



September 22, 2021

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, California 90012-2952  
*Via email to BoardClerk@metro.net*

**Re: Concerns on Item #35- Fareless transit**

Dear Metro Board of Directors:

The Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles (ACT-LA)—a county-wide coalition of 42 organizations—and our community allies have deep concerns about the fareless transit pilot. As it stands the pilot lacks consideration of the impact on Metro's most important stakeholder: current bus riders, and is not ready for consideration. **We are asking you to commit to keeping buses fare free and setting the agency on a pathway to achieving universal fareless transit.** Public transit is a public good. During the pandemic, buses have been rightfully fare free for all riders—relieving many of their second highest living expense, after rent.

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## Concerns on Item #35- Fareless transit

Metro must conduct an overall evaluation of this current period of universal fareless buses, including measuring the impact of today's fareless buses on rider's lives. This overall evaluation should (1) include input from bus riders themselves, (2) analyze the nature of bus rider/operator interactions, and (3) analyze bus system operating gains (e.g. dwell times, ridership, etc.). The Metro Board needs to collectively understand the benefits of universal fareless buses on today's bus riders as you consider a pilot program.

Bus ridership is regaining riders faster than rail ridership in part because with universal fareless transit, which is how Metro buses are operating right now, there isn't any group of people who worry about how to pay to ride. As noted in the Universal Fareless Transit section of the [Item 35 board report \(page 9\)](#), universal fareless transit can grow transit ridership, which aids Los Angeles in our fight for better air quality, climate solutions and less traffic congestion. By financially stabilizing community members, our communities' economies are benefitting during this time of economic recovery. Any pilot program you consider should be part of a strategy towards universal fareless transit.

Fareless transit is economic justice. The pandemic is not over, and many LA residents remain burdened by rent and other debts. If fareless buses end, not only will Metro add onto the economic burdens these residents already endure, Metro will return to forcing riders to pay double for public transportation. The majority (70%) of Metro's funding comes from local sales taxes. LA County residents, including all of our members, already pay for public transit.

Fareless transit is racial justice and makes sense. For every dollar collected in fare, Metro spends nearly 90 cents on policing its buses and trains. Instead of adding to transit riders' already burdensome cost of living and instead of maintaining an expensive and unjust fare collection and enforcement system, Metro should be universally and permanently fareless for everyone.

**Overall evaluation of this period of universal fareless bus transit should at a minimum include the following:**

**Part 1 - Qualitative data analysis** (similar to stories here: [bit.ly/StayFarelessMetro](https://bit.ly/StayFarelessMetro))

- Who is riding and why?
- How have fareless buses helped riders?
- Other qualitative points should illustrate the benefit of universal fareless buses on many aspects of bus rider's lives, including alleviating living expenses that also include rent, various types of housing costs, health care, education, better food options, and other investments in community members' health and livelihoods.

**Part 2 - Nature of Rider/Operator interactions**

- Bus operator interactions - how have universal fareless buses lowered or changed bus driver altercations related to fares?

**Part 3 - Operational data**

- How have ridership trends shifted?
- Time savings from fast boarding procedure and low dwell times

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- Other operating gains should be analyzed and included such as bus speeds, on-time performance, comparative rates of change of bus and rail ridership, etc.

Sincerely,

**Organizations:**

Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles (ACT-LA)

Advancement Project California

Community Power Collective

Esperanza Community Housing Corporation

Feminists in Action Los Angeles

Happy City Coalition

Inclusive Action for the City

Investing in Place

Jobs to Move America

LA Forward Action

Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC)

Los Angeles Walks

Morena Strategies

Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA)

People for Mobility Justice

Strategic Actions for a Just Economy

Student Coalition Against Labor Exploitation

Women Organizing Resource, Knowledge and Services (WORKS)

**Individuals:**

Ahsen Pothiwala, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Akira Quan, Greater Wilshire, Council District 4 & 5

Alburn Binkley, Los Angeles, Council District 11

Alexandra Cave, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Alfonso Directo Jr., Los Angeles, Council District 5

Alix Kalaher, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Amelie Cherlin, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Analisa Swan, Burbank

Andrea Garcia

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Angel Cervantes, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Anne Freiermuth, Los Angeles, Council District 11

Antonio Hernandez, Los Angeles, Council District 9

Asher Guthertz, Los Angeles, Council District 1

Benjamin Bressette, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Bill Myers, Westchester, Council District 11

Brandon Quintana, Lincoln Heights, Council District 1

Brian Eklund, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Brian Hutton, Los Angeles, Council District 5

Carly Kirchen, Northeast LA (Mount Washington), Council District 1

Catherine Chan, Empowerment Congress North, Council District 1, 8 & 9

Chase Engelhardt, Los Angeles, Council District 5

Chien Yang, Long Beach

Chih-Wei Hsu, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Chris Lee, Los Angeles, Council District 11

Chris Riddle, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Clint Blakely, Los Angeles, Council District 2

Connie Kwong, Los Angeles, Council District 5

Corey Arterian, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Corinne Baptiste, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Crystal Kan, Los Angeles, Council District 2

Daisy Alvarado, Los Angeles, Council District 44

Daniel Lee, Culver City

Danielle Ngo, San Jose, CA

Derrick Lemos, Los Angeles, Council District 1

Diego Tamayo, Claremont

Eden Bui, Westwood, Council District 5

edna monroy, LOS ANGELES, Council District 10

Edward Kuhlmann, Santa Clarita

Elenna Salcido, Long Beach

Elizabeth Medrano, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Emily Ward, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Emma Soren, Santa Monica

Eric de la Torre, Sylmar, Council District 7

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Favian Gonzalez, Hawthorne

Felicia Risolo, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Gabriela Gonzalez, North Hollywood, Council District 2

Gemma Lurie, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Geoergina Serrano, Los Angeles, CA, Council District 8

Grace Fetzer, Saint Michael, MN

Gregory Irwin, Los Angeles, Council District 5

Hailey Ruffner, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Harry McDonough, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Hilary Duarte, Los Angeles

Hunter Vargas, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Ian Carr, Los Angeles, Council District 1

Isabel Hidalgo, Los Angeles, Council District 1

Isabella Aceves, Covina

Isabella Roland, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Ivan Aguirre, Empowerment Congress Central, Council District 8

Jamie Cadwell, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Jason Bautista, Los Angeles, Council District 6

jazlyn tabar, Long Beach

Jenn Nguyen, Van Nuys

Jennifer Jayat, Los Angeles, Council District 8

Jessica Craven, Los Angeles, Council District 1

Jessica Wilhelm, Long Beach

Jesus Benavides, Los Angeles, Council District 9

Jillian Moreno, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Joanna Cardenas, Los Angeles

Joanna Valle, La Puente

John Perry, Pasadena

John Redondo, Rampart Village, Council District 1, 13 & 10

Joshua Siverson, Los Angeles, Council District 1

Julia Quandt, North Hollywood West, Council District 2

Katarina Shieh, Fontana

Katherine Eiler, Los Angeles, Council District 11

Katherine Stiegemeyer, Los Angeles, Council District 4

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Kelsey Stefanson, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Kendall Mayhew, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Kennon Raines, Hollywood , Council District 13

Kenny Uong, Glendale, CA

Kevin Porche, Greater Wilshire, Council District 4 & 5

Laura Cowan, Los Angeles , Council District 13

Levi Chau, Lancaster

Liliana Bolanos-Agustin, Los Angeles, Council District 14

Lindsay McCormick, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Lyndsey Nolan, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Marc Reta, Los Angeles, Council District 10

Mariana Huerta Jones, Unincorporated East Los Angeles

Marisela Quintero, Maywood

Matt Iller, Tampa

Melissa Portillo, Granada Hills, Council District 12

Miah Lapeyrolerie, Eagle Rock, Council District 14

Mike Rose, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Molly Rabbitt, LOS ANGELES, Council District 11

Naomi Wilson, Glendale

Nathalie Hernandez, Los Angeles , Council District 4

Neha Patel

Nick Cron-DeVico, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Patrick Brady, Los Angeles, Council District 9

Rabeya Sen, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Racquel Madrid, Los Angeles, Council District 13

Rafael Ibay, Los Angeles, Council District 11

Ray Dang, Los Angeles, Council District 14

Reiana R, Los Angeles, Council District 8

Robert Krauss, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Robin Murphy, Long Beach

S B, Los Angeles

Saba Lurie, Los Angeles

Sanketh Yayathi, Palms, Council District 5

Selene Betancourt, Los Angeles, Council District 1

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Sharifa McCauley, Valley Village, Council District 2

Stella Yoo, Rancho Palos Verdes

Steven Weitz, Hawthorne

Sydney Small, North Hills, Council District 7

Tamara Eskenazi, Los Angeles, Council District 5

Thomas Lahoz, Los Angeles, Council District 1

Timothy Staton-Davis, Los Angeles, Council District 5

Valentine Miele, Glendale

Veronica Shirley, Los Angeles, Council District 4

Wendy Dorantes, Los Angeles, Council District 11

Yanel Saenz, Los Angeles, Council District 15

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Total: 17 organizations and 122 individuals

Note: Any neighborhoods referenced in the Individuals list are for identification purposes only  
and not on behalf of an organization