



JOSE HUIZAR
COUNCILMEMBER, 14TH DISTRICT

09-0600-S48
Submitted in Transportation
Committee 6/10/09.
Communication from
Councilmember Huizar

June 10, 2009

Honorable Wendy Greuel, Chair
City of Los Angeles Transportation Committee
And Honorable Members

Dear Councilmember Greuel:

In November 2008, voters entrusted us with a great responsibility in approving Measure R to support transportation projects and transit improvements. Today's Transportation Committee meeting will address our joint motion relative to the Department of Transportation and Bureau of Street Services report on how to allocate Measure R funds (Council File Number 09-0600-S48). The Committee will also consider various motions which seek to allocate Measure R Local Return funds for specific projects.

I write to express my thoughts with respect to the City's strategy on Measure R Local Return dollars, which will exceed \$30 million per year for the next 30 years. The voters gave us a rare opportunity to think creatively and strategically about the allocation of transportation dollars for the City. The City Council is poised to become a leader in establishing forward-thinking transportation policy that will result in new transportation projects and programs. I would like to share my thoughts on what I believe should be the priorities and focus of Measure R Local Return dollars:

1. **Green Projects, Modernization, and Innovation**—We have an opportunity to make a strong and clear statement about our goals and how we chose to use the funds entrusted to us on the voters' behalf. I urge this Committee to develop policies that emphasize environmentally-friendly projects, which allow for innovation within systems, and for the modernization of infrastructure and projects. These projects should make the transit experience a positive one for transit users, and for the environment. This policy choice will put our local return dollars to work helping Los Angeles become a world-class City with an inter-connected world-class transportation system that is modern, green, and user-friendly.

2. **New Projects and Transit Connectivity**—The Measure R ballot included a number of projects which we are committed to building. I believe that the City's main focus for the use of the Local Return dollars should be to get new transportation projects which would otherwise not get funded and think about expanding the capacity of existing modes. We understand the challenges we face with deficits in the local Propositions A and C, and while we should use some of our Local Return dollars to assist with those deficits, we must be mindful that the voters' intent in approving Measure R was to also advance new and improved forms of public transportation.
3. **Prioritize Fiscal Responsibility**—The City is required to provide a three percent match of construction costs for each Measure R ballot project, an obligation which will amount to about \$200 million dollars over the next 30 years. I propose that we carefully and strategically develop how much of our annual Local Return dollars will be used for the Local Return match.
4. **Establish a Fair, Transparent, and Equitable Process**—The process by which we allocate the Measure R Local Return dollars will be the critical piece of the puzzle. I would urge this Committee to consider an initial nomination process similar to the Metro Call for Projects. A key component of this process will be to develop the criteria by which projects will be evaluated, and that determines who submits project applications and how, including an appeals process. For the steps beyond project nomination, we should consider the Measure R Local Return Implementation Plan as a useful guide in determining our own procedures.

On an immediate basis, as this process develops, this Committee should consider expanding the current Measure R Working Group to include staff from City Council, and other major departments within our City family, such as the City Planning Department. The City Council has often expressed the need to link transportation policies with land-use planning.

In conclusion, I believe that this Committee and the City of Los Angeles have a historic opportunity to develop new ideas, new projects, and new ways of moving people in our City. I look forward to working with you in my capacity as your colleague on the City Council and as Director of the Metro Board of Directors. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,



José Huizar
Councilmember, 14th District

CC: Los Angeles City Transportation Committee Members
Rita Robinson, General Manager, LA DOT