Los Angeles’ successful bid to host the 2028 Summer Games of the XXXIV Olympiad is predicated in part on an improved transportation system, yet Los Angeles’ transit ridership continues to drop. It now stands at under 400 million boardings per year, down almost 20 percent from Metro’s 1985 bus-only peak.

Los Angeles County Measure M passed in 2016, authorizing an additional 0.5 percent sales tax for transportation and an eternal extension of the 0.5 percent sales tax previously authorized under Measure R. It would be comforting to believe that Measure M’s $120 million in new annual revenues will prepare LA’s transportation system to support the Olympic Games. In truth, Measure M is largely irrelevant to the quality of transportation service in Los Angeles. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority was a fabulously wealthy agency with over a third of its funds available for transit operations subsidies going unspent before Measure M passed, and it is a bit wealthier now. The key to whether Los Angeles is well positioned to cope the 2028 Olympics is not how much money we spend on transportation, but what Metro spends it on. Fortunately, there is ample evidence to show what Metro should do.