

CAC

Metro's Citizens' Advisory Council

July 15, 2020

The Honorable Eric Garcetti, Chairman and Distinguished Board of Directors
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

And

Mr. Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

RE: LIFE Program – Presentations to the CAC (August 28, 2019 & May 27, 2020)

Dear Distinguished Chairman and Honorable Board of Directors:

Over the course of the last 12 months, the CAC has requested and been provided with a presentation by Metro Staff about the LIFE Program for Low-Income Metro riders. We thank staff for their presentation, which provided excellent information. The information continues to evolve with changing ridership patterns and evolving challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

First and foremost, the CAC wants to strongly commend the program staff for increasing the program enrollment by **60%+** with greater engagement with more community/government organization partners. The CAC membership feels successful efforts such as these should be acknowledged and duplicated in other programmatic efforts. Simply put, the LIFE program staff **crushed** any reasonable expectations, especially given the current unprecedented global and national events.

In its various Executive Committee meetings, the CAC has developed consensus around the following issues, which we would like to communicate to the Board and Executive Management:

- 1) Despite the recent upsurge in enrollment, the relative number of enrolled households/individuals is low compared to the large number of riders that would qualify for the program;
- 2) The enrollment process is cumbersome and not expansive enough with only two community-based partners available to riders throughout the Metro region, and while partners are very helpful, the enrollment times are only on a limited schedule; and,
- 3) Lastly, given the challenges of increasing enrollment, would it be helpful to either:
 - A) Increase the budget for outreach and enrollment opportunities to current qualifying households given these unprecedented times;
 - B) Make special provisions or grant waivers of qualifying income standards to reflect current situations rather than previous years;
or,
 - C) Modify the program qualifications to increase the income from 50% of median income (\$56,300) to 100% of median income (\$77,400) so that more households can qualify for the program.

Given our consensus on these issues, the CAC would like to request that the LIFE Program team please report back to the CAC with the following items:

- 1) Updated (and better) enrollment numbers, confirmed administrators and more partners;
- 2) Any legislative or administrative steps necessary to implement improvements to the program;
- 3) Information (only if already collected and available) about ridership enrollment outlined by income strata and geographic distribution;
and,
- 4) Report back on proposed changes, if any, to the LIFE Program as a result of the comprehensive pricing study.

We continue to applaud and support Metro's commitment to equity in our communities and among our ridership, especially as reflected in this program. We appreciate your willingness to serve on this very important board and trust you will do all you can to provide the best service to our community.

Sincerely,