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September 26, 2016

Councilmember Mike Bonin
Chair, Transportation Committee, City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: CF 16-0395 – Measure M and Local Return Funding

Dear Councilmember Bonin:

It is exciting to think of the possibilities of investments from the local return that will be generated if Measure M passes in November 2016. Local return is a portion of Metro's sales tax revenue that is distributed to cities by population as a flexible source of transportation funding — in the past, local return has been used to maintain streets and sidewalks, operate municipal transit systems and provide matches for state and federal funding opportunities throughout Los Angeles County.

The City of Los Angeles currently receives about \$175 million per year from Proposition A (1980), Proposition C (1990), and Measure R (2008). Measure M, if passed by voters in November, would generate an additional \$56 million per year initially for the City of Los Angeles starting 2018, which would increase over the life of the measure.

The City of Los Angeles currently uses local return to subsidize transit operations, including DASH, Commuter Express, and a future downtown streetcar. It is also used as a local match to leverage federal, state, and regional grants, bringing home \$3 to \$9 for every local dollar used. There is also a policy to dedicate 10% of Measure R local return (approximately \$8 million per year) for bicycle and pedestrian planning, projects, and programs, including safe routes to school. With so many competing demands on a limited funding source, it is important for the City of Los Angeles to set clear priorities to use local return funding efficiently and effectively to achieve desired policy outcomes.

Despite the opportunities, we are concerned about the proposal to use two-thirds of this vital funding for reconstruction of city streets that are in "D" and "F" repair. We support fixing potholes and bringing our streets into state of good repair, but we are concerned that using this critical funding source for mostly street pavement is a limited approach and lacks a forward thinking and clear prioritization process for allocating these repairs to benefit all people who walk, bike, and take transit.

Investing in Place supports the reconstruction of our streets, sidewalks, crosswalks and more, and we request that the allocation of local return be allocated through the following framework and process:

1) Leverage local return with other funding to maximize investments in Los Angeles.

The highest priority for local return should be to leverage with federal, state, and regional grants to increase the total funding invested in Los Angeles vibrant transportation projects and local infrastructure. The City should also seek to shape other agencies' program guidelines to align with City transportation goals.

2) Pursue multiple benefits through coordinated planning.

Standards like complete streets and green streets should be integrated into all street maintenance and rehabilitation programs. The City has multiple plans, including Vision Zero, the Sustainable City pLAN, the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, and Mobility Plan 2035, that depend on transportation projects to achieve safety, health, and sustainability co-benefits. City Planning and Transportation should work proactively to identify funding and project-level coordination opportunities that maximize benefits of transportation dollars. Overall, improvements should also be prioritized along the High Injury Network to align funding with high needs areas.

3) Dedicate funding for future priorities.

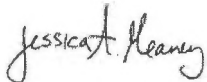
The City must continue to increase funding for walking, biking, and safe routes to school in order to achieve adopted safety and mobility goals like Vision Zero and the Mobility Plan. The City is also beginning to explore shared mobility and other technology solutions that require flexible funding to respond to innovative ideas. Mobility Plan 2035 recommends dedicating 20% of local return for walking, biking, and safe routes to school.

4) Engage the public in setting funding priorities.

Our recommendations are based on extensive outreach conducted as part of Mobility Plan 2035, the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, and other citywide planning initiatives. Future citywide plans should increase and continue to improve in authentic, culturally competent, and linguistically appropriate outreach.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of our recommendations. Please contact me at any time at 213-210-8136 or jessica@investinginplace.org

Sincerely,



Jessica Meaney
Executive Director

CC:

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