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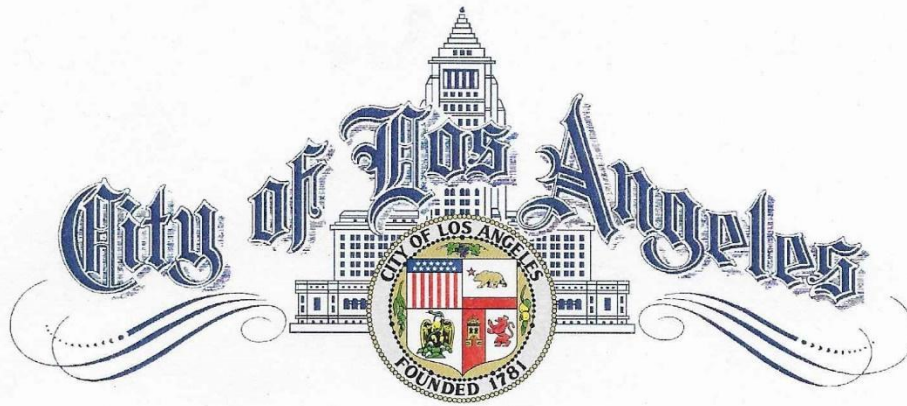
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**PAUL KORETZ**  
Councilmember, Fifth District

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September 24, 2021

Ron Kosinski, Deputy District Director  
California Department of Transportation  
Division of Environmental Planning  
100 S. Main Street - MS 16A  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Ms. Alice Tolar, 405 ExpressLanes Project Manager  
Metro  
One Gateway Plaza, MS 99-11-1  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
[405expresslanes@metro.net](mailto:405expresslanes@metro.net)

Regarding: Comments on I-405 ExpressLanes Project

Dear Mr. Kosinski and Ms. Tolar:

I am writing to express my concern about Metro's continuing movement toward creation of an ExpressLane on the I-405. As the Los Angeles City Councilmember who represents all of the neighborhoods east of the I-405 between the I-10 and Mulholland Dr., along with the neighborhoods of Encino west of the I-405, I thought that it would be essential to offer comment on behalf of my constituents. I want to start by expressing my concern that Metro did not begin this process with a compelling case that any of the build options outweigh the sacrifices for the adjacent neighborhoods and the commuters.

If the communities along this corridor are to experience any project requiring significant construction, it should be to build a rail transit project that would potentially remove thousands of commuters through this corridor from their commute via motor vehicle to a system that potentially carries tens of thousands of commuters on a rail line between the San Fernando Valley and the Westside. I also have a concern that this process is moving forward while two potential monorail options for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor are still being considered. I would be troubled if the desire to build an ExpressLanes project is in any way precluding or limiting either of the monorail project options.

Secondly, I am troubled that Metro/Caltrans would consider alternatives 2 and 3, both of which would mean that there would no longer be at least a single dedicated lane for those who are carpooling in the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane or driving with a Clean Air Vehicle (CAV) decal. My concern is with the volume of drivers even in the heaviest usage periods on this busy corridor will fill with drivers who are willing to pay the price for a real or perceived travel time advantage. This would potentially greatly dilute the incentives for carpooling and

Clean Air Vehicles, especially for those who regularly travel on this corridor. I would strongly urge us not to take this step backward on this corridor.

I also believe that Alternatives 3, 4, and 5 all raise too many questions of concern about the ability of Metro/Caltrans to add capacity by adding a lane without again causing major disruption through significant construction. The neighborhoods and the commuters along this route have suffered from a degree of construction fatigue over the past fifteen years. The first project was the construction of the southbound HOV lane project followed by the even more impactful northbound HOV lane project. My office, along with the LA Department of Transportation and the bureaus of our Department of Public Works were active partners in the second project. This project was substantially disruptive to so many and I would strongly urge you to avoid any such impacts that may result from this project. I would also question if it is safe enough through this somewhat windy stretch of highway to add a lane by narrowing existing ones along with narrow shoulders, without creating a significant reduction in roadway safety. I am highly skeptical that an additional lane can be created without again resulting in significant freeway overpass and ramp reconstruction. I strongly believe that our investment in the expansion of our mass transit for such projects as the Sepulveda Transit Corridor and others in the queue is more important than a continued frenzy to widen our freeways.

Lastly, I think that the equity issue as it relates to the continued expansion of the ExpressLanes program throughout this County needs to be called into question. I do understand that this project may raise some enticing opportunities to create new revenue for Metro and Caltrans, but toward whose benefit? Many of the commuters who travel this corridor daily travel to their workplaces in my district east of the I-405 from their homes in the San Fernando Valley and beyond. Let's assume that you will have white-collar workers who make more than \$150,000 per year and travel from their home in Porter Ranch and are able and willing to pay peak hour ExpressLane fees. On the other hand, you will have blue-collar workers making less than \$50,000, traveling from a community such as Pacoima who are much less likely to pay the fees and will take 15 minutes longer each way and burn more fuel in the process. I am disappointed and troubled that these inequitable options are being presented as a potential solution to our challenging traffic congestion issues.

I would urge you as staff, along with the Metro Board of Directors to take a step back in considering the continuation of this process. Please suspend this discussion before moving forward into the EIR/EIS. The I-405 corridor through the Sepulveda Pass is not an appropriate corridor for ExpressLanes. Let's stay laser focused on building a Sepulveda Transit Corridor project that takes more people out of their motor vehicles, a project that we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,



**PAUL KORETZ**  
Councilmember, 5<sup>th</sup> District

cc: Metro Board Clerk Collette Langston at [langstonco@metro.net](mailto:langstonco@metro.net)