



February 14, 2023

Metro Board of Directors  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90013



**RE: Item #5 - New 710-N Projects - Support Safer Crosswalks & other Multimodal, Multi-benefit Projects**

Dear Metro Board Members and Staff,

As community-based organizations and stakeholders committed to improving the health and well-being of community members of Los Angeles County, **we strongly support Metro investments in safer, healthier, multimodal transportation improvements, especially projects to improve walkability and pedestrian safety.**

In February 2022 the Metro Board approved a motion to clarify eligible uses for SR-710 North Mobility Improvement Projects funds. Motion 35 unequivocally stated that local pedestrian, transit, and bicycle improvements are eligible. Two corridor cities subsequently submitted updated, multi-modal project requests, recognizing that when Metro funding is used on local streets, it impacts all roadway users.. **We commend agency staff for recommending funding for these multimodal, multi-benefit projects.** However, **one transformative pedestrian project was notably missing from the staff list**, a request from the City of Pasadena to install high-visibility, 'continental' crosswalks across their section of the corridor.



On left, “standard” crosswalk striping; on right, high-visibility “continental” crosswalk striping  
Renderings courtesy of NACTO.org

**Upgrading crosswalk design from ‘standard’ to high-visibility ‘continental’ is an impactful and deserving Mobility Improvement Project** (not a “maintenance” project). Submitted by Pasadena’s Department of Transportation and strongly supported by community members, the proposed upgrade of crosswalks at 100 intersections within the SR-710 northern stub corridor would positively impact the lives of tens of thousands of Pasadena residents as well as improve walking conditions for hundreds of thousands of people who visit Pasadena each year. The project could be completed in a matter of months – not years – providing immediate safety benefits at a time when serious collisions involving people walking are reaching an all time high.

**According to the Federal Highway Administration, [high-visibility crosswalks are a “Proven Safety Countermeasure”](#) that can reduce pedestrian injury crashes up to 40%.<sup>1</sup>** The Metro Active Transportation Strategic Plan includes such “enhanced crosswalks” as a key component in supporting safe mobility; and high-visibility crosswalks are frequently used to enhance safety and access to Metro’s own facilities. This safety benefit is especially important for the most vulnerable road users - including older adults, children, and persons with mobility impairments - who are disproportionately at risk while walking in Los Angeles County, and as recognized by the Metro Board.

**Los Angeles County voters overwhelmingly support pedestrian safety projects.** In Spring 2016, polling of voters prior to the passage of Measure M found greater support for repairing sidewalks than any other local improvement. Specifically:

- 83% favored using funds from the measure to make it easier and safer for children to walk or bike to schools.
- 81% favored using ballot measure funds to improve crosswalks so they are safer for pedestrians.
- 74% favor using ballot measure funds for fixing sidewalks, including more street trees, benches, wider sidewalks, lighting, and more separation from cars.

Even a decade ago – when local streets were statistically far safer to cross on foot – County residents

<sup>1</sup>Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements U.S. Department of Transportation logo U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration FHWA-SA-21-049  
<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/crosswalk-visibility-enhancements>

underlined strong support for pedestrian safety improvements. [A countywide field survey in 2013 by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#) found 88% of respondents in favor of installing new and repairing existing sidewalks, and 83% increasing the availability of crosswalks and street lighting.<sup>2</sup>

**Details such as what qualifies as a pedestrian improvement project may appear minor but are incredibly important.** The number of injury-causing and fatal collisions involving pedestrians has increased significantly in the US in the past decade, while other developed countries have made significant progress in reducing pedestrian deaths<sup>3</sup>; in Los Angeles County traffic crashes remain the number one cause of premature death for children aged 5-14, and number two cause for children 1-4, young adults 15-24, and adults 25-44.<sup>4</sup>

We will never meet our climate action goals unless we make it easier to walk, and reduce how much we drive. Individual and commercial vehicles are responsible for over 50% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the state of California when one accounts for emissions related to the extraction, processing, and distribution of oil; vehicle electrification alone will not be sufficient to meet our goals, according to the CA Air Resources Board.<sup>5</sup> Vehicle trips are also the main source of air pollution in southern California, one of the most polluted regions in the United States.

Fortunately, almost half of all non-work trips in southern California are 3 miles or less in distance. As local cities focus new housing in downtown districts and around high-quality transit, we have an obligation to help replace more vehicle trips with walking trips. Short-, medium-, and long-term pedestrian improvements are critical to meeting this growing need.

**Agenda Item 5 is largely a step in the right direction. The undersigned request that the Metro Board 1) again clarify that safer crosswalk design is an eligible use of funding, and 2) specifically allow funding of Pasadena’s request to implement new, high-visibility, “Continental” crosswalks at 100 intersections through the SR-710 N program.**

Thank you,

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<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. “Active Transportation and the Built Environment” <https://investinginplace.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/dph-activetranspbuiltenviroment.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Road Safety Annual Report 2020: United States <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/united-states-road-safety.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Mortality in Los Angeles County. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dca/data/documents/mortalityrpt12.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> CA Air Resources Board. “2018 Progress Report - California’s Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act.” Page 28. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/tracking-progress>

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