completely packed. Every so often
10 you'd see a FASTRAC car zoom by, and I felt that that was
11 certainly counterproductive to what the carpool lane was
12 originally meant to be.

13 I don't recall having had notification that they
14 were attempting to start a FASTRAC lane. I don't recall
15 that at all and I read the paper every day. I read The
16 Daily Breeze and the L.A. Times and The Gardena Valley
17 News, but I saw no notification of the possibility that
18 the FASTRAC was going to be enabled. Okay? They didn't
19 have a town hall meeting such as what we're having today.
20 It just kind of happened and then all of a sudden these
21 fees started popping up and I'm saying to myself, Wait a
22 minute. I pay taxes. It was already alluded to in one
23 of the plates that you have, I pay taxes and I'm going to
24 be charged again? There is a problem with that.

25 If you looked at your bar of utilization as far

1 as ethnic backgrounds are concerned, did you see the
2 preponderance of white and Asians in comparison to the
3 Hispanic and the black? It is outrageous. Well, that
4 goes along the lines of income. They, the whites and the
5 Asians, historically have had more income and, therefore,
6 are able to afford it. Are we again talking about a
7 racial issue or rather, I should say, socioeconomic issue
8 where the others get left behind?

9 I'm not a person of wealth. I was lucky enough
10 to get a little bit of education so I can speak and
11 address these situations. There is a problem. There is
12 a problem as far as utilization is concerned and there's
13 a problem as far as outreach to the people are concerned.
14 Utilization is down, in my opinion. I can take any
15 number of data and skew it in the way to benefit my point
16 of view, but that is not what it's about. It's more a
17 reflection of utilization. What do we see?

18 That's all I have to say. I am getting
19 flustered. Thank you.

20 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

21 We have about 45 minutes left for the public
22 hearing today, so this gives a chance for more people to
23 make public comments, spoken word, or we can break and
24 have a Q and A individually around the room.

25 Are there any other public comments?

1 KIMBERLY: Hello. My name is Kimberly and I do use
2 the FASTRAC lane and I also participated in the rideshare
3 with the Metro bus.

4 I was looking for -- I would appreciate, first
5 of all, that they have -- I like the FASTRAC lane because
6 I was one of the individuals who wanted a special car so
7 that I could be a single user and get through the FASTRAC
8 lanes. So I appreciated them building it.

9 I have seen other models in other parts of the
10 state where they have various time exchanges that allow
11 you to enter the FASTRAC lane at high -- when there's a
12 high -- a time where it's a high-use time, and they even
13 reversed the -- they have -- they manipulate the time
14 frame that you can get in and out of the FASTRAC lane,
15 and I'd love for them to take a look at that possibility
16 and try some of the other models that the other parts of
17 the state are using.

18 And I had a question as to why I'm not able to
19 use this FASTRAC transponder in Riverside County,
20 San Diego County, or in Alameda County. So I am not
21 clear about if I can use it, how to use it, and you're
22 driving in and out throughout the state. You have the
23 double FF on your transponder, but you don't know if
24 it's, you know, accessible or not. So that's one issue
25 I'd like for them to address.

1 And when I looked in my bills, my statement, my
2 FASTRAC statement, I do have, as the other woman spoke
3 about, a cost of \$9 and another was 10, you know, 10.50
4 in the month of October. And I got into the lane and we,
5 again, as has been said earlier, we were only going about
6 five miles an hour, so it was totally worthless. I'd
7 like for them to address and at least find a way to put a
8 cap or find some way to supplement. There's no way I
9 should pay \$10 and only be going five miles an hour, or
10 they can somehow modulate the traffic better.

11 The other area is -- the cap on the funding --
12 oh, the bicycle lane. I would like to see a way to
13 utilize the bike lanes or build -- if they take the
14 funds, add more designated use for bicycles, bicycle
15 riders.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

18 Any other public comments?

19 I think you spoke, and, Milly, you spoke
20 already.

21 MS. WIGGINS: There's a gentleman in the back.

22 MS. KEINER: Gentleman in the back. State your name
23 for the record.

24 MR. WARD: Good morning, everybody. My name is Nick.
25 First and last name or just first name? It doesn't

1 matter? My name is Nick.

2 I don't have any strong opinions for or against
3 it, but think it's very important to take this time to
4 state an opinion since I guess a bunch of opinions are
5 going to be compiled and hopefully decisions are going to
6 be made based on those opinions and expressions.

7 So, you know, I take the ExpressLanes in the
8 mornings, generally between 8:00 and 9:00 because I've
9 got to get to work at 9:00 in Hollywood, and I don't -- I
10 don't feel necessarily that I'm traveling at an average
11 of 45 miles an hour the entire way. Maybe at 5:00, 6:00
12 and 7:00 in the morning, but around 8:00 or 9:00 it gets
13 really congested. And I take it pretty much the whole
14 way. I live at the 91 and I work in Hollywood, so I take
15 the entire ExpressLane.

16 Around the 105 Freeway, occasionally it does
17 start backing up. It picks up and it backs up again at
18 Florence all the way until Adams until I'm off and I'm
19 back into regular traffic. I think that's an issue and
20 it should be addressed.

21 I do understand the 45-miles-an-hour average
22 being maintained between 5:00 and 9:00, but it's
23 definitely not being maintained between 8:00 and 9:00.

24 I know someone mentioned the exits and entrances
25 being placed pretty far apart. I think they are very

1 dispersed. They are very far apart, I should say. I
2 know if I miss my exit, I'm stuck traveling, you know, an
3 extra two or three miles and I have to double back to
4 where I wanted to be. I think that's something that
5 could also be addressed, maybe, perhaps. I don't know.

6 I do like the idea that there is accommodations
7 for the low-income drivers. That's good. Based on what
8 I've heard from a lot of people today, I think there
9 should be more accommodations made. Any ideas on what, I
10 don't know, but I think there should be more options for
11 more low-income people.

12 Outside of that, you know, I do appreciate that
13 more income is being -- more revenues are being generated
14 for the cities or for the city. I think that's very
15 important considering all the budgetary issues we are
16 having with a lot of the municipalities in L.A. County.
17 So that's great and all, but that dollar -- mandatory
18 dollar fee a month, that's not cool.

19 And that's pretty much it, all I have to say.

20 My name is Nick and I generally support it, but
21 I don't want to pay for anything that's not going to do
22 what I need it to do. Thanks.

23 MS. KEINER: Okay. Thank you.

24 Any other spoken public comments?

25 MR. VICKERS: Hi. My name is Norman and I was

1 sitting here listening and there's a lot of good comments
2 that I was hearing today both for and against, even some
3 things that I hadn't even thought about. Again, I heard
4 some very good comments, things that we should all be
5 against, and that's charging people, especially.

6 You know, me personally, I had -- the Board that
7 she showed with the three reasons why we don't want the
8 toll lanes, those are all my reasons. Okay? One, I
9 don't think we should be paying for a toll road, a road
10 that we already pay taxes to drive on. Okay? Two, we
11 shouldn't be paying, you know, a maintenance fee on those
12 roads ever. Okay? And if you really, really want to
13 improve traffic in L.A., it's not by charging people more
14 money; but if you have this extra money that you want to
15 spend, why don't you teach people how to merge in and out
16 of traffic? If you teach people how to merge in and out
17 of traffic, there wouldn't be any traffic. There
18 wouldn't be any traffic. Make it mandatory that people
19 go to school to merge in and out of traffic. What's so
20 hard about that? You've got to teach people how to drive
21 on the freeway. If you merge properly into traffic, if
22 you allow people to merge into traffic, that's going to
23 get you down the road a whole heck of a lot faster. Just
24 allow people to merge into traffic. Don't try to jam
25 four cars into a two-car space or one-car space. Merge

1 one here, one there, one here, one there. It's easy
2 stuff. I mean, it's common sense. Yeah, it is. It
3 really is. People need to know how to merge in and out
4 of traffic.

5 If you look at your traffic patterns, there is
6 always a backup where people get on and off the freeways.
7 Teach people how to merge in and out of traffic and you
8 won't need carpool lanes because there will never be a
9 backup, with one exception. When you go up a hill,
10 you've got to press the gas pedal to go up a hill.
11 Really, you do. Okay? If there's an incline on the
12 freeway, press the gas pedal a little bit. You'll get up
13 the hill and traffic won't back up behind you.

14 I mean, commonsense things. Thanks. That's all
15 I have.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And use your signal lights.

17 MS. KEINER: Thank you very much.

18 We're going to hold firm on everyone getting
19 their three minutes, so we appreciate your comments and
20 want to thank everyone for coming out today on a Saturday
21 morning.

22 As Stephanie Wiggins said, the comments -- we
23 have one more?

24 We are accepting public comments through
25 April 7th. Please feel free to submit a written public

1 comment if you didn't speak today; or if you did, we're
2 accepting both by mail and e-mail and today.

3 As Stephanie said, all of the public comments
4 will be recorded and submitted to the Metro Board in
5 April for their consideration.

6 And after we conclude today, you'll have a
7 chance to speak with Stephanie. We'll be here until
8 12:00 noon, so people like Kimberly and Skip can get
9 their questions answered.

10 Again, thank you very much for coming today.

11 Yes?

12 MS. ANDERSON: So is the meeting over? We had 45
13 minutes.

14 MS. KEINER: We have 45 more minutes, or I guess 35
15 more minutes, so we're here until 12:00 noon.

16 MS. ANDERSON: So why couldn't anyone else who wanted
17 to continue with comments -- because I don't -- I mean, I
18 can't go all over to every time you're going to have a
19 meeting. So everyone should have the opportunity to
20 speak. As long as you still have time, we should all be
21 allowed to speak if we have something else to say,
22 because something somebody else said may have generated
23 something. So you are limiting my opportunity to have a
24 public speaking.

25 MS. KEINER: Well, we're holding firm to the

1 three-minute public comment period for each person, but
2 you are more than welcome to stay and speak individually
3 one on one.

4 MS. ANDERSON: I want to speak publicly. I want to
5 speak publicly because I want it publicly on the record
6 and so --

7 MS. YAMADA: We should be allowed.

8 MS. ANDERSON: -- why should I have to speak --

9 MS. KEINER: Well, like I said, sorry, ma'am. We're
10 just holding firm to the three minutes per person.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But since there's time, why
12 not?

13 MS. YAMADA: Yeah. You have time. It's not like
14 you've run out of time.

15 MS. KEINER: That's just our protocol for public
16 hearings.

17 MS. YAMADA: Just, you know, slam it down our throats
18 that you're not going to allow people to speak. That's
19 not fair.

20 MS. ANDERSON: That's not fair. I don't want to
21 speak privately. I want to speak publicly. That's why I
22 came out. I don't want to have to go to another meeting
23 in order to get what I want to say done. That's unfair.
24 That's costing me money, too.

25 MS. KEINER: Okay. Well, we appreciate you coming

1 today and we're going to be here until 12:00 to talk with
2 you one on one.

3 MS. YAMADA: Yeah. I think that's wrong.

4 MS. KEINER: Thank you all for being here today.

5 MS. ANDERSON: So the meeting is over?

6 MS. KEINER: Well, the public comment period.

7 (Public Comments concluded at 11:24 a.m.)

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BEFORE THE
METRO EXPRESSLANES PROJECT TEAM

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Public Hearing in the Matter of:)
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METRO EXPRESSLANES)

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken at
El Monte Community Center, 3130 Tyler Avenue,
El Monte, California, commencing at 6:15 p.m.,
on Wednesday, March 26, 2014, heard before the
Metro ExpressLanes Project Team, reported by
MARCENA M. MUNGUIA, CSR No. 10420, a Certified
Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of
California.

1 APPEARANCES:

2 Metro Presenter: STEPHANIE WIGGINS
3 Executive Director
4 Metro

4 Facilitator: BRONWEN KEINER
5 Senior Community Relations Officer
6 Metro

6 The Interpreters: ALEX VARELA
7 EDDIE YIP

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I N D E X

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1 El Monte, California, Wednesday, March 26, 2014

2 6:15 p.m.

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4
5 MS. KEINER: Good evening, everyone. Can you hear
6 me?

7 Thank you for being here this evening.

8 My name is Bronwen Keiner and I am a Senior
9 Community Relations Officer with Metro, and welcome to
10 the Metro ExpressLanes public hearing.

11 Tonight before we get started, I'd like to
12 introduce the Spanish and Mandarin translators,
13 Alex Varela and Eddie Yip.

14 (Translations given)

15 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Alex and Eddie.

16 So if you need translation assistance, please
17 speak with them.

18 I'd also like to introduce our court reporter
19 today, Marcena Munguia. She's going to be recording
20 everything that's said tonight at tonight's hearing.

21 So tonight we're going to begin with a brief
22 presentation by Metro Executive Officer Stephanie
23 Wiggins, and that will be followed by the formal public
24 comment part of the meeting.

25 So if you would like to speak this evening,

1 please complete a blue speaker card and turn it in at the
2 registration table. The speaker card that's given to you
3 is also available at the sign-in table, along with a
4 written comment sheet. So if you'd prefer to submit your
5 comments in writing, please feel free to do so.

6 This is your forum, so the time after the
7 presentation will be devoted to public comments. As
8 such, staff will not interrupt the hearing to make
9 clarifications or comments.

10 So each speaker will be given three minutes and
11 we'll call you to the microphone in the order that was
12 received -- that your cards were received, and your
13 comments will be recorded by the court reporter. So
14 please be sure to state your name clearly into the
15 microphone and if you have additional comments when your
16 time is up, you're welcome to fill out this comment form
17 and submit it at the registration table. And if you have
18 additional questions that you weren't able to get
19 answered during this open-house period, staff will be
20 available until 8:00 p.m. tonight to answer any of those
21 questions. As a reminder, the comment deadline is
22 Monday, April 7.

23 And at this time, I'd also like to recognize
24 Rob Charles, District Director for Senator Ed Hernandez's
25 office.

1 Rob.

2 Are there any other elected officials or their
3 representatives here this evening? No? Okay.

4 Thank you, again.

5 At this time, I'd like to introduce Metro
6 Executive Director Stephanie Wiggins to provide the
7 presentation.

8 Stephanie?

9 (Metro presentation by Stephanie Wiggins)

10 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Stephanie.

11 We will start our public comment period now.

12 To reiterate our protocol, if you would like to
13 speak, please fill out and submit a blue speaker form to
14 Kim or Ginny in the back if you haven't already done so,
15 and I'll call each speaker to the microphone in the order
16 in which the cards were received. So please come to the
17 mic when you hear your name called.

18 Each speaker will be given three minutes and
19 you'll be able to see the timer on the computer there, to
20 let you know how much time you have left for your
21 reference.

22 And as I said, if you have additional comments
23 when your time is up, you're welcome to fill out this
24 comment card and submit it at the back.

25 As I said, please remember to speak your name

1 clearly into the microphone so that the court reporter,
2 Marcena, can record everything that you say, capture your
3 comments.

4 So first we're going to hear from
5 Patricia O'Brien, followed by Erik Sanchez, followed by
6 Elizabeth Huesca.

7 Patricia?

8 MS. O'BRIEN: Hi. I'm Patricia O'Brien. That's
9 O apostrophe B-r-i-e-n.

10 And what I want to talk about really at this
11 point is we ended up getting the FASTRAC account because
12 we were basically forced into it and we had to pay \$40
13 and we've always carpooled; never, you know, solo people.
14 We carpooled. If there's traffic, we just get off and
15 take the side streets. Born and raised in Southern
16 California, I know every street possible. I can get from
17 Palmdale to the border all on streets. That's how I got
18 here tonight.

19 If you notice on my transponder, it's marked to
20 two. It's always going to be two because I didn't want
21 to accidentally not and say it was one and I got charged.

22 Okay. I've had so many problems with the
23 transponder in the area. When the system first started,
24 I was doing well. Then I started getting my license
25 plate dinged. Of course the license plate was connected

1 to the plates and I was able to, you know, explain to
2 people that this was my problem and so it was finally
3 said to me that I should move the transponder, I should
4 actually go to my dealer. And I put it where the dealer
5 said. He goes, As long as it was out of sight, and put
6 it in the right place.

7 So again, I didn't have problems for a while and
8 then I started to get dinged again. And it's not like I
9 get dinged every day, but periodically we get dings and
10 it's all the same thing. It's always reading our plate
11 and not the transponder, and we had it there for at least
12 a good year.

13 So the person that I spoke to, you know, they
14 were getting a little testy. And we talked about
15 customer service a little bit earlier and, Darlene,
16 they're going to take care of it, thank God. But the
17 thing that I'm seeing for me as a person with this pilot
18 program, if it's reading my plate and nobody wants to
19 show me exactly where this transponder is going to work
20 at, I was almost -- it was being -- like being threatened
21 yesterday when I had this phone call with the customer
22 service, saying, "Well, you put it on wrong, you're stuck
23 with it, and every time it's dinged it's your fault and
24 we're going to charge you."

25 And I finally said, "Now, I've had this since

1 August of last -- of '12." I said, "Well, what am I
2 supposed to do? Is there somebody there that can tell
3 me? You know, I still need somebody to tell me where to
4 put it or show me." And she said, "Well, all you have to
5 do is go to the center." I've had this since, I said,
6 August '12 and nobody ever said that. The closest thing
7 to any advice I ever got for this transponder was to go
8 to my dealer and when they put it on, they said it
9 wouldn't do it. It worked fine for a while.

10 I don't know. If it's the transponder, if it's
11 in the wrong place, help if somebody needs some help.
12 And they say that they can only credit it once. If
13 that's true, there's a lot of people that are having
14 problems. I mean, I can show you the different -- and
15 I'll leave this (indicating) with you, the highlighted
16 where it dinged by spot and it would actually read the
17 transponder and also to my plate. I don't know why, but
18 this is what's going on and I think this is a big issue.

19 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

20 Erik Sanchez, followed by Elizabeth Huesca,
21 followed by Dale Rogers.

22 MR. SANCHEZ: Hi. It's kind of weird talking like
23 this. Can I talk this way (indicating)?

24 MS. KEINER: Sure.

25 MR. SANCHEZ: Well, I think we -- as background as

1 far as why we use FASTRAC, my wife and I, we're both
2 teachers. I work for LAUSD and we have a little
3 18-month-old son and the baby-sitter is near, you know,
4 my wife's school and, you know, we live in Diamond Bar.
5 So we come obviously towards Downtown. And for us, it's
6 convenient.

7 We really enjoy the FASTRAC experience. We use
8 it every single day. It's convenient for us as far as
9 time and it's -- it's been a really good experience.
10 It's -- for us, we don't mind paying the money because
11 for us, what's important is getting to where we've got to
12 go and in a faster time. And for us, you know, I know
13 it's a luxury for some people and, I mean, we don't make,
14 you know, a tremendous amount of money ourselves, but I
15 think it's well worth the time that we can go from the
16 East L.A. area to my mother-in-law's here in East L.A. --
17 I mean here in El Monte from our house.

18 I think one thing that I would love for -- is to
19 have it obviously continue and for it to go -- FASTRAC
20 lanes to go at least to the West Covina area. If we can
21 get that going, that would be even better. For us, we're
22 always the three of us so, you know, we usually don't pay
23 a toll, but if we have to pay a toll for some reason or
24 get somewhere we're late, that's on us and we usually use
25 the FASTRAC. We'll pay the toll and it's awesome. So I

1 think that if we can extend it all the way through, that
2 would be pretty sweet for us.

3 I do appreciate the CHP officers being out
4 there. Sometimes I do wish they'd be out there a little
5 bit more often, but I know you guys have got to do other
6 things and stuff, but I do appreciate when they're out
7 there and they're getting the people who don't have the
8 transponders. You see them every day, but I know you
9 guys can only get so many people. But I appreciate you
10 guys being out there and I hope that it continues,
11 especially in the area of -- City Terrace area where just
12 a little bit east -- a little bit east of -- east of
13 Fremont where they're crossing over the double white
14 lines before they even go onto it, I kind of hate that.
15 But, you know, it would be kind of cool if you could get
16 a motor officer there and catch those guys. It would be
17 nice.

18 But, you know, I think -- there was a few more
19 things I know I'm forgetting, but -- yeah. I think --
20 I'm for it, so I hope it continues. Thank you.

21 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

22 Next we have Elizabeth Huesca, followed by
23 Dale Rogers, followed by Alejandra Hoff.

24 MS. HUESCA: Good evening. My name is Elizabeth
25 Huesca and I am a resident of El Monte and I also work in

1 the Skid Row/Downtown L.A. area, so I'm very familiar
2 with the FASTRAC.

3 I appreciate the Metro's attempt to try and
4 decrease traffic among the highways, the 10 Freeway
5 especially, but I believe that the FASTRAC strategy is
6 counterproductive to its goal of moving more people, not
7 more vehicles.

8 Rather than encouraging others to carpool, the
9 FASTRAC is an option for individual drivers to pay a fee
10 that allows them to bypass traffic and not have to
11 carpool. So I'd just like to add that roads were built
12 as a public service and in my opinion, it is unjust to
13 pay for convenience.

14 I feel Metro should come up with other ideas of
15 mass transit that do not impose drivers, especially
16 people who cannot afford to access convenience.

17 Thank you so much for your time.

18 MS. KEINER: Thank you. Next we'll have Dale Rogers,
19 followed by Alejandra Hoff.

20 MR. ROGERS: First, I'm a little bit disappointed
21 about your three-minute time frame. I think it's
22 disgusting that we come to a meeting and you're given
23 three minutes to discuss what you want to when you really
24 need a little bit more time.

25 With that being said, the 10 Freeway entrances

1 and exits: People that live in the mid Valley area, say
2 from Peck Road going west towards Alhambra, can't use the
3 carpool lane even if they have the transponder because
4 they can't get in it. So I don't know what moron decided
5 to make those rules, but it's almost sickening that
6 people cannot foresee that you're denying those people
7 the use of those lanes. You spend millions of dollars
8 putting double stripes in there, but nobody thinks about,
9 "Hey, you know, there might be a few people in between
10 that might want to get in those lanes"?

11 This being said, let's go to another section,
12 weekends. Why do you need a transponder for the weekend?
13 My father and I go Downtown usually on weekends for
14 breakfast or lunch sometimes. The carpool lanes are
15 totally empty. The other lanes are bumper to bumper all
16 the way in to Fremont Street. Why? Because the morons
17 that are running this organization are not looking at the
18 whole picture. You can look at that freeway and you can
19 drive down it and see there's nobody in the carpool lane
20 on weekends. Why? Because they don't have transponders.
21 Why don't they have transponders? Because they're not
22 regular commuters that use the freeway. They should
23 eliminate the transponder issue entirely for weekends.

24 Other than that, the regular week, fine, use
25 them; but the weekends are totally a different traffic

1 pattern than the weekdays.

2 The other thing is the fee for the low-use user.
3 Now, I know you've suspended it, but how people could not
4 foresee that that would be penalizing those people that
5 are low-use users that want to be carpoolers, it -- maybe
6 I've got enough time to throw out a few other things.

7 On the other freeways, I'm not sure if you're
8 dealing with the other carpool lanes, but the length of
9 distance you have to exit or enter, you're competing with
10 the traffic that's exiting out of the carpool lane,
11 you're trying to get into the carpool lane, and those two
12 groups are competing. You're given a short distance if
13 you're coming down the San Bernardino Freeway to get off
14 at Baldwin. You have to be a pretty damn good driver to
15 go over five lanes of traffic at 70 miles an hour with
16 everybody just bumper to bumper, and you're supposed to
17 get off in that length of time when you could easily open
18 it up another quarter mile? I just don't understand what
19 the engineers are doing when they really can't see this.

20 So I've got 17 seconds. I don't know what I'll
21 burn up with that, but I'll use it.

22 But I do feel -- it's crazy. Somebody needs to
23 reevaluate what they're doing and take a whole other look
24 at it as far as the access and so forth, but I'll leave
25 it at that. I've got one second left.

1 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

2 Next we have Alejandra Hoff.

3 MS. HOFF: Hi. Good evening. My name is
4 Alejandra Hoff and I live here in Arcadia.

5 I just wanted to throw my opinion in this. I
6 absolutely love the FASTRAC lanes. It's been such a
7 godsend for me and my family to be able to cut my time
8 from the time I enter in El Monte to the time I get
9 off to get on the 710. I work in South Gate. It saves
10 me 21 minutes each way, every single day. And I'm a
11 teacher myself and it's been an absolute blessing to have
12 it.

13 Another thing I wanted to comment on is the use
14 of the Silver Line. Since being on the FASTRAC lane,
15 I've noticed a lot more buses that are the Silver Line,
16 which has made me aware of the fact that they're there,
17 which actually has made me use the Silver Line a lot
18 more. So whenever we have a trip to go Downtown or just
19 want to go to a museum, I know that instead of taking my
20 car, I can take the Silver Line, which is so fantastic.

21 And what else did I want to say? My biggest
22 concern is the safety concern of the FASTRAC lanes. So I
23 notice a lot of people going in and out because of the
24 fact that yes, people that are in the middle of these
25 entrances and exits don't get a chance to use those

1 lanes, so they are coming and going as they wish. So
2 when I am traveling in my car with my five-year-old, I am
3 always to the very left, but people are coming in and out
4 and that is very dangerous, especially when people are
5 going way above the speed limit and I'm, you know, trying
6 to hunker down and stay at speed limit or at least, you
7 know, something acceptable. But that is my biggest
8 concern that people are going in and out, and I feel kind
9 of threatened by them.

10 My concern -- or I'm kind of wondering where --
11 I know other FASTRAC lanes have posts or something that
12 prevents people from coming in and out. I don't know if
13 that's possible for our corridor on the 10, but it would
14 make me feel a lot safer knowing that, you know, people
15 who aren't supposed to be coming in and out aren't
16 allowed to be coming in and out, because there's only so
17 much the CHP can do. And yes, I get that personal, "Yes,
18 they got one guy" every time I see that the CHP actually
19 got one. But, you know, there's not enough of them
20 obviously out there.

21 So my biggest concern is just the safety.
22 People flying at like 80 miles an hour is really scary
23 when you're trying to get to work safely.

24 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

25 Any other speakers?

1 Like I said, if you didn't get a chance to speak
2 tonight --

3 MR. SANCHEZ: Can I make just a comment?

4 MS. KEINER: We're holding firm to the three-minute
5 comments.

6 Like I said, we're going to have written comment
7 forms that you are welcome to fill out, and we are going
8 to be here until 8:00 p.m. if you have questions you want
9 to ask.

10 Comment?

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just had some questions.

12 MS. KEINER: Just to wrap before we go to the
13 open-house period again, again, I just want to thank you
14 all for attending and for your excellent input.

15 As Stephanie said, all the public comments made
16 today will be going to the Metro Board for their
17 consideration in April.

18 Remember the public comment period closes
19 April 7th. As a reminder, there are five more public
20 hearings throughout the next week and following week.
21 And if you'd like to view the presentation that Stephanie
22 gave tonight, we'll have it up on our website at
23 Metro.net/ExpressLanes. And like I said, we'll be here
24 until 8:00 p.m. tonight and we really appreciate your
25 attendance and participation in this process.

1 So thank you.

2 (Public Comments concluded at 7:13 p.m.)

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BEFORE THE
METRO EXPRESSLANES PROJECT TEAM

Public Hearing in the Matter of:)
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METRO EXPRESSLANES)
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
Torrance, California
Thursday, March 27, 2014

Reported by:

MARCENA M. MUNGUIA,
CSR No. 10420

Job No. :
1017

1 APPEARANCES:

2 Metro Presenter: STEPHANIE WIGGINS
3 Executive Director
4 Metro

4 Facilitator: BRONWEN KEINER
5 Senior Community Relations Officer
6 Metro

6 The Interpreter: ALEX VARELA

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1 Torrance, California, Saturday, March 27, 2014

2 6:12 p.m.

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5 MS. KEINER: All right. Good evening, everyone, and
6 welcome to the Metro ExpressLanes public hearing.

7 Thank you very much for joining us here this
8 morning. My name is Bronwen Keiner. I'm a Senior
9 Community Relations Officer with Metro and I'll be your
10 facilitator this evening.

11 First, we're going to begin with a brief
12 presentation by Metro Executive Officer Stephanie
13 Wiggins.

14 But before we get started, I'd like to introduce
15 Alex Varela, our Spanish language interpreter.

16 (Translation given)

17 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Alex. So if any of you need
18 translation assistance, Alex is available.

19 I'd also like to introduce Marcena Munguia, our
20 court reporter who will be recording everything that's
21 said at today's hearing.

22 So this evening, like I said, Metro Executive
23 Director Stephanie Wiggins will be providing a brief
24 presentation and that will be followed by the formal
25 public comment period. If you'd like to speak this

1 evening, please fill out this blue speaker card
2 (indicating) and leave it with Kim at the registration
3 table. If you'd like to submit a written public comment,
4 please fill out this written public comment card
5 (indicating).

6 And this is really your forum. So the time
7 after the presentation will be reserved for public
8 comment. Each speaker is given three minutes and as
9 such, staff will not interrupt to make clarifications or
10 make comments.

11 We will call you to the microphone in the order
12 in which the cards are received and your comments will be
13 recorded by the court reporter. So please be sure to
14 speak clearly into the microphone, state your name.
15 If you have additional comments when your time is up, you
16 are welcome to fill out the written public comment card.

17 And also, if you have additional questions,
18 staff will be here until 8:00 p.m. to speak with you
19 individually, so please feel free to stay late.

20 As a reminder, the deadline for comments on this
21 project is Monday, April 7th, and this information is on
22 your comment sheet as well.

23 So at this time, I'd like to recognize
24 Hamilton Cloud with Congresswoman Maxine Waters' office.

25 Hamilton, thank you.

1 Are there any either elected officials here or
2 their representatives? No? Thank you.

3 And at this time, I'd like to introduce Metro
4 Executive Director Stephanie Wiggins.

5 (Metro Presentation by Stephanie Wiggins)

6 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Stephanie. We'll start our
7 public comment period now.

8 To reiterate our protocol, if you'd like to
9 speak, please fill out a blue speaker card if you haven't
10 already done so, and I'll call each speaker to the
11 microphone in the order in which the cards were received.
12 So please come to the mic when your name is called.

13 Each speaker will be given three minutes, and
14 there is going to be a timer on the screen so you can
15 monitor how much time you have left. If you have
16 additional comments when your time is up, please feel
17 free to fill out a written comment card and turn it in at
18 the front.

19 And please remember to state your name and speak
20 clearly into the microphone so that the court reporter
21 can record all of your comments.

22 I'm going to start with Kyle Orlemann, followed
23 by Tom Marshall, followed by Marianne Andres. Yes?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Kyle just went to the ladies'
25 room.

1 MS. KEINER: Well, let's put it to the side and go to
2 Tom Marshall.

3 MR. MARSHALL: You want me to speak at that
4 microphone or should I just speak, because I can't see
5 the time if I'm looking at everybody. I've got to face
6 the crowd. I'm good. Trust me. Everybody can hear me.

7 Okay. I want to start out by saying some of the
8 things Stephanie said, one of the biggest problems I have
9 with the carpool lanes is freeways should be free and we
10 paid for them and they should be that. Some of us forget
11 the original intent of the carpool lanes on the Harbor
12 Freeway. The original carpool lanes were put there to
13 move people from downtown Los Angeles to the airport, and
14 that whole system that was installed in the 1980s was to
15 do that.

16 Now, I've been a carpooler now for 25 years. I
17 believe in carpooling. I drive a clean-air car. I have
18 a white-sticker car, but I have cars that aren't and I
19 like the fact that I can get in a carpool lane and I do
20 have that ability, and it bothers me to have to pay to
21 have that ability.

22 I have to say this made the commute a lot worse.
23 I used to come in at 6:00 in the morning and the freeway
24 was wide open. If you drive the regular lanes now at
25 6:00 in the morning, you get bumper-to-bumper traffic.

1 It starts at Manchester. Sometimes it starts before the
2 105, and you used to fly in. Sometimes it would back up
3 at Manchester. Sometimes it would back up at the viaduct
4 because people stomp on their brakes because they get
5 afraid, but you could fly in at 6:00 in the morning. You
6 can't now. It's backed up.

7 Casual users I think are a real big problem.
8 People that -- you know, I have a nephew that lives in
9 Glendale. He can't come see his grandmother without
10 purchasing this thing, the transponder.

11 In San Diego -- they talked about what's going
12 on down there. In San Diego, if you're a casual user,
13 you do not need a transponder to get into the carpool
14 lanes. It's enforced by the CHP and thank you for
15 enforcing that on the 110 Freeway. I see you guys out
16 there every day.

17 I've got to say this really quickly. Most of
18 the Metro bus drivers are very good, but some of your
19 buses only go 45 miles an hour and some of your bus
20 drivers keep hitting the brakes and backing up the whole
21 thing behind them. Most of them -- you've probably seen
22 that. Most of them drive very professionally, but there
23 needs to be some retraining there.

24 Also, get the box trucks off that lane. These
25 big trucks that are going on that lane, some people have

1 done the math and said, "Well, I've got to pay these
2 employees. It's cheaper to pay the tolls" and we've got
3 those big trucks on that lane going 48, 49 miles an hour
4 and we really need to do that.

5 And you have nothing to do with this, but I wish
6 you could talk to the Sheriff's Department. Their prison
7 buses pollute like crazy. You don't want to get behind
8 one of those. Now, they drive fast, but their prison
9 buses are terrible.

10 And the last thing I want to say -- and it has
11 nothing to do with Metro again -- is get people off the
12 cell phones. And I just got this before I came here
13 today that the -- it's from the National Safety Council.
14 26 percent of all accidents are caused by cell phone use.

15 Once again, I want to wrap up by saying that the
16 carpools should be free. You know, there are people that
17 use them as carpools and I think we can get back to that.
18 I mean, whatever you're doing, I'd like to try to say
19 let's cancel this for a month and see if it gets better
20 or if it gets worse. Let's go back to what we had and
21 we'll go from there.

22 I also want to thank you for admitting that
23 Metro really wanted the cash, because at the beginning of
24 this, nobody admitted that.

25 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

1 Next we have Kyle Orlemann. Is he back? She.
2 Sorry, she; followed by Marianne Andres, followed by
3 Stephanie Roberts.

4 MR. MARSHALL: It worked fine for me.

5 MS. ORLEMANN: Okay. Hi. I'm Kyle Orlemann and I
6 live essentially at the intersection of the 405 and the
7 105 Freeways.

8 I make regular trips outside of business hours
9 to Burbank and so my regular route has been the 105 to --
10 the 105 north over through downtown to the 5 north to the
11 134 west in order to get where I need to go. In the 18
12 months that this program has been going on, I can no
13 longer use the carpool lanes with my husband, and that
14 doesn't just affect us on the 110. It also affects us on
15 the 105 because when we're eastbound on the 105, we
16 cannot get off to get over to the transition lanes to the
17 northbound 110 without the traffic completely tying up.

18 So what has ended up happening is instead of
19 being able to make the quick trip by those freeways, I
20 now have to take 120th Street over to Crenshaw, north to
21 Imperial Highway, take Imperial Highway east over until I
22 get to the other side of the 110 north of where the curve
23 is where it all backs up now, because everybody in the
24 regular lanes backs up on that curve and nobody can get
25 through there, and then I rejoin the 110 north of that

1 curve and finally struggle my way through downtown.

2 So what used to be a 30- to 45-minute trip now
3 can take between two and three hours on Friday evening
4 when I'm making that trip.

5 The other portion of this is that my husband is
6 170 percent service-connected disabled veteran. Our
7 income is extremely limited. We don't have the \$40 to be
8 extorted to buy a FASTRAC transponder. We don't have the
9 monthly fee to pay on the few occasions when he is well
10 enough to make the trip for religious services for me.
11 So the result of all of this is we can no longer use the
12 freeways that we have paid taxes for for 30 years and
13 that he put in 14 years of his life serving our country
14 in the military to be able to make our country have it
15 the way it is right now.

16 We feel disenfranchised and it has made it the
17 situation where I have to choose between going to
18 religious services and leaving my disabled husband at
19 home for the many, many extra hours that I am now on the
20 road, as opposed to being able to have him go with me and
21 have some social contact and finally be able to get out
22 of the house for a change. This has made a catastrophic
23 difference in our personal lives and I would really ask
24 that this be looked at.

25 Again, it is not fair to ding those of us who

1 are already having trouble paying our utility bills, have
2 had our utilities turned off, and now you're expecting us
3 to pay additional money for services that we've already
4 paid for. Thank you very much.

5 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

6 Marianne Andres, followed by Stephanie Roberts,
7 followed by Mike George.

8 MS. ANDRES: Hello. My name is Marianne.

9 I travel on the FASTRAC 110 northbound Monday
10 through Friday from Torrance to my work downtown and I'm
11 a solo driver and I feel kind of guilty here because I am
12 a solo driver, but I love the FASTRAC and I pay the price
13 because I need to get to work.

14 My schedule -- I work in a hospital. My
15 schedule is a little bit so I can't carpool as much, so
16 that's about the hours. But I'm glad -- I think I was
17 probably the first one that bought one of the
18 transponders. I waited for it for years. I've been
19 traveling that freeway for 18 years, so I'm glad and I
20 hope it stays.

21 But my problem is I don't think there's enough
22 entrances on that freeway. I get on at the -- it says
23 northbound three by El Segundo and you go through where
24 the buses are and if you don't get on there, the next one
25 is four more miles; and if you stay over in the regular

1 lanes, four more miles can take you sometimes in the
2 morning another hour. So I go through there, but it's
3 getting to where it backs up through the bus lane.

4 They already had that one accident where some
5 drunk driver went through the bus lanes and did some
6 things, but now it's not as easy to get through the bus
7 lane; but then the FASTRAC has to go through the bus lane
8 also and in the morning it slows down, people are
9 slamming on their brakes, and I have almost had a wreck
10 several times, someone just hitting their brakes because
11 they've got these two beams and then the buses.

12 And then another thing, it is the -- the buses
13 are pretty slow on there. But if they could just add
14 some more entrances maybe or some more exits, and I think
15 that's all.

16 They could lower the tolls a little bit, but I
17 don't see -- she says that -- I thought it was when the
18 regular lanes -- the traffic was heavy and like sometimes
19 I'll see it. I'll see the toll is 7 to 10 dollars and it
20 is backed up on the regular lanes, but in the FASTRAC
21 it's not really that much backed up that much more to
22 have a \$10 toll. So I don't know. I know the later you
23 leave, I usually leave about ten to 7:00 to try to get
24 on. If I get on at 7:15, the toll goes way up.

25 So thank you.

1 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

2 Next we have Stephanie Roberts, followed by
3 Mike George, followed by Bob Gelfand.

4 MS. ROBERTS: Hi. I'm Stephanie Roberts.

5 I live in the South Bay and so I travel the 110.
6 I -- pretty much every day to go to work and come back
7 home. And so even before the ExpressLanes were
8 instituted, I carpooled and I actually was a transit
9 rider when I was working downtown. I rode the bus. It
10 was the Blue Line then. It was an express, and I also
11 carpooled when I could. I changed jobs. I work now in
12 Glendale off the
13 2 and the 5, which is through downtown. It's not at
14 downtown.

15 And so I have three major issues with the lanes.
16 The first one is that they might be okay for someone
17 who's going downtown, but when you're going through
18 downtown, it's a joke because they dump you right where
19 the most of the traffic is. They dump you right by USC,
20 and so even though I may have -- I might have gained ten
21 minutes or whatever I gain by passing them up, now I'm
22 dumped right into the bulk of the traffic, which is at
23 USC, and that's absolutely ridiculous.

24 It would have been much more intuitive to make a
25 flyover lane to continue the lane through downtown and

1 then take those people over who aren't going downtown and
2 bypass the downtown traffic.

3 My second is that there is something very, very
4 wrong with your accounting. I get -- I've gotten at
5 least 20 toll violations when I've had a working
6 transponder since December, since you-all started the
7 program, and I continue to get them. And then when I
8 call, I speak to some customer service agent who tells
9 me, "You need a working transponder." "I have a working
10 transponder." "You need to add the license plate of your
11 car." "I've added the license plate." 20 -- I tear them
12 up at this point. It really, really is a waste of my
13 time, and how many trees are you cutting down? I'm an
14 environmental engineer. How many trees are you cutting
15 down sending these erroneous notices? Because if I'm
16 getting them, somebody else is getting them, too. It's
17 beyond my understanding. I have no idea. It's in the
18 right place. I've got that comment, too. I've measured
19 it. It's two inches down on the windshield. That's just
20 ridiculous.

21 My further comment is for the casual user, the
22 way that Los Angeles is built is that you have USC,
23 Dodger Stadium, Staples Center all going that way and
24 you're basically forcing casual users who normally could
25 get in the carpool lane if they had three or four people

1 going to a game, if they don't have a transponder, they
2 now have to get -- they're in the regular lanes. So on a
3 Saturday or a Sunday or whatever when you could have a
4 lot of people in a carpool lane, you don't because they
5 don't have a transponder because that's not their normal
6 travel pattern.

7 So those are my three major issues, and I
8 strongly dislike the lanes. I will not say I hate them,
9 but it's closer to hate. But I strongly dislike them.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

12 Next we have Mike George, followed by
13 Bob Gelfand, followed by Terry Chi.

14 MR. GEORGE: Good afternoon or evening. My name is
15 Mike George. I'm a librarian here in Torrance.

16 I'm a casual user of the HOV lanes. Basically,
17 once a month, my wife and I go to a concert in Glendale.
18 It hasn't been a problem until we needed the transponder.
19 With the transponder, it works pretty well; however, my
20 beef is with the maintenance fee. There's a \$3
21 maintenance fee if you don't ride the freeway four times
22 a month. It's been abrogated, I understand, but what
23 happens after April? I don't think there should be a fee
24 if you're using the HOV lane for its proper purpose as
25 the carpool, which my wife and I are.

1 So I would strongly recommend that you disable
2 or get rid of that maintenance fee, the \$3 fee, if you're
3 in a carpool and using the HOV lanes for their purpose.

4 The second thing is beware of the sin tax.
5 Thank you for mentioning at the beginning where you need
6 the funding. We're not using as much gas; therefore,
7 there's not much revenue being produced by the gas tax.
8 Overall, that's a good thing. We want to decrease our
9 use of gas, the pollution, and ecologists, hence the HOV
10 lanes. You're going to have your income go even further
11 down. You're going to have to find another revenue
12 stream if -- rather than the tolls, rather than the gas
13 tax. I don't know what that might be. I'm sure our
14 elected officials could figure something out. They
15 usually are pretty good at raising the money.

16 So I would suggest get rid of the fees, look at
17 other ways to finance the HOV and the lanes, and I want
18 to thank you for the Silver Line because I do do that
19 when I go to downtown or to USC games.

20 And by the way, I wholly sympathize with you.
21 I've been in those cars with a whole bunch of fans not in
22 the lanes because of no transponder.

23 Again, thank you very much for this opportunity
24 to speak out. Thank you.

25 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

1 Next we have Bob Gelfand, followed by Terry Chi,
2 followed by Vinita Waskow.

3 MR. GELFAND: Hi. My name is Bob Gelfand.

4 I live in San Pedro and I'm also a member of the
5 Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council Governing Board
6 and I just want to point out again for the record that
7 our neighborhood council discussed this at great length
8 before the lanes were opened. We opposed it pretty much
9 unanimously. We've continued to oppose it. We've
10 continued to protest it.

11 Yes, this is an experiment that was essentially
12 forced upon us because it was a federal grant and the
13 federal grant exhorted the creation of these lanes. They
14 should simply paint over those double white lines and get
15 rid of the whole thing or turn it back into a carpool
16 lane. Remember that at one time long, long ago, they
17 actually put a carpool lane, which at the time was called
18 a diamond lane, on the 10 Freeway going from Westwood out
19 to downtown and there was so much protest that they took
20 it out.

21 When they started to do this particular we call
22 it the FASTRAC -- I think of it myself as being in the
23 slow track -- it was -- you know, there was -- it was --
24 again, it was just extorted out of us, but I want to
25 point out something, that there's this sort of

1 philosophical history to this. This idea of congestion
2 pricing is something that's deeply beloved of a
3 particular one train of thought in the right wing and
4 there's sort of an underlying philosophy that we all are
5 equal both legally, which is true, but then also
6 financially; in other words, one dollar, one better, to
7 quote the famous line from George Hillyard. And I would
8 say that that's obviously not the case in the current
9 society and the creation of this FASTRAC system is,
10 therefore, profoundly immoral.

11 And I offer, you know, three examples which I
12 thought of on my drive over, which is somebody driving a
13 '94 beater who's at the nearly end of his unemployment
14 and now he has a job interview somewhere between
15 San Pedro and downtown and he doesn't have a transponder
16 because, you know, he doesn't do it all the time and he
17 gets in there and now he's got a 45-minute delay sitting
18 there bumper to bumper while there's nearly an empty two
19 lanes off to your left, and you see -- you can sit there
20 and count on your watch and, you know, car, car, once in
21 a while, and meanwhile there's 10,000 cars all around
22 you.

23 Then I think about the guy in the Lexus who can
24 burn \$20 bills for breakfast, and the third one is the
25 guy gets picked up at his mansion down there next to the

1 cliffs by his chauffeur and they get into the FASTRAC and
2 he doesn't pay anything at all. That's an extreme case,
3 but it's basically screwing over the people who don't
4 have a lot of money. That's why it's called the Lexus
5 lanes. That's why we've always called it the Lexus
6 lanes. The experiment, if it's not required by law, get
7 rid of it.

8 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

9 Next we have Terry Chi, followed by Vinita
10 Waskow, followed by Gigi Castello.

11 MS. CHI: Hi. So I'm an infrequent user of the lane
12 and when I purchased the transponder, it was told to me
13 that there was an account maintenance fee each month and
14 it's clear to me from this public hearing today that
15 actually the fact that it's been, you know, removed has
16 not been properly communicated. We had several people
17 today just still talk about the account maintenance fee
18 when your presenter said at the last slide that it's been
19 removed and none of us knew about it. So I think this
20 underlines the fact that your marketing communications is
21 not good.

22 And also, there was a commercial I think that is
23 airing on television -- I don't know if it's related to
24 your Department -- promoting some type of \$40 discount.
25 Is that related to you guys or is it some other company?

1 We recently saw this commercial on television that had to
2 do with the ExpressLanes, so we're not sure -- I
3 thought -- I watched the commercial several times, still
4 didn't understand what it was saying. So I thought I'd
5 bring that to your attention to have your marketing
6 people look at it, if it is related to your department --

7 MS. KEINER: Okay.

8 MS. CHI: -- but there is an issue of poor
9 communication about fees and all these rules, if they are
10 changing.

11 MS. KEINER: Okay.

12 MS. CHI: So I implore you to please do a better job
13 of communicating to your customers. Thank you.

14 MS. KEINER: We'd be happy to talk to you off-line.

15 Next we have Vinita Waskow, followed by
16 Gigi Castello.

17 MS. WASKOW: Hi. I'm Vinita Waskow and I work in
18 downtown in City Hall and live in the South Bay and every
19 morning I take the Commuter Express 438 just short of the
20 Aviation/Imperial station and basically go along the 105
21 to the 10, and I've been taking it for a couple years and
22 ever since this project started, I have seen increasing
23 amounts of congestion in the carpool lane, or now it's
24 FASTRAC lane, and today I actually timed it. It's
25 supposed to take, according to the Commuter Express

1 table, 15 minutes.

2 From the Green Line Station to the 37th Street
3 USC stop, it's supposed to take 15 minutes. Today it
4 took about 25 minutes. So it's only a ten-minute
5 difference, but if you think about it, it's actually a
6 66 percent increase in travel time for that, for that
7 portion, which is kind of pretty extreme, I think.

8 So I don't have all the answers, but I think you
9 should really look into -- I -- unfortunately, I missed
10 the slide show earlier. I had to work, but I kind of
11 went through it earlier and I saw some of your numbers
12 and your statistics were measuring from 5:00 to 9:00 in
13 the morning; was that correct? I feel like that's kind
14 of a very long range. Maybe you should focus it down to
15 7:00 to 9:00, because at 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning,
16 there's not as much traffic. I feel like the numbers may
17 be skewed a little bit, especially at like 7:30 to 8:30
18 when there's large amounts of traffic. I don't see
19 people paying \$12 to only go five miles faster.

20 I don't know, but maybe limiting -- during
21 high-traffic hours, limiting only to HOV, the
22 high-occupancy vehicles and busway or -- bus lanes
23 allowed or increasing the fees or something, just really
24 looking at that, because I think it's impacting a lot of
25 transit riders, you know, the Commuter Express, because

1 as I go through, the Silver Line runs there, there's some
2 Torrance transit lines, Gardena. I think all those are
3 being impacted and, you know, I work for city planning.
4 We're always trying to incentivize transit, use carpool
5 lane and I feel like this program doesn't really do that.
6 I feel like you're almost being punished a little bit to
7 take transit.

8 I just would recommend you looking into maybe
9 keeping one lane as just HOV and bus lanes and maybe the
10 other one's FASTRAC or thinking of something during
11 high-commute hours, rush hours, thinking of a different
12 plan. So thanks.

13 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

14 Next we have Gigi Castello, followed by
15 J.K. Drummond, followed by Stephanie Garrett.

16 MS. CASTELLO: Hi. I'm Gigi Castello. I'm a science
17 teacher in the South Bay area and my concern is that
18 there's missing data from what they presented.

19 It was a great presentation, but I feel that
20 they're really not addressing what has happened to the
21 regular commuter, the people who aren't are taking the
22 ExpressLanes. We don't see any data representative of
23 about how their commute has been affected and that isn't
24 fair. That should be addressed.

25 Secondly, we're not being provided any data that

1 states the difference between the people who are
2 carpooling and the people who pay. We don't know the
3 percentage. We need to have the facts to really be able
4 to know whether this is a good program or not.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

7 Next J.K. Drummond, followed by
8 Stephanie Garrett.

9 MR. DRUMMOND: These so-called HOT lanes were a
10 vicious attack on the South Bay. The most highly
11 impacted were those people south of the former Artesia
12 Transit Center. We lost our through buses from
13 Palos Verdes. The former 444 downgraded to the 344. We
14 do have a few. The 550 a few times a day goes -- during
15 weekday peak hours, it does go to USC, but it no longer
16 goes to West Hollywood. The bus from San Pedro to
17 downtown is now reduced to peak hours weekday only. We
18 lost a lot of service and a lot of money went to the
19 San Gabriel Valley. It's a miserable attack.

20 Formerly, if you had two people in the car, no
21 problem in the carpool lanes. Now if you have two people
22 in the car and they take pictures, they ought to be able
23 to count and see that you have two people. Why should
24 you need this FASTRAC nuisance stick-on thing? Any time
25 there's two people in the car, they can take a picture.

1 That should be okay.

2 We need to get -- since it's making money -- I
3 noticed the impact area map doesn't go very far south.
4 It doesn't go to Palos Verdes and South Bay and
5 Wilmington and Lomita. Those are the places that were
6 hardest hit by this miserable excuse.

7 Let's face it. MTA is a money-grubbing agency.
8 Money -- federal money was available and the money to rip
9 it all out was part of that. I don't know if they spent
10 that yet or not, but this has really hurt us horribly and
11 this is apparently the southernmost meeting that they are
12 having. They should have a meeting in Palos Verdes, they
13 should have a meeting in San Pedro, and I hate the HOT
14 lanes.

15 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

16 Stephanie Garrett.

17 MS. GARRETT: I'm Stephanie Garrett and I live in the
18 South Bay.

19 I work in downtown Los Angeles. I take the 450
20 or the -- can everybody hear me now? How is that? Is
21 that better?

22 All right. Again, I'm Stephanie Garrett. I
23 live in the South Bay. I work in downtown Los Angeles
24 and I ride the 450 and the Silver Line. I catch it at
25 the -- what used to be the Artesia Transit Center. I

1 think it's called the Harbor Gateway or something now.

2 Initially I thought the FASTRAC was actually
3 kind of a good thing. I am a casual user, but whenever
4 I -- on the occasional times that I do need to drive, I
5 would just stop at the Transit Center, pick up somebody,
6 hop in the carpool lane, and I could shoot downtown and
7 we could get downtown in like 15 minutes.

8 Now I've noticed that with the additional
9 drivers in the FASTRAC lane that it takes much longer to
10 get downtown. I have to leave much earlier. I think it
11 takes an additional maybe 20 minutes to get to work and
12 that's really my biggest complaint is just that it takes
13 so much longer to get downtown and the lanes just seem to
14 be so congested.

15 I don't know if you guys are responsible for the
16 additional Silver Line buses, but yeah, I'm happy about
17 that.

18 Okay. Thank you.

19 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

20 Any other speakers?

21 MR. DRUMMOND: Could I have the rest of my three
22 minutes?

23 MS. KEINER: J.K., you may not stand and interrupt
24 for your whole three minutes. We're holding firm to the
25 three minutes, but you are welcome to submit a written

1 comment card.

2 MR. DRUMMOND: There's real poor coordination. The
3 buses that head south all leave within ten minutes of
4 each other from the Transit Center. They should be
5 staggered.

6 MS. KEINER: J.K., let's talk off-line.

7 MR. DRUMMOND: I'd like to talk on-line.

8 MS. KEINER: Well, we appreciate all of you attending
9 tonight's hearing. This input is very important and as
10 Stephanie mentioned, all the public comments made today
11 will be considered by the Metro Board at their meeting in
12 April.

13 Remember, the public comment period closes
14 Monday, April 7th. As a reminder, there are four
15 remaining hearings. And for more information on this
16 project, for more information or to view the PowerPoint
17 presentation, go to Metro.Net slash ExpressLanes and
18 click on public meetings.

19 If you have any questions, project staff will be
20 here until 8:00 p.m. I think there are a couple of you
21 who wanted to talk to us off-line, like J.K., and we'll
22 be here until 8:00 p.m.

23 And if you have additional comments you'd like
24 to make in writing, please feel free to do so. Again, we
25 really appreciate you attending tonight. Thank you.

(Public comments concluded at 7:14 p.m.)

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1 APPEARANCES:

2 Metro Presenter: Kathy McCune
3 Director
4 Metro

4 Facilitator: BRONWEN KEINER
5 Senior Community Relations Officer
6 Metro

6 The Interpreters: ALEX VARELA
7 EDDIE YIP

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1 Los Angeles, California, Wednesday, March 31, 2014

2 6:18 p.m.

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4
5 MS. KEINER: Welcome, everyone. Thank you very much
6 for being here this evening. My name is Bronwen Keiner.
7 I'm a Senior Community Relations Officer with Metro and
8 I'll be your facilitator here this evening. I want to
9 welcome you to the Metro ExpressLanes hearing.

10 Before we get started this evening, I'd like to
11 introduce the Spanish and Mandarin translators,
12 Alex Varela and Eddie Yip.

13 (Translation given)

14 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Alex and Eddie.

15 If you need translation assistance, please speak
16 with Alex and Eddie and they can help you.

17 I'd like to also introduce our court reporter,
18 Marcena Munguia. She's going to be recording everything
19 that's said at tonight's hearing.

20 And also an important announcement, if you
21 parked in Lot B as in boy or G as in George, you can get
22 free parking tonight. Just make sure you bring my
23 business card with you when you exit the lot and your
24 parking -- that will be your validation for parking
25 tonight.

1 So tonight we'll begin with a brief presentation
2 by Metro ExpressLanes Director Kathy McCune and that will
3 be followed by the formal public comment part of the
4 evening.

5 If you would like to speak this evening, please
6 complete a blue speaker card and submit it at the
7 registration table. We also have written comment sheets
8 that you can submit as well.

9 And this is your forum, so the period after the
10 presentation will be devoted to your public comments and
11 as such, staff will not interrupt to make clarifications
12 or comments. Each speaker will be given three minutes
13 and we'll call you to the microphone in the order in
14 which your cards are received.

15 So your comments will be recorded by the court
16 reporter, so please be sure to state your name very
17 clearly into the microphone so all of your comments can
18 be captured. And if you have additional comments after
19 your time is up, please feel free to fill out a comment
20 form, written comment form. And if you have additional
21 questions, please feel free to stay until 8:00 p.m.
22 Staff will be available at the boards to answer questions
23 and speak with you one on one.

24 As a reminder, the deadline for public comments
25 is Monday, April 7th, and I want to thank you again for

1 coming.

2 We'll begin with the presentation by
3 Kathy McCune.

4 (Metro Presentation by Kathy McCune)

5 MS. KEINER: So the question was, Are the slides that
6 Kathy just presented online? They are at
7 Metro.Net/ExpressLanes if you'd like to access the
8 presentation.

9 We'll start our public comment now. If you
10 haven't done so already, please fill out a blue speaker
11 card and submit it to Kim.

12 And as I mentioned, I'll call each speaker to
13 the microphone in the order that the cards are received.
14 You'll be given three minutes to speak and there's going
15 to be a timer up on the screen for your reference. And
16 if you have additional comments and your time is up, we
17 do have written comment cards that you can fill out.

18 Please remember to state your name clearly into
19 the microphone so the court reporter can record
20 everything that you say today.

21 And we will start with Andrew Wang, followed by
22 Tania Darnton, followed by Leticia Delgadillo.

23 MR. WANG: Hello. My name is Andrew Wang and I am
24 a -- I am a frequent user of the Metro ExpressLanes and I
25 am often using it as a solo driver for the most part. So

1 I would certainly hope that this program becomes
2 something permanent so that I can keep using it as a solo
3 driver and I'm also hoping that more ExpressLanes come
4 into play, such as on the Interstate 105 Freeway, and I
5 figure that that's -- that would also be a really good
6 one to implement ExpressLanes on.

7 And -- and in regards to -- and in regards to
8 this program, I have shared this program to others as
9 well, too, and to try to get them to be aware about the
10 fact about -- about the change in the operation of these
11 lanes, because a lot of people still don't know that yet,
12 the ones that I know. So I try to tell them about this
13 so that they won't be surprising -- they won't be
14 surprised about receiving violations when they're using
15 the lanes and not being -- while not being aware of the
16 fact that the operation of these lanes have changed. And
17 when I tell people about this new program, I do mention
18 the fact that there is that monthly maintenance fee and I
19 make sure that they are aware about that too and so,
20 therefore, regarding -- 'cause I figured that this is
21 also one of the things that somewhat has been barring
22 people from signing up.

23 So I'm hoping that perhaps Metro can look into
24 adding or expanding the structural plans, too, for the
25 accounts, maybe putting in a convenience plan, which is

1 like a minimal usage one, and one that is like the
2 moderate usage plan which probably would have like a
3 monthly maintenance fee of instead of being \$3 to \$2, and
4 then just use it up to two times instead of four times.
5 And then have the current one, the standard plan, being
6 the frequent usage plan. And the current existing equity
7 plan, I think a good idea for that one would be to rename
8 that to be a special access plan. And I'm pretty sure
9 for the structural plans, this is pretty much what I have
10 to say about it.

11 But anyways, yeah, I guess -- 'cause I'm -- I
12 certainly would hope that this program can stay permanent
13 and that just adding -- probably expanding the structural
14 plan, the structural account plans, that way probably I
15 am hoping that more people will sign up and I hope -- I
16 just hope that things will work out. And that's it.

17 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

18 Next we have Tania Darnton, followed by
19 Leticia Delgadillo, followed by Tom Williams.

20 MS. DARNTON: Thank you. As she said, my name is
21 Tania Darnton.

22 I use the ExpressLanes a lot. I'm also a solo
23 driver. I'm a big supporter of the -- of the High
24 Occupancy Vehicle lanes. I think the prices are
25 reasonable. I think that it's a really great way for

1 people to use the freeways. I live in Pasadena and I use
2 the lanes a lot to go visit my family in El Segundo, so I
3 also just hope the program continues. I would like to
4 keep using it.

5 I was glad to see that the maintenance fee got
6 waived for L.A. County residents. I thought that was a
7 really great thing.

8 And I think that's it. That's all I have to
9 say. I'm a big supporter, so keep it up.

10 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

11 Next we have Tom Williams -- Leticia Delgadillo.
12 I'm sorry. Followed by Tom Williams, followed by
13 Bill Lindquist.

14 MS. DELGADILLO: Good afternoon. I have FASTRAC, but
15 it's not convenient because I live in Alhambra between
16 Atlantic and Garfield. So when I get in on Garfield in
17 order to go to Covina or somewhere in the east, I have to
18 use the regular freeway and I have to get in on Rosemead
19 because there's an entrance there. Sometimes I have to
20 go to the 605, and that's about a mile.

21 That's all. I think they should open up more of
22 the streets. For example, when I am coming from Covina,
23 I have to get off on Rosemead and then I have to take the
24 freeway all the way to Garfield or go all the way to the
25 Long Beach Freeway on Fremont and then go all the way

1 around in order to get home. They should have access at
2 each street or each exit.

3 And I don't know why they painted the freeway
4 white. It's better for it to be painted yellow, just
5 like it is painted on the 5 on your way to Tijuana,
6 because when it rains, or at night, it's easier to see
7 and distinguish the yellow lines compared to the white
8 ones.

9 So I have a FASTRAC, but I hardly ever use it.
10 I have a business right here on Placita Olvera and I get
11 on the freeway here and then I have to get off on Fremont
12 and then take the streets, so it's a problem for me.

13 Thank you very much.

14 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

15 Next we have Tom Williams, followed by
16 Bill Lindquist, followed by Jelil Romano.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Dr. Tom Williams, Angeles
18 Chapter of Sierra Club Transportation Committee, and I
19 live in El Sereno next to Alhambra and we have the same
20 problem, no access.

21 But more importantly, we reviewed the
22 Environmental Impact Report for this project a long time
23 ago and we were quite concerned about environmental
24 justice and there's a lot of numbers that were put up,
25 but specifically, the question is, Who benefits? Who

1 doesn't benefit? And my safe -- I have a car or the
2 transponder. 20 years ago or almost 20 years ago, we
3 developed it and used it in Dubai United Arab Emirates,
4 so why did it take so long? Well, there's a lot of
5 reasons.

6 Our basic concern is lack of environmental
7 justice and lack of documentation as to What are the
8 specifics of those people who are benefiting from it
9 versus those people who are still in the mixed lanes?

10 So there's a lot of questions, but our central
11 point is environmental justice because here's another
12 thing, physically. In order for the I-10, we're looking
13 at whether the I-10 currently meets interstate freeway
14 requirements because right now the outside travel lane is
15 in the gutter and you have to go across the real work for
16 all the stormwater inlands and that's not interstate
17 standard. Sorry. So by squeezing it so much, there's a
18 problem, compliance with interstate requirements which we
19 paid for a long time ago, and environmental justice.

20 That's all.

21 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

22 Next we have Bill Lindquist, followed by
23 Jelil Romano, followed by Chris Romano.

24 MR. LINDQUIST: Hi. I'm Bill Lindquist and I want to
25 say thank you for having this meeting here. I wanted to

1 see the great train station here, but also the
2 expressways all the way out to where the 605 right now,
3 I'd like to see it extended and I think a lot of us here
4 agree we should have more access, more lanes. I'd love
5 to see the 101 done this way, too, to help us get
6 downtown. And as far as tolls go, being fair, not
7 fair, I'm more of a solo driver as well and I do more of
8 the convenience as opposed to the rush-hour times. So if
9 there's a way to maybe change that so that -- I don't
10 want to volunteer to pay more, but I wouldn't mind paying
11 more if it was more accessible to more people. I think
12 the idea of the express busways on the ExpressLanes is
13 great, too. So I think that's helps out.

14 My last suggestion may not be -- it's more the
15 social equality thing. I like the idea of perhaps basing
16 the tolls on a percentage of the registration fees of the
17 car vehicles. So if the value of your car is so much,
18 then it's tied to your registration vehicle cost. That
19 way, the tolls are made fair for all. Thanks.

20 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

21 Next we have Jelil Romano, followed by
22 Chris Romano, followed by Loran Moore.

23 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

24 I'm Jelil Romano. I just have some questions
25 from a personal standpoint. I mostly use it as a carpool

1 with my son and we get on the southbound 2 on the 110 and
2 constantly -- it's been several times a month -- we get
3 billed for it and it takes a picture of the license plate
4 and then we get this bill and it's misread and it says we
5 entered and exited at the same time and it doesn't make
6 sense. And then later, the thing doesn't beep. When we
7 go on, it constantly is not beeping. Sometimes it will
8 work and go beep, beep when we go in. Other times,
9 nothing and then later on down the freeway, it will beep.

10 So then we get this letter from Metro. It says,
11 You probably have it in the wrong spot, but it wouldn't
12 beep, if it was in the wrong spot, further down.

13 So I think something's wrong with the transponder --
14 no, it's not the transponder. It's the thing that reads
15 it, because the transponder works coming up, going down,
16 except for a couple of places. I don't know.

17 So the other thing is I'm wondering -- I
18 understand in San Diego that carpools and motorcycles and
19 cars that have the stickers don't need a transponder and
20 only cars that are single drivers use a transponder. I
21 think that would be great. I can see the benefit for
22 people that want to drive alone and they're able to use
23 that. So is it possible to not have the transponder?

24 And I think it's unfair for visitors to our
25 city. They're going down the Harbor Freeway to get to

1 the 105 to go to the airport and they aren't able to use
2 that, and it seems like it's an unfriendly city that
3 forces them to be in the traffic if they're a carpool.

4 Oh, and one other thing. When you mentioned the
5 income level, I was never asked for my income level. I
6 don't understand where that comes from. It may be the
7 area; and I can tell you I'm not one of the wealthy
8 people in my neighborhood, but there are wealthier
9 people. So if I'm being put in with them or wealthy
10 people are put in with poorer people, there must be a
11 better way to determine that.

12 Anyway, thank you.

13 MS. KEINER: Thanks.

14 Mr. Romano, come see me after the presentation
15 or after all the comments and we can talk about your
16 customer service issue.

17 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

18 MS. KEINER: Next speaker is Chris Romano, followed
19 by Loran Moore, followed by Adam Levbarg.

20 MR. ROMANO: Hi. I'm Chris Romano. Actually, you
21 just heard from my dad, Jelil Romano.

22 Again, we didn't purchase the transponder to
23 suddenly be able to use the lanes. We purchased the
24 transponder to continue to be able to use the lanes
25 because, again, my dad works in San Pedro. I work near

1 LAX. We always took the 110 carpool lane to get there.

2 It seemed like a good idea.

3 While driving that particular area, you can tell
4 the 110 carpool lane, now ExpressLanes, leads directly to
5 the 105 carpool lane and that leads essentially directly
6 to the airport where, you know, visitors come, families,
7 groups of people. If they were in a car at the airport,
8 they come up the carpool lane on the 105. It leads
9 directly into the ExpressLanes where suddenly now they
10 can't use them because you're at LAX in a rental car.

11 If you're in an outlying area, you could see
12 that they don't really buy the transponders.

13 I do enjoy that there is no monthly maintenance
14 fee for people in like the Los Angeles area and local
15 people, but those would be the people that would be more
16 likely to actually use the system. People who were
17 outside, they would be less likely to use it because,
18 again, they wouldn't be in the area. They wouldn't be
19 able to use it all the time, and they would be
20 essentially barred from lanes there indefinitely because
21 there would be no reason.

22 It also limits. I know the people I work with,
23 I'd carpool with them sometimes and I don't -- if the box
24 is with my dad, suddenly, you know, if I say, "Hey, can I
25 get a ride home?" Then "sure." Sometimes he gives me a

1 ride and I'm stuck in the regular lanes because we can't
2 use the carpool lane because, you know, suddenly it's not
3 allowed.

4 I don't understand why the lanes can't be
5 policed by the police because I see them sitting there
6 every time I go by. This morning, we're on the FASTRAC
7 lanes, on two of the areas, there were cops sitting right
8 there waiting for people. I don't see why they couldn't
9 suddenly see if someone was a single person and that blue
10 light didn't start flashing when they went under the
11 thing and read the box.

12 I mean, I think it's a great system. I think
13 it's great that people who are single and want to pay to
14 use the lanes can use the lanes. I think that's great.
15 I think it gets them off, you know. It pays for everyone
16 else who's in traffic so there's less people there and
17 there's more people in the lanes, but I don't see why,
18 again, people without the transponder box can't use the
19 lanes.

20 So anyway, that's it. Thank you.

21 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

22 Next, Loran Moore, followed by Adam Levbarg.

23 MR. MOORE: Good evening. My name is Loran Moore. I
24 commute in from San Bernardino.

25 THE REPORTER: Could you speak up, please.

1 MR. MOORE: My name is Loran Moore. I usually
2 commute from San Bernardino County. I carpool with two
3 or three individuals frequently.

4 Points: I was very happy to hear in Kathy's
5 presentation that vehicles with "Access Okay" stickers
6 are allowed. As both a CNG and a Volt owner, now having
7 cars that are eligible for that, it is good to hear. I
8 was not aware that that had changed at the end of
9 February, so it would probably be good to communicate
10 that a little more openly.

11 Also, I would like to comment that the access to
12 the -- the entrance to the toll lane here at Alameda just
13 a few hundred feet to my left ends up being a very
14 dangerous situation with the pedestrians jaywalking and
15 also them -- quite the large amount of traffic that's not
16 being regulated by lights. It makes for a very dangerous
17 situation, people making left turns into pedestrian areas
18 and also the left turns not being protected, so that they
19 could end up hitting the flow of oncoming traffic coming
20 northbound on Alameda.

21 Finally, I'd like to suggest that signage be put
22 up. I have noticed that buses, when they use the lane,
23 tend to travel in the left-most lane, which is a bit
24 opposite from the fact that usually the left is a passing
25 lane. Buses tend to use that lane for safety reasons so

1 they're not next to the flow of the slower freeway
2 traffic, but it would be great to identify the passing
3 versus driving lanes on the ExpressLanes.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

6 And next we have Adam Levbarg.

7 MR. LEVBARG: Hi. I'm Adam Levbarg.

8 Thank you for having this public meeting. I
9 wanted to thank Kathy, wherever she is.

10 Hi, Kathy.

11 I want to thank you for addressing the customer
12 service issue, because I have had a couple issues before
13 and recently just about the topic I wanted to talk about,
14 which is the account maintenance fee.

15 The customer service agents don't seem -- didn't
16 seem to be aware of the fact that there was even this fee
17 waiver in place and to the -- I wish I had her name. To
18 her credit, the last person I talked to actually called
19 me back after realizing that I received bad information
20 from her. So, you know, kudos to her for that.

21 But the issue with the account maintenance fee,
22 it is -- the information about the waiver has been very
23 difficult to track down and the FAQs on the website just
24 were updated recently to reflect the April 30th date. It
25 was -- it had expired and I called to clarify about it

1 and -- anyway, but about the account maintenance fee, I
2 was hoping that you might be able to just address how the
3 fee itself was arrived at, the amount, I mean, because
4 the issue -- you know, I printed out this page from the
5 Metro ExpressLanes where you explain that the account
6 maintenance fee is \$3 for the ExpressLanes and \$7 for the
7 91, \$4.50 for the I-15 ExpressLanes, et cetera,
8 et cetera. It seems like within that context it's a very
9 reasonable amount of money, but when you look at the
10 monthly account maintenance fees or subscription fees for
11 E-ZPass, which is the dominant toll transponder system on
12 the East Coast and in some cities in the midwest, you see
13 dramatically lower prices for these fees: Zero dollars
14 per month in Illinois and Delaware, \$1 a month in
15 Indiana. This is from Wikipedia, by the way, so please,
16 you know, this is not vetted information.

17 But just for discussion purposes, Pennsylvania
18 has a \$3 fee, which seems on par with ours until you
19 realize that it's an annual fee, not a monthly fee.

20 So most of these fees are either free or \$1,
21 50 cents, 75 cents a month, which does seem much more
22 reasonable for people like me that are casual carpoolers,
23 and I think that you would have probably a lot less
24 resistance if the fees were more in line with the E-ZPass
25 fees on the East Coast than the oddly inflated fees of

1 California.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. KEINER: Thank you.

4 Are there any other speakers tonight?

5 If not, I'd like to thank you all again for
6 providing your input. We really appreciate you being
7 here.

8 As Kathy mentioned, all the public comments made
9 today will be given to the Metro Board for their
10 consideration at the meeting in April. And remember, the
11 public comment period closes April 7th, this coming
12 Monday.

13 We have three hearings left this week and next
14 Monday. And as I mentioned for your information, the
15 presentation is on our website at Metro.Net/ExpressLanes.

16 And it sounds like a couple of you had questions
17 like Adam, Mr. Romano, so feel free to stay.

18 We'll be here until 8:00 p.m. to talk to you one
19 on one at the project boards. And if you have additional
20 comments, you're more than welcome to fill out a written
21 comment form.

22 And, again, we appreciate you being here
23 tonight. Thank you very much.

24 (Public comments concluded at 7:14 p.m.)

25

1 APPEARANCES:

2 Metro Presenter: KATHY MCCUNE
3 Director
4 Metro

4 Facilitator: BRONWEN KEINER
5 Senior Community Relations Officer
6 Metro

6 The Interpreter: ALEX VARELA

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1 Inglewood, California, Thursday, April 3, 2014

2 6:15 p.m.

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5 MS. KEINER: Good evening, everyone, and thank you
6 for being here this evening. We're going to get started.

7 My name is Bronwen Keiner and I am a Senior
8 Community Relations Officer with Metro.

9 I want to thank you for being here this evening.
10 I will be your facilitator this evening.

11 And first I'd like to introduce Alex Varela, our
12 Spanish interpreter.

13 (Interpretation given)

14 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Alex. So if you need help,
15 Alex will be there.

16 And I'd also like to introduce Marcena Munguia,
17 our court reporter. She is going to be recording
18 everything that's said at tonight's hearing.

19 So this evening we're going to begin with a
20 brief presentation by Metro ExpressLanes Director
21 Kathy McCune, and that will be followed by the formal
22 public comment part of the meeting.

23 If you would like to speak this evening, please
24 fill out a blue speaker card and submit it at the
25 registration table; and if you'd like to submit written

1 public comments, we've got written comment sheets
2 available as well.

3 And this is really your forum, so the time after
4 the presentation will be reserved for public comment; and
5 as such, staff will not interrupt to make comments or
6 clarifications.

7 Each speaker will be given three minutes to
8 provide his or her comment and we will call you to the
9 microphone in the order the cards are received.

10 Your comments will be recorded by the court
11 reporter, so please be sure to state your name clearly
12 into the microphone. And like I said, if you have
13 additional comments when your time is up, please feel
14 free to fill out a written public comment card.

15 If you have additional questions, staff will be
16 here until 8:00 p.m., so please feel free to speak with
17 us individually afterwards.

18 And as a reminder, the deadline for public
19 comments is Monday, April 7th.

20 Again, I want to thank you all for being here
21 tonight and I'd like to introduce Metro ExpressLanes
22 Director Kathy McCune.

23 (Metro Presentation by Kathy McCune)

24 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Kathy.

25 All right. We will start our public comment

1 period now. And to reiterate the protocol, if you'd like
2 to speak, fill out a blue speaker card and submit it at
3 the registration desk. I'll call each speaker to the
4 microphone in the order the cards are received and you'll
5 have three minutes. There will be a timer on the screen
6 there for your reference.

7 And as I mentioned, if you have additional
8 comments when your time is up, you're welcome to fill out
9 a written comment form. Please remember to state your
10 name clearly into the microphone so Marcena can capture
11 all of your comments.

12 We will start with Joyce Perkins.

13 MS. PERKINS: I am Joyce Perkins and I am
14 representing the Veronica-Sanchez Sycamore Block Club and
15 I'm here on behalf of Los Angeles Neighborhood
16 Initiative. I'm on the Board and I like to take
17 information back to the agency.

18 I was not real clear on the 16 to 19 million
19 dollars that will -- that you anticipate netting, and I
20 understand that you will be dividing this up in three
21 pots in order to create some improvements in various
22 sectors. I would imagine that this will be spread
23 throughout the county and I'm just wondering or wanting
24 to encourage you to make sure that the community has some
25 say-so in how these improvements are made, just so that

1 there is equity throughout the county in terms of the
2 improvements that will be made.

3 And I had a question, and that was -- one of the
4 questions that people who are opposed to your program ask
5 or contend is that there's double taxation and so I was
6 just wondering how you answer that question, Kathy.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. KEINER: Thank you. Thank you, Joyce. And we're
9 going to have a chance after public comment is over to
10 speak one on one with staff so feel free to chat with
11 Kathy afterwards.

12 Are there any other public comments? No?

13 All right. Well, thank you all very much for
14 attending tonight. As Kathy mentioned -- you do have
15 one?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, I just thought -- is
17 there going to be like a general question-and-answer in
18 case there's something we didn't understand?

19 MS. KEINER: Informally. We're going to gather
20 around the boards and we'll be here until 8:00 p.m. so
21 yes, you'll have a chance to chat with all of us. We
22 will be here until 8:00.

23 And as Kathy mentioned, all of the public
24 comments tonight, written or given by Joyce, will be
25 submitted to the Metro Board for their consideration at

1 their meeting in April. There are two more public
2 hearings and if you'd like more information or would like
3 to view the PowerPoint presentation that Kathy made, you
4 can go to our website at Metro.Net/ExpressLanes.

5 And, again, we really appreciate you all being
6 here tonight. So we'll be here until 8:00 to talk with
7 you individually.

8 Thank you.

9 (Public comments concluded at 6:51 p.m.)

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BEFORE THE
METRO EXPRESS LANES PROJECT TEAM

Public Hearing in the Matter of:)
)
METRO EXPRESSLANES)
_____)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
West Covina, California
Saturday, April 5, 2014

Reported by:

SICILY ORSTEAD
CSR No. 13523

Job No. :
1081ROB

BEFORE THE

METRO EXPRESS LANES PROJECT TEAM

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Public Hearing in the Matter of:)
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METRO EXPRESSLANES)
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken at
West Covina Civic Center, 1444 West Garvey Avenue,
West Covina, California 91790, commencing at
10:50 a.m. on Saturday, April 5, 2014, heard
before the Metro Express Lanes Project Team,
reported by SICILY ORSTEAD, CSR No. 13523,
a Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for
the State of California.

1 APPEARANCES:

2

3 Metro Presenter: BRONWEN TRICE KEINER

4 Spanish Interpreter: ALEX VARELA

5 Chinese Interpreter: EDDIE YIP

6 Also Present: KATHY MCCURE
KIM LE

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1 West Covina, California, Saturday April 5, 2014

2 10:50 a.m.

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5 MS. TRICE KEINER: We will start our public comment
6 period now. Let's reevaluate our protocol. If you would
7 like to speak, please fill out a blue speaker card and
8 submit it to Kim. This is the public speaking portion, and
9 you'll have three minutes per speaker. There's going to be
10 a timer on this thing here for your records, and if you have
11 additional comments and your time is up, please feel free to
12 submit a written comment card or submit an E-mail.

13 If you have additional questions, staff will be
14 here until 12:00 noon, so we'll be happy to talk to you one
15 on one afterwards. Please just remember to speak clearly
16 and project, since we don't have AV today. We'll start with
17 Hank Fung, followed by Rina Sa.

18 MR. FUNG: Get me after I just got my coffee; but okay.
19 So my name is Hank Fung, and I just live in the area here.
20 I've been on the Board of Advisory Group for this project.
21 I think they have done a really good job of outreach. I
22 would say it's a model for outreach, so I think I would put
23 that on the record that we want to commend the metro staff
24 for that.

25 Some issues I want to see resolved. Definitely,

1 keeping the maintenance fee free for L.A. County residents,
2 that's very important. Actually, Gloria Molina has a
3 proposal to put a dollar fee on everybody that uses the
4 express lane. She put that in her Board motion in February
5 and that's unacceptable.

6 You know, either we have a current system where
7 it's free for L.A. residents or that you go to the originally
8 approved system, which is \$3 for people that don't use it
9 four times a month, but not charge everybody \$1 a month.
10 That's unacceptable and hopefully the Metro staff will tell
11 Gloria Molina to stop that. That's very unacceptable.

12 Extending the I10 carpool lane, the express lane
13 eastward to Puente Avenue, such as they mentioned in the
14 presentation, we need to do that because it is causing
15 issues with people weaving in and out, especially at that
16 605 interchange, it's not a great idea. So extending express
17 lanes out will help a lot with that.

18 Regarding the Silver Line service, I think that's
19 great, but the Silver Line service needs to be upgraded to
20 rail light service, so at night it needs to run every
21 20 minutes. Right now it runs every 40 minutes at night.
22 So sometimes I'll go to a Dodgers game, and I'll come back
23 on the Dodger shuttle and then I will wait at Union Station
24 for 15, 20, sometimes even longer, minutes, and I like to
25 take the express lanes. I like to take the Silver Line to

1 watch Dodger games.

2 Waiting around at night at that stop at Union
3 Station -- I know they are building a new spot, but waiting
4 around at that stop is not a great idea. It's dark, and
5 that's a big issue. Adding an exit off the express lanes
6 westbound on the 10 Freeway -- right now the exit is near
7 the 710 -- and I would like that exit to be moved a little
8 further east, so people can get on and still use the
9 Fremont Avenue off-ramp.

10 Right now, people that get on the freeway eastbound
11 on the express lane, they can get on still at Fremont, and
12 there is a lot of businesses on -- for the Fremont Avenue
13 corridor in Alhambra. There's that big Alhambra business
14 complex.

15 There's the Department of Public Works in Alhambra,
16 so extending that off-ramp on the 10 West consistent with
17 the 10 East, I think, is important. And, also, the equity
18 plan is very important, but they need to advertise it,
19 like the student lunch programs and people at DPSS. I think
20 that would be helpful, so more people use that equity plan.
21 And that's all. Thanks.

22 MS. TRICE KEINER: Thank you. Next, we have Rina Sa.

23 MS. SA: Hello everyone. I'm a student at USD,
24 California. Actually, half an hour ago -- I don't know what
25 the green card means. I saw these questions. So here, I

1 have one question because I'm doing a project about Metro,
2 at school, about public policy. So I have some questions.

3 The express lane just, like, improves someone who
4 is driving a car or just -- it can improve the traffic
5 situation in Los Angeles.

6 We know that public transportation is about
7 equality and everyone has the right to enjoy the same
8 (inaudible) about the traffic, but if we have to pay for it
9 to ensue (inaudible) our own. That's my question.

10 MS. TRICE KEINER: Thank you. Any other speakers today?
11 Okay.

12 And Rina, we'll be able to speak with you about
13 your question afterwards, and we appreciate everyone for
14 being here today. Thank you very much for coming.

15 As Kathy mentioned, all the public comments made
16 today will be submitted to the Metro Board for the meeting,
17 for their consideration. And remember, you can submit
18 comments through Monday, April, 7th. We have one more
19 hearing on Monday night in South L.A. And if you would like
20 to view this presentation or get more information about the
21 project, you can go to our Website at metro.net/expresslane.

22 Like I said, we'll be here 'til 12:00 noon.

23 Thank you very much.

24 (Hearing concluded at 10:56 a.m.)

25

1 APPEARANCES:

2 Metro Presenter: STEPHANIE WIGGINS
3 Executive Director
4 Metro

4 Facilitator: BRONWEN KEINER
5 Senior Community Relations Officer
6 Metro

6 The Interpreter: ALEX VARELA

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1 Los Angeles, California, Monday, April 7, 2014

2 6:13 p.m.

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5 MS. KEINER: Good evening, everybody, and thank you
6 for being here this evening. Welcome. My name is
7 Bronwen Keiner and I am a Senior Community Relations
8 Officer with Metro and I will be your facilitator this
9 evening.

10 So before we get started this evening, we would
11 like to introduce the Spanish language interpreter,
12 Alex Varela.

13 (Interpretation given)

14 MS. KEINER: Thanks, Alex.

15 I'd also like to introduce Marcena Munguia, our
16 court reporter who is going to be recording everything
17 that's said at tonight's hearing.

18 Tonight we are going to begin with a brief
19 presentation by Stephanie Wiggins, Metro's Executive
20 Director, and that will be followed by a public comment
21 period.

22 If you'd like to speak this evening, please
23 complete a blue speaker card and turn it in at the
24 registration table. We also have written comment sheets
25 and you can fill out your comments in writing.

1 And this is really your forum, so the time after
2 the presentation will be devoted to public comment. As
3 such, staff will not interrupt to make clarifications or
4 comments.

5 Each speaker will be given three minutes. I
6 will call you up in the order that the cards are
7 received. Your comments are going to be recorded by the
8 court reporter, so just be sure to state your name and
9 speak clearly into the microphone.

10 If you have additional comments when your time
11 is up, feel free to fill out a written comment sheet.
12 And if you have additional questions, staff will be here
13 until 8:00 p.m. So please feel free to stay afterwards.

14 As a reminder, the deadline for public comments
15 on this project is today. So thank you.

16 At this time, I'll introduce Stephanie Wiggins.

17 (Metro presentation by Stephanie Wiggins)

18 MS. KEINER: Thank you, Stephanie.

19 We'll start our public comment period now.

20 To reiterate the protocol, if you'd like to
21 speak, please fill out a blue speaker card and submit it
22 to our staff and I'll call each speaker to the microphone
23 in the order the cards were received. You'll have three
24 minutes, and typically we have a timer on the screen for
25 your reference, so you can refer to that while you're

1 speaking.

2 As a reminder, please speak clearly into the
3 microphone so the court reporter can record all of your
4 comments.

5 If you have additional comments when your time
6 is up, feel free to fill out a written comment card and
7 we will be here, as I said, until 8:00 p.m.

8 So the first speaker is --

9 MS. WIGGINS: That's Caroline.

10 MS. KEINER: Caroline.

11 MS. WIGGINS: Drum roll.

12 MS. COWARD: Okay. I'm not a shell. I was not hired
13 by Metro or CalTrans, but I love you guys. This program
14 has saved my sanity and saved my bank account and saved
15 my car.

16 I live in Pasadena. I work in Carson. So I am
17 your target market. I am up and down the 110 Freeway.
18 If there's an accident, I take the 710. If there's an
19 accident, I take the 605. So I am constantly -- and it's
20 just me. My husband works at home, so I'm a solo driver.
21 On bad days, it may be two hours. But since this program
22 started, I can look forward -- after that horrible spot
23 through downtown, I can look forward to getting in my
24 FASTRAC lane, having my transponder go beep, beep, and
25 just enjoy the rest of my ride to work. So yeah, you've

1 saved my sanity.

2 You saved my bank account. I have a 2006 car.
3 Because I am going at speed and not stop-and-go traffic,
4 I haven't had to replace my brakes in over a year. My
5 transmission is healthy. My mechanic said, "You have one
6 of the best-looking cars I've seen under the hood" and I
7 am -- I won't have to buy another car until I roll over
8 200,000 miles. It's wonderful.

9 I love this program. I hope you continue it. I
10 hope you'll expand it. I wish every HOV lane in the
11 state had a FASTRAC. I would be on it.

12 In terms of cost, before I signed up for the
13 program, I kind of figured out, okay, about 6 bucks per
14 trip and how much would I normally be spending in
15 automotive upkeep and repair and maintenance? And it's a
16 lot cheaper to take the FASTRAC. So I think this is a
17 wonderful program and I'm really surprised you guys
18 didn't think of this 10 years ago, 15 years ago.

19 Chicago, if you've ever been to Chicago, they
20 have ExpressLanes where you can go solo in the HOV lanes
21 and I thought, Why doesn't L.A. do this? It's such a
22 great idea. I would pay money to do this. So finally 15
23 years later you guys did it.

24 To the folks that say, "I'm already a taxpayer
25 and the toll is a double tax," I am a taxpayer and there

1 are a lot of programs in L.A. County and the State of
2 California that I don't take part in, that I don't
3 directly benefit from, but I am absolutely more than
4 willing to pay taxes into those programs because I
5 benefit from them indirectly and it's good for the entire
6 state.

7 I already sent you guys an e-mail, comments to
8 the same effect, so you have all this.

9 What else? Yeah, I wish you would continue the
10 program. I wish you would expand the program.

11 And since my CHP brothers are here, I hope I
12 don't get a parking ticket. Thank you.

13 MS. KEINER: Thank you very much.

14 We don't have any other speakers tonight.

15 I want to thank you very much again for coming,
16 Caroline.

17 MS. COWARD: I can add to my comments. I have a
18 suggestion, actually.

19 MS. KEINER: Great. We'll talk to you. We'll be
20 here, like I said, until 8:00 p.m. in case any other
21 people trickle in.

22 And for more information, the PowerPoint
23 presentation is on our website at Metro.Net/ExpressLanes.

24 And, again, thank you very much for providing
25 your comments and participating in the process. We

1 really appreciate it. Thank you again.

2 (Public comments concluded at 6:40 p.m.)

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