



**DOWNTOWN  
LONG BEACH  
ALLIANCE**

October 2, 2018

Mr. Phillip A. Washington  
Chief Executive Officer  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: Pico Grade Separation Support Letter**

Dear Mr. Washington and Metro Board Members,

The Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) is writing to express our support for upgrades made to the Pico Metro station, which would include the undergrounding of Pico Metro station and the Blue / Expo rail line tracks south of Pico Station past the Washington Blvd junction of the Blue / Expo Lines. The addition of crossing gates and signal preemption at all intersections between Washington Blvd. and Expo Park/USC station on the Expo Line. And the prioritization of the improvements mentioned above in relation to other possible Blue Line improvements in the area due to the large regional impact and the ability to have the greatest potential impact of any proposed improvements to the Blue Line.

As a non-profit that represents more than 1,600 businesses and 4,000 commercial and residential property owners within the two Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Downtown Long Beach (DTLB), the improvements made at Pico Station would have a huge impact for ridership throughout the region. Particularly, as the Blue Line serves as a connector between Downtown Long Beach and Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA), these improvements would benefit both communities significantly.

Furthermore, we support the Pico Station improvements for the following additional reasons:

**Grade Separation Impacts the Entire County**

There is no other section of track in the Metrorail system where improvements would positively impact so many passengers from so many parts of the county.

Once the Regional Connector is completed, the project area will directly serve lines that go through South LA, West Adams, Mid-City, the Westside, Long Beach, Boyle Heights, East LA and the San Gabriel Valley. Every other rail line in the system is just one transfer away. Reducing delays at the project area would impact nearly half of all Metrorail passengers, including many of our region's most transit dependent riders whose job opportunities often depend on access to fast, convenient and dependable transit.

**Long Delays Discourage Ridership and Limit Capacity**

There are 5 grade crossings from 12th Street to Washington Blvd (area proposed for a tunnel) and an additional 5 from Washington Blvd to the Expo/USC station (area proposed for crossing gates). The South Park Business Improvement District (SPBID) has consistently tracked grade crossing delays between 2-13 minutes for trains on this section of track. These



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delays significantly impact whether people choose to take the train or drive. Additionally, once demand increases with the opening of the Regional Connector and the completion of more real estate development along the lines, the opportunity to attract many of these choice riders will be squandered because of consistent delays and overcrowding. This will severely restrict one of the region's greatest opportunities to decrease car dependency in the densest area in the region.

### **Much More Demand is Already on the Way**

The Regional Connector is projected to add nearly 67,000 new passengers to the lines serving the project area. The immediate neighborhood is projected to more-than triple in size by 2019, growing to more than 25,000 residents, and become a retail destination with the addition of almost 500,000 sf of retail space and nearly 5,000 hotel rooms. Additionally, as Downtown Long Beach is undergoing a similar transformation, the expected increase in the number residents, workers, and visitors that move between DTLB and DTLA will place added pressures on the current system.

For these reasons, we urge Metro to:

1. Underground Pico Metro station and the Blue and Expo rail lines tracks south of Pico Station past the Washington Blvd junction of the Blue and Expo Lines.
2. Add crossing gates at all intersections between Washington Blvd. and Expo Park/USC station on the Expo Line.
3. Give the highest priority to the above listed improvements in relation to other possible Blue line improvements in the area.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Kraig Kojian  
President & CEO

cc; Mayor Robert Garcia, City of Long Beach  
Mayor Pro Tem John Fasana  
Supervisor Janice Han  
Long Beach City Council  
DLBA Board of Directors  
South Park Business Improvement District