

Metro



Board Report

File #: 2019-0105, **File Type:** Policy

Agenda Number:

REVISED
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 28, 2019

SUBJECT: THE RE-IMAGINING OF LA COUNTY: MOBILITY, EQUITY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE the staff recommendations to:

- A. PURSUE the Transformational Initiatives that are central to “The Re-Imagining of LA County;”
- B. CONTINUE work on the Twenty-Eight by '28 goal and accelerate the delivery of the remaining eight projects in every feasible way, and report progress to the Board on the acceleration efforts on a quarterly basis; and
- C. DEVELOP proposed funding and financing plans for the accelerated projects, and report back to the Board in ~~September~~ July 2019.

ISSUE

Metro staff proposes the pursuit of solutions to eradicate congestion in LA County, drastically reducing the region’s carbon footprint and combatting climate change, increasing transit frequency and capacity, dramatically improving transportation equity, and putting the County in a position to be the first major region in the world that could offer free transit services. This proposal has been branded as “The Re-imagining of LA County: Mobility, Equity, and the Environment.” This item asks the Board to approve staff recommendation to pursue the Transformational Initiatives to achieve “The Re-imagining of LA County.”

BACKGROUND

LA County is currently home to more than 10 million people and its population is projected to grow to 10.75 million by 2028. This means that an increasing volume of people and goods will need to travel on a transportation network that is already inadequately serving their needs. Overall consumption in the region is expected to intensify the conflicts between passenger and goods movement. Optimizing system capacity to accommodate new growth will be necessary to ensure that the region can meet

these new demands and remain economically competitive in the global marketplace. Significant investments are needed, both to shore up an aging system of roadway and transit infrastructure, as well as to expand and fully utilize available capacity to ensure continued delivery of safe and reliable transportation services.

Historically, transportation policies and investments in LA County have prioritized single-occupancy travel in private passenger vehicles at the expense of providing other high-quality travel alternatives. The result is an inequitable transportation system that exacerbates the divide between those who have the access and means to drive and those who do not, while providing inadequate options for both groups. This system is not sustainable from an economic or environmental perspective. As more people turn to driving alone for speed and convenience, mobility and air quality for all citizens suffers due to the inefficient use of existing roadway space. Changing this paradigm and raising the quality of multiple transportation options is essential to delivering a system that provides better mobility for everyone. This means investing in high-quality transit options that can carry more people in less space, creating incentives to reduce solo driving, and removing incentives that further exacerbate transportation inequities. Moving forward we must align Metro's policies and investments across its portfolio of programs and services to provide more high-quality transportation options for people and, equally important, effectively manage demand from all users.

Metro is considering several "Transformational Initiatives" that demonstrate significant potential to address the widely shared desire to eradicate congestion, improve mobility and air quality, realize equity, and ultimately provide a more sustainable and resilient LA County for all.

DISCUSSION

Metro is currently meeting or exceeding the Measure M schedule on all projects. However, as we complete construction on the first decade of Measure M projects, it is imperative to make concurrent efforts to improve mobility and equity by identifying ways to improve congestion throughout the County. The Transformational Initiatives described below represent bold and progressive ways to achieve a number of our public policy goals as we anticipate new projects coming on line.

Transformational Initiatives **Congestion Pricing**

The Congestion Pricing strategy proposes to investigate the feasibility and framework for conducting congestion pricing pilots with the intent to expand the program in the most traffic-clogged parts of LA County. Congestion pricing offers a compelling mobility solution that, when implemented thoughtfully, can significantly improve equity and reduce emissions by providing cleaner, more frequent and more reliable mobility options for the most vulnerable populations in LA County.

At the January 24, 2019 Board meeting, Motions 43.1 (Butts) and 43.2 (Solis, Garcetti, Dupont-Walker, Butts and Hahn) were presented and approved. Motion 43.1 asked Metro staff to respond to several questions, mostly related to scope and framework of a proposed Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study. Staff have prepared responses to the various parts of Motion 43.1 in a separate Board Receive and File report (File ID 2019-0083). The response includes a detailed plan for the feasibility study, should the Board approve pursuing this recommended strategy as part of the Re-Imagining LA County Plan. The contents of Motion 43.1 and the related response are provided in

Attachment A to this report.

Motion 43.2 focused attention on equity as it relates to the proposed Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study. The motion was comprised of five parts that asked staff to develop an Equity Strategy for the study, engage a variety of experts and stakeholders, and defer congestion pricing implementation until the feasibility study, including the Equity Strategy, is complete. The responses to Motion 43.2 are provided in a separate Board Receive and File report (File ID 2019-0055). The contents of Motion 43.2 and the related response are provided in Attachment B to this report.

Three different pricing models would be explored as part of the study: cordon, corridor, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The study will include extensive, comprehensive, and genuine community and public engagement throughout the feasibility study, as promised through the Equity Platform that the Board adopted nearly a year ago. As part of the engagement and technical support to the study, Metro intends to create an Advisory Council to inform the study, including subject matter experts in Equity. Staff will work with the Board to identify candidates for the Advisory Council.

The anticipated schedule to complete this feasibility study is 12-24 months. Staff expects to conduct this study through a consultant contract led by Metro. Staff anticipates addressing the following scope elements in the feasibility study:

- Equity strategy to address potential impacts to historically underserved populations (see Equity Strategy below)
- Research and analysis of three models: cordon, VMT, and corridor pricing
- Analysis of potential revenues
- Analysis of policy implications
- Selection criteria and process to identify potential pilot locations.
- Performance measures and desired outcomes of congestion pricing pilot
- Identification of transit service and improvements needed to provide mobility options in congestion pricing pilot area
- Review of research done to date, and determination of any key gaps in that research that bear on Equity issues.
- An assessment of the potential negative and positive impacts of a congestion pricing strategy on historically underserved populations, including low-income drivers and transit users, as it affects their mobility access to jobs, housing, and other opportunities.

A more detailed plan for a Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study is provided as part of the response to Motion 43.1, referenced as Attachment A to this report.

Equity Strategy for a Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study

Congestion pricing as a comprehensive transportation policy has both challenge and promise. Implementing congestion pricing at a scale that would be effective, even for a portion of Los Angeles County, would exert tremendous change on the transportation network and the people who use it. Thus, staff is very clear that a comprehensive and thorough feasibility study must be undertaken before any actions would be considered for implementation.

Equity must be front and center in a congestion pricing evaluation. The Board's adopted Equity

Platform provides a valuable framework to design an Equity Strategy integral to the Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study.

An equity-driven policy objective for any congestion pricing evaluation would be to improve such access for underserved populations. Data and metrics to evaluate that potential must be incorporated into the Equity Strategy scope of work within the CPFS. More details on an Equity Strategy for a Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study are provided in the response to Motion 43.2, referenced as Attachment B to this report.

New Mobility Fees

Staff proposes to explore the levying of fees for Transportation Networking Company (TNC) trips in Los Angeles County as a mechanism for managing demand on our streets and highways. The shared mobility device strategy also proposes looking at imposing fees on shared devices, such as scooters and bicycles, for the use of public rights-of-way.

Both of these proposals would require building support throughout the state for transferring regulatory and taxation authority from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to Metro. They would also require building support among cities within LA County for the regulatory authority to be with Metro.

Metro staff has developed a proposed plan to provide more detailed information regarding the timeline and key activities to pursue New Mobility service fees in LA County, if the Board approves these Transformational Initiatives for the Re-Imagining LA County Plan. The proposed plan is provided in Attachment C to this report.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

This motion response has no direct impact on safety at this time. However, the approval of the Transformational Initiatives will support safe and reliable operations of the transportation system in the long-term.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

If approved to pursue the recommended Transformational Initiatives, funding will be identified to conduct the study and will be the responsibility of the lead department, in partnership with the Office of Management and Budget.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed actions are fully consistent with Initiative 1.3 of Metro Vision 2028 plan to test and implement pricing strategies to reduce traffic congestion. Also, Initiative 1.3 commits to exploring opportunities for expanding access to shared, demand-responsive transportation options for everyone.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EQUITY PLATFORM

The Transformational Initiatives explicitly address approaches and priorities that would advance the

mobility needs of the County's most vulnerable populations. Managing congestion, particularly to ensure reliable operations for LA County's transit system, upon which many of our most underserved community members depend, enables economic mobility that can help those populations overcome historic disadvantages and disparities. In addition, strategies such as congestion pricing can enable benefits, such as free transit, to these same underserved communities in ways that are unimaginable with traditional approaches. The Metro staff and Board must remain committed to Equity as a key evaluative lens as we consider these progressive strategies for improving mobility, equity, and the environment.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Metro Board of Directors may decide not to approve the pursuit of the Transformational Initiatives to achieve The Re-imagining of LA County. This is not recommended, as this would take the LA region on a similar path followed in the past, without effectively addressing the problems we face even today.

NEXT STEPS

If the recommended actions are approved, Metro staff will return to Board to report on progress as follows:

April 2019 - Review scope for Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study

June 2019 - Award professional services contract to conduct Congestion Pricing Feasibility Study

September 2019 - Report on financing/funding plans for the accelerated projects

Quarterly - Progress reports on efforts to accelerate the eight remaining projects of Twenty-Eight by '28.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion 43.1 and Response to Motion 43.1 (File ID 2019-0083)

Attachment B - Motion 43.2 and Response to Motion 43.2 (File ID 2019-0055)

Attachment C - LA Metro New Mobility Service Fee Plan

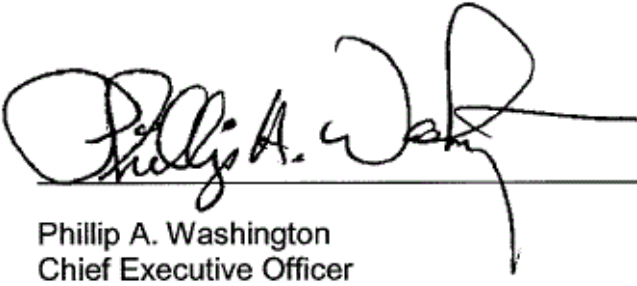
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