

The open session of the Metro Board meeting was pretty light this month. Besides the Chair's and CEO's monthly reports, we had 5 action items; two of them being Resolutions of Necessity, the Procurement Policy for non-revenue vehicles and a motion to extend the LIFE program for wildfire victims.

The most discussed action item was the Consent item to approve the FY 26 Audit Plan, specifically focusing on the individual element **Measure M Subregional Program (MSP) Performance**.

All four regional Directors asked that it be held given that it affects all the COGs and small cities receiving Measure M MSP funding.

All 4 members stressed in their comments this is not going to be a "clawback" vehicle. Najarian, and Sandoval expressed their intent that this should be an effort to "help the cities and make it as easy as possible. The "it" in this context alludes to the common misconception among Board members that the COGs and cities are not spending their money fast enough and are "..sitting on funds.."

Mayor Butts in his remarks reflected what Jacki had expressed ( and I plagiarized) to the other Cogs when he stated:

"I appreciate Director Najarian pulling this item from Consent.

I want to express my support for our COGs. I believe that before Metro proceeds with the MSP audit process, it's a good idea for **Metro staff to further engage in meaningful discussions with all the subregions to better understand how these subregional programs are functioning on the ground in each of the respective subregions.**

**Given that we're dark in August, I think a workshop in October would be a good idea and a report back by staff would be helpful for everyone.**

I know that the South Bay Cog have already identified areas for improvement and could provide a valuable context and insights that could be informative for any formal evaluation and audit.

Moreover, I also think it's important to acknowledge that many of the challenges facing project delivery, such as rising labor and material costs are systemic issues well outside of the control of Metro, individual cities or subregions, and any audit assessment should take these realities into account."

This was strongest statement made by any of the Board members.

Staff responded that they are happy to convene an in-person Workshop for the COGs and Cities and I can assure you that myself and Najarian's deputy will make this happen with the emphasis that it will be a meaningful two-way discussion.