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## Public Comments for May 6, 2020 RTA Board of Directors Meeting

*Below are comments received verbatim if by email, or summarized if verbally provided by telephone. Note that the sender's email address has been redacted. These comments will be updated each morning at 8:00AM and posted on the RTA website as soon as possible each morning.*

### **Comments received as of May 5, 2020 at 11:00 AM:**

From: Pete Rodgers <**REDACTED**>  
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 10:56 AM  
To: Info <Info@slorta.org>  
Subject: **Public Comment - Item B-1**

Public Comment on Item B-1; SLORTA Board Meeting May 6, 2020  
From: Peter Rodgers, SLOCOG Executive Director;

Here are 3 key points from SLOCOG:

1. **SLOCOG conceptually supports the RTA's proposed operating and capital budget.**
2. **CARE's Funding is a welcome windfall!** - SLOCOG staff has worked rapidly to facilitate programming of the \$16M in CARE's Act funding to the region. The transit operators have agreed to the allocations below, accounting for all operating costs for February through June 2020 (\$6.7M).
  - \$1.4 M to SLO Transit
  - \$ 4M to SLORTA
  - \$423 k to Paso Robles Transit
  - \$197k to Atascadero Transit
  - \$639k to South County Transit
  - RTA is entitled to a share of the funds in the Santa Maria Urbanized Area
    - This is a "work in progress" with Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG). Estimate: ~\$1.3M

*(The remaining \$9.6M will be allocated once local LTF impacts are known and committees/city mgmt./Boards have had an opportunity to provide input/approve)*

We worked very fast to assure some of the large metropolitan regions (i.e. LA, SD, Bay Area) did not have the opportunity to modify (i.e. reduce) the formula distribution to smaller regions.

The Regional Transit Authority is a Joint Powers Agency serving residents and visitors of:

Arroyo Grande Atascadero Grover Beach Morro Bay Paso Robles Pismo Beach San Luis Obispo and The County of San Luis Obispo

The split of the rural area federal funds (\$1.5M in FTA Section 5311), will also benefit RTA and Morro Bay Transit. \$591k allocated to RTA based on approved current year projects. The \$917k is remaining for allocation. Staff has requested estimated operating expenses for MB transit for Feb through June so they get immediate LTF relief like the urban area operators.

3. **We are anticipating a 15% reduction (~\$2M drop from \$12.5M to \$10.5M) in funds available to apportion to local jurisdictions**

- Fortunately, the impact to local jurisdictions **can be offset with a ~\$2.0 M infusion of** CARES Act funding in the RTA's budget (Formal RTA action is needed in June)

We will be ironing out the details this month, and will need the RTA OWP & Budget modified and approved before SLOCOG action on TDA claims at our June 3rd meeting.

THANK YOU AND STAY HEALTHY!

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From: Eric Greening <**REDACTED**>  
Sent: Sunday, May 3, 2020 6:33 PM  
To: Info <Info@slorta.org>  
Subject: **Non-agenda Public Comment by Eric Greening for the May 6th RTA Board meeting**

Thanks to Geoff Straw and the entire staff of RTA for the extraordinary efforts and sacrifices that come with providing services during the current protracted emergency, as we face an aftermath that may be equally trying in different ways. As an elder, to be safe, and to help keep others safe, I personally have been "sheltering at home" and not riding for over a month, so can't speak from the rider's perspective about morale and performance as is my usual habit. I hope circumstances allow me to return the the buses in the not too distant future.

Most of the issues I will be addressing for this meeting relate to agenda items; the one that doesn't, that I will mention here, is that the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Cal Poly Master Plan is now available at the Cal Poly Master Plan website. It includes public comments and responses to comments. I would like to thank Geoff Straw for his comprehensive and carefully thought out comments. I find some the responses to his comments relevant, constructive, and informative, while others seem formulaic, defensive, and evasive. The California State University Board of Trustees meets on May 12th, and it will be on their agenda to decide whether to certify this EIR and approve the Master Plan. If Geoff Straw is so inclined, and has the time among the many demands he is facing, he can review the Final EIR and communicate his thoughts with the Trustees by sending an e-mail to

trusteesecretariat@calstate.edu and there may also be an option to send a one-minute oral comment by telephone, although instructions for that are not yet available, and clearly the one-minute format means that more complex and detailed responses need to be communicated in writing.

I should mention that I personally am corresponding with the Trustees, and that my recommendation is that they NOT approve the Master Plan, which would strait-jacket Cal Poly's future into a plan made under assumptions now wildly obsolete; the post-pandemic future is likely to challenge and fiscally constrain education just as it will public transit, and the search for frugal, creative, and innovative approaches to meeting changing and intensifying public needs in both areas deserves rethought once we get past the acute phase of the pandemic to where we can see farther ahead. The campus community deserves the same opportunity to rethink its future as your Board does relative to the future of public transit. Thank you for your attention, and STAY WELL!!

From: Eric Greening <**REDACTED**>  
Sent: Sunday, May 3, 2020 7:10 PM  
To: Info <Info@slorta.org>  
Subject: **Public Comments from Eric Greening on Executive Director's Report for the May 6th RTA Board Meeting**

Again, I'd like to thank Geoff Straw, the Board, and the entire family of dedicated RTA employees for their herculean efforts and unheralded sacrifices during these trying times.

The County now has what is called the "START" framework in place to guide our emergence from "shelter-in-place" toward various stages of reopening of our economy, services, and social life. It is open for public comment and is considered a living document that will evolve with the times; I urge Geoff Straw, if he has not already done so, to review it and to make whatever comments he believes are appropriate.

This framework covers three phases of reopening; it is to be hoped that they will proceed forward in sequence, although if viral circumstances force a retreat, they can also temporarily regress, hopefully for a very limited time if at all. New guidance will be added as the framework evolves, and at present there is not much in the way of specific guidance for transit agencies. I believe the framework's principal authors, of whom County Health Officer Dr. Borenstein is probably the most central, would be very open to a collaborative approach with the RTA and other transit providers as more specifics of changes appropriate to each phase are worked out.

In that connection, I would like to suggest that, in future Executive Director reports, the plans for service restoration and changes in procedures could be mapped in relation to the phases defined by the framework, at least in concept or expectation. It is not clear to me, for example, at what phase, if any, it will be considered safe to load more passengers on buses, load them through the front door and charge fares, or provide "non-essential" trips. Perhaps Geoff Straw

can attain clarity from Dr. Borenstein, or perhaps we will simply have to follow her signal regardless of the phase we are in. At present, I would doubt the RTA is serving any significant number of "choice" riders; these may be slow to return if there is remaining fear of infection involved with public spaces and facilities. It is also not clear what sort of information we would need at hand to provide solid reassurance when such reassurance is indeed backed by fact.

The reference to "Trippers" would seem to imply that there is enough demand that occasionally the rationed capacity of a bus is not sufficient to accommodate all who need to ride. The question that would be most relevant to riders would have to be: are "Trippers" available with sufficient reliability that a passenger can be sure of not being stranded when ready for a return trip home? Have all passengers, to date, made it home?

When service begins to return toward a "new normal" with the "phased two-week ramp-up" referred to in the Executive Director's Report, will this happen AFTER the maximum loading of buses can be relaxed from present constraints, or could it still happen under those constraints? Will there be predictable schedules to guide riders through those two weeks? I would hope that, at least, the present reduced core service could be reliably maintained during that period so that, at least, the buses already available can be counted on.

To end on a festive note, I am glad that construction of the new transit center at Osos and Palm was considered "essential work," and that it is nearing completion! I very much look forward to seeing and using it once it again becomes safe for me to use the buses!

Again, thanks for all you are doing to see us through these challenging times!