



**Board Report**

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**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 17, 2019**

**SUBJECT: EQUITY PLATFORM FY19 ACTIVATION PLAN**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE Equity Platform FY19 Activation Plan.

**ISSUE**

This report outlines the set of activities that Metro is pursuing to implement the Metro Equity Platform Framework adopted by the Board in March 2018.

**DISCUSSION**

The Equity Platform (“Platform”) stands on four pillars - Define and Measure, Listen and Learn, Focus and Deliver, and Train and Grow (Attachment A). Because the Platform is designed to inform, shape and guide all lines of the agency’s business, on a continuing basis, this “activation plan” highlights a broad portfolio with some elements that are and will be on-going; current or planned projects that have a discrete beginning and end; and new initiatives still in the conceptual stage. This mix underscores the reach and depth of the Platform’s intent - and likewise illustrates the distance the agency still has to go to fully realize the Platform’s potential and impact for change. Incorporated into the agency’s recently adopted Vision 2028 Strategic Plan, the Platform will never be a singular task that is finished; instead it is an agency commitment to incorporate Equity principles into, and pursue equitable outcomes emerging from, everything we do.

It is important to reiterate the basis of the Equity Platform, and what outcomes are intended to be achieved. While we acknowledge many different definitions of “equity” exist, the Platform is explicit in its focus on the vast disparities in access to opportunity -- jobs, housing, health care, and education to name a few -- among many people and communities within Los Angeles County. Race and income have and continue to be strong indicators of where these gaps exist. The Equity Platform is intended to help identify and implement projects or programs that close or eliminate those gaps. Equity defined here is not a calculated geographic distribution -- it is a set of outcomes driven by access needs, though such needs may be located in many places. Equity will not be the sole criterion for investments, but it is a critical one that must be addressed front and center in our

complex decisions.

Our objectives and progress over the next year under each of the Equity Platform's four pillars are outlined below:

A. Define and Measure

This pillar embraces the key task of defining "equity" in the transportation realm - and where transportation intersects with other disciplines. This must be matched with performance metrics that allow us to determine whether equity, as defined, is being meaningfully achieved as part of Metro's actions. It is essential that equity definitions and metrics be done in a collaborative environment, to include those voices which may not have been previously sought at the forefront of Metro-driven decisions. Efforts include:

1. Work with the Policy Advisory Council (PAC) to define "opportunity gaps" - measurable evidence where inequities exist - and related performance metrics to measure how those gaps can be minimized or closed. This activity is being done as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan that the Board will use to prioritize investments over a 40-year period.
2. Construct and apply equity-driven performance metrics in key Metro initiatives
  - Develop overall guide to consistently identify equity concerns, and solutions, as a component for internal evaluations. This should ideally emerge from the Long Range Transportation Plan definition and performance metric efforts above.
  - In the meantime, include appropriate metrics in both the evaluation and recommendations of major initiatives.
    - For example, the NextGen bus reassessment has established an advisory group that includes representatives from ridership and community advocates; and on-going adjustments are being made to the NextGen analysis to ensure equity considerations are addressed.
  - All Planning Board Reports will include an "equity assessment" section.

B. Listen and Learn

This pillar establishes the crucial connection between Metro and the larger Los Angeles County community in carrying out the principles of the Platform. The following elements have been initiated or are in progress:

1. Establish new partnerships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs).
  - Blue Line, First/Last Mile Plan lessons learned: The Board was briefed in May 2018 on the transformative approach pursued under this study, including the active contributions of CBOs in report development, and the inclusion of CBOs as contracted participants in implementing the project.
  - Responding to lessons learned, the Communications Department is preparing a new policy to guide enhanced partnerships with CBOs on several levels, including a clear process for contracting opportunities within Metro's larger public engagement efforts.
  - As an outgrowth of our engagement work with the Blue Line Metro staff are working with community members to listen to and address neighborhood and rider concerns regarding Metro safety and security.

- On other fronts, the agency is involved with collaborative policy and program efforts, such as serving as a Transportation Working Group co-chair of the South Los Angeles Promise Zone (Slate Z).
2. The PAC has spearheaded community-driven collaborations on Metro's Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) policy development; PAC representatives sitting on other Metro advisory groups (i.e., the Citizens Advisory Council and the Aging and Disability Network) have introduced the Equity Platform in those forums.
  3. Establish Equity Advisory avenues.
    - Staff is considering two tracks to address this "Listen and Learn" recommendation:
      - Assigning the PAC and its associated networks a technical advisory role in Equity Platform implementation (see Define and Measure discussion as one example);
      - Developing a model to draw Equity thought leaders throughout LA County into a "Blue Ribbon Commission" or similar forum to advise staff on specific topics, particular equity concerns that traverse between transportation and other disciplines: affordable housing/displacement; public health; community safety and security.
    - Actively participate in local and national forums addressing equity challenges, to increase Metro's exposure to best practices and to learn from other experts in the field.

#### C. Focus and Deliver

The third pillar addresses the need to implement actions and programs that carry out Equity Platform objectives and principles. Over the next year, these include, but are not limited to:

- Next Gen: revisit/strengthen equity focus
- Women and Girls Governing Council: council agenda includes specific gender-oriented equity studies (e.g. planned RFP and outreach to understand women's travel needs on Metro's system)
- LRTP - apply equity focus throughout the Long Range Transportation Plan's various phases, including identification of vulnerable populations, equity-specific performance measures (see Define & Measure above) and need-based transportation investment analyses.
- Continuing assistance to Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Veterans Business Enterprise firms (e.g. recent special forums on contracting opportunities with future public/private partnerships)
- Career Pathway initiatives, including the launch of a Transportation School
- Explore the potential to establish consultant assistance to resource-challenged local jurisdictions in Los Angeles County, to enable them to plan and deliver transportation improvements to the underserved communities they represent.

#### D. Train and Grow

This fourth pillar recognizes that implementing the Equity Platform effectively will require significant commitments within the Metro organization to understand, embrace and maximize equity advancements in the other pillars. Commitments include:

- Pursue senior-/executive-level training program in racial equity.

- Work with philanthropic foundations on possible training/seminars geared to Metro-related focus areas.
- Host workshop on technical best practices for equity measurement and analysis among other public agencies and academic institutions.

In summary, these highlighted initiatives should not be viewed as the only elements that will impact or add to activation of the Equity Platform. The Platform will be carried out through an ongoing portfolio of agency actions.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

There is no impact on safety standards for Metro.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Implementing the Equity Platform in many cases involves shaping and adjusting the direction of current projects within existing budgets. In any case where a proposed equity-based initiative requires stand-alone revenues, a separate budget action would need to be taken.

#### Impact to Budget

There is no impact to the existing FY19 budget as a result of this Receive and File report.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will report on milestones achieved on individual Equity Platform actions on an ongoing basis, as appropriate.

### **ATTACHMENT**

Attachment A - Equity Platform Summary and Objectives

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Chief Executive Officer



# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## Summary and Objectives

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

Access to opportunity: a core concept to public decision-making, public investment, and public service

- Vast disparity exists in LA County among neighborhoods and individuals:
  - To seize opportunity – jobs, housing, education, health, safety;
  - To improve their circumstances to do so.
- Transportation is an essential lever to enable that access.

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## Why an Equity Platform now?

- As a transportation leader, Metro can and should address disparities.
- Metro has already signaled a change:
  - Measure M: performance metric considerations
  - New Long Range Transportation Plan committed early to Equity
  - Recent, targeted community collaborations (First/Last Mile, Rail to Rail grant effort)
- Exploratory outreach to LA County equity thought leaders





# Metro Equity Platform Framework

Multi-point Equity Platform is built on four pillars:

**I. Define and Measure**

**II. Listen and Learn**

**III. Focus and Deliver**

**IV. Train and Grow**

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## I. Define and Measure

Need a common basis to build an equity agenda.

- “Equity” holds different perspectives and priorities for many.
- Inequity → fundamental differences in access to opportunity
- Race and Class—historically and currently—predominate disparities in LA County
  - Concentrated in poor, minority communities
  - Age, gender, disability, and residency also can expand or constrain opportunities



# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## I. Define and Measure (cont.)

- Pursue an inclusive conversation that commits to:
  - Establish meaningful goals around a shared definition of equity – and actions to achieve those goals;
  - Define metrics to evaluate outcomes, including investment decisions;
  - Ensure consideration at the front end, not the back end;
  - Seek out and involve the diverse range of voices that must collaborate on above.

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## II. Listen and Learn

Establish comprehensive, multiple forums to engage the community meaningfully and actively in defining, measuring and acting on equitable outcomes.

- Open the conversation with LA's community members to address:
  - where achieving equity has been problematic — broadly, and specific to transportation;
  - where improved relationships, partnerships and actions can advance more equitable transportation outcomes going forward.

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## II. Listen and Learn (cont.)

- Recognizing past experience provides foundation for a different future.
- Community-driven conversation is essential.
  - Seek best practices.
  - Establish distinct advisory body for the equity agenda.
  - Engage CBOs in community outreach and problem solving.
  - Build local government technical capacity serving historically underserved communities

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## III. Focus and Deliver

The Long Range Transportation Plan is unifying activity with 2 major crosscutting Equity arenas:

- Where Metro Leads
  - Transportation planner, operator, builder and funder;
  - Performance-based investment decisions that:
    - a) advance outcomes to promote and sustain opportunities;
    - b) avoid outcomes that aggravate disparities in opportunity;
  - Operating/maintaining the system impacts opportunity as much as infrastructure investments.

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## III. Focus and Deliver (cont.)

- Where Metro Partners
  - Beyond Metro's core transportation responsibilities—Housing, Public Health, Economic Development
  - Example: Gentrification/displacement/affordable housing
    - An urgent issue in every corner of the county
    - Metro cannot address alone—Partners are essential: local government, business, community advocates, foundations

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## IV. Train and Grow

A new equity agenda requires “top-to-bottom” ownership throughout the agency.

- Training in two important areas:
  - Methods to evaluate equity including data collection, measurement and analysis;
  - Approaches to effectively communicate and work with communities with priority and respect for equity issues.



# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## Next Steps

- The Equity Platform is a framework.
- It intends to shape specific analyses and actions going forward.
- Experience may redirect and improve the platform.
- The Policy Advisory Council (PAC) is an essential touchstone for input and checkpoint for progress.
- Presentations to the Metro Board are key.



Thank you



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# Metro Equity Platform Framework

Fiscal Year 2019 Activation Plan



# Metro Equity Platform Framework

Access to opportunity: a core concept to public decision-making, public investment, and public service

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- Transportation is an essential lever to enable that access.

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- Exploratory outreach to LA County equity thought leaders

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

The Platform is not any single task that will be “finished”. Instead, the Platform is:

- A vehicle to inform, shape and guide all lines of the agency’s business on a continuing basis
- A commitment to incorporate Equity principles and pursue equitable outcomes
- A paradigm that will help identify and implement projects or programs that close or eliminate disparities in access to opportunity
- A set of outcomes driven by access needs and not merely a calculated geographic distribution

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

Multi-point Equity Platform is built on four pillars:

- I. Define and Measure
- II. Listen and Learn
- III. Focus and Deliver
- IV. Train and Grow

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## I. Define and Measure

Defining “equity” and matching with performance metrics. Efforts include:

- Work with the Policy Advisory Council to define “opportunity gaps” and related performance metrics as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Construct and apply equity-driven performance metrics in key Metro initiatives:
  - LRTP process to develop guide for identifying equity concerns and solutions
  - NextGen Bus Study
  - Equity Assessment section in all Planning Board Reports



# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## II. Listen and Learn

Establishing a connection between Metro and the Los Angeles County community. Efforts include:

- New partnerships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs):
  - Blue Line, First/Last Mile Plan lessons learned
  - Communications Dept policy on CBO partnerships
  - Staff have engaged community members on safety and security concerns raised by riders
  - Agency is serving as Transportation Working Group co-chair of the South Los Angeles Promise Zone (Slate Z)
- Community-driven collaborations led by the Policy Advisory Council



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# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## II. Listen and Learn (cont.)

- Evaluating and establishing Equity Advisory avenues
  - Assigning the Policy Advisory Council and its associated networks a technical advisory role
  - Developing a “Blue Ribbon Commission” or similar forum to draw Equity thought leaders from LA County to advise on specific topics (housing/displacement, public health, community safety and security)
  - Actively participating in local and national forums to address equity challenges and increase exposure to best practices

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## IV. Train and Grow

Top-to-bottom commitment from within Metro to understand, embrace and maximize equity advancement. Efforts include:

- Senior- and executive-level training program in racial equity
- Trainings and seminars geared to Metro-related focus areas in collaboration with philanthropic foundations
- Workshop on technical best practices for equity measurement and analysis

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## III. Focus and Deliver

Implementing actions and programs that carry out the Platform. Efforts include:

- NextGen Bus Study
- Women and Girls Governing Council
- LRTP
- Assistance to Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Veterans Business Enterprise firms
- Career Pathway initiatives, including Transportation School
- Potential consultant assistance to resource-challenged local jurisdictions in Los Angeles County

# Metro Equity Platform Framework

## Next Steps

- Staff will report on milestones achieved on individual Equity Platform actions on an ongoing basis



Thank you

