

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

VERMONT TRANSIT CORRIDOR

Community Outreach Executive Summary

The Vermont Transit Corridor (VTC) is a 12.4-mile stretch where community collaboration is essential to shaping the future of transportation. Metro has prioritized a robust community engagement process centered on understanding residents' needs and ensuring their voices are heard. Metro provides ample opportunities for residents to share their input on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and rail alternatives through various channels.

Metro has woven community engagement into the fabric of the project's development. Since 2021, Metro has implemented an extensive outreach program to inform and involve local communities. This commitment is not merely a box to be checked but a fundamental principle guiding every step of the journey.

As of February 2025, the VTC project has actively engaged over 24,300 individuals through various community engagement activities.



Public Meetings & Workshops

- Eighteen public meetings, including three Cultural Needs Assessment workshops in February 2024 and seven Urban Design Workshops (May–June 2024), involving over 1,621 participants and 900 feedback responses.



CBO Partnership Program

- Collaborations with 38 hyper-local Community-Based, Community-Based Development and Faith-Based Organizations to expand outreach, gather insights, and build trust with communities along the corridor.



Elected Official and Stakeholder Briefings

- Engagements with City Council Districts 1, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 15, local institutions, business associations, and advocacy groups.



Project Updates

- Regular communication through canvassing, community meetings, newsletters, website updates, social media, and email notifications.

Background

In April 2019, the Metro Board directed its staff to advance both BRT and rail concepts into the environmental review.

At the same time, the Board directed staff to study the feasibility of extending these BRT and/or rail concepts further south—evaluated separately as the Vermont Transit Corridor South Bay Extension Feasibility Study, which was completed in December 2021.

Prior to the Vermont Transit Corridor Project moving into the environmental review process, Metro conducted a pre-environmental, community-based planning effort aligned with the agency’s Equity Platform Framework that has successfully elevated the voices of stakeholders who live, work, play, study, and/or worship along Vermont Av. The purpose of the community-based planning approach is to engage with community partners and stakeholders early to build a common vision for the corridor, listen to their transit needs and concerns, and incorporate their feedback into the development of an equitable transit solution for the corridor.

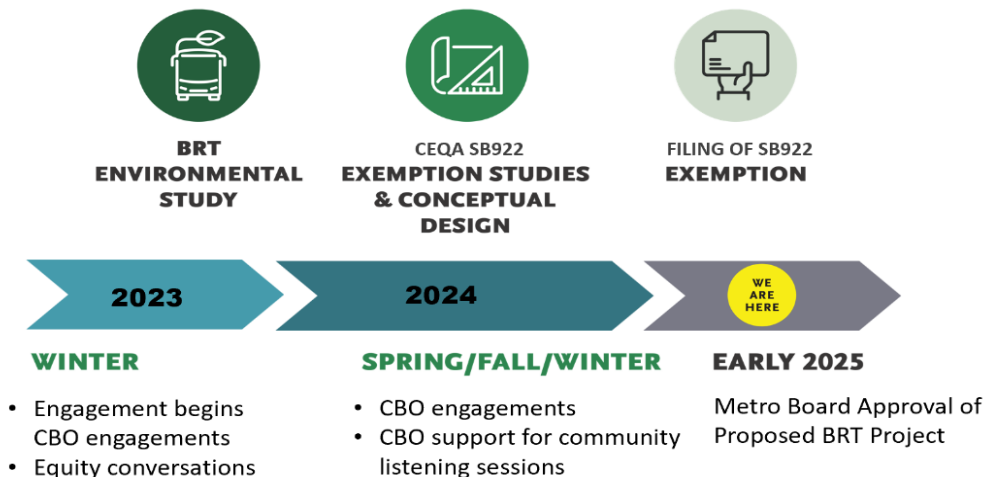
Over a seven-month period, from December 2021 to June 2022, Metro partnered with community-based organizations, faith-based groups, and local neighborhood groups to solicit feedback about the types of improvements that should be planned for the Vermont Transit Corridor (VTC) Project.

Project Area

The 12.4-mile-long corridor traverses six Los Angeles City Council Districts, two Supervisorial Districts, 14 neighborhood councils, and many key educational, cultural, medical, social, and faith-based centers. The various communities that make up the VTC include, but are not limited to, East Hollywood, Thai Town, Little Armenia, Little Bangladesh, Wilshire Center, Koreatown, West Adams, USC Village, Expo Park, Vermont Square, Vermont Knolls, Vermont Vista, Broadway-Manchester, and Westmont-Athens.

All corridor-wide communities are considered Equity-Focused Communities given their socioeconomic characteristics: More than 40% of households are low-income (making less than \$35,000 annually), 80% are non-white, and 10% do not have access to a vehicle.

Project Timeline





Engagement Approach

As an agency, Metro ensures people can safely and reliably reach everyday destinations, such as jobs, schools, healthy food outlets, and healthcare facilities. For Los Angeles County as a whole, but specifically for the Vermont Transit Corridor, public transportation services play an essential role for people who depend on it – such as those who are unable to drive or do not have access to personal vehicles; low-income adults; children; individuals with different abilities; older adults, among other populations.

Outreach was conducted in Armenian, English, Korean, Spanish, and Thai to ensure all groups participated. In addition, the team connected with stakeholders who spoke Russian, Bangladeshi, and Zapotec (an Indigenous dialect from the southern part of Mexico).

Transit investment along the Vermont corridor is a critical equity issue because improvements will provide people with faster, more reliable mobility options and improve access to employment, community resources, medical care, and recreational opportunities, which in turn will drastically improve the quality of life for area stakeholders.



Community-Based Organization Partnership Program

The CBO Partnership program is based on Metro’s CBO Partnering Strategy, written and adopted by the Metro Board of Directors in 2021. It plays a vital role in ensuring the VTC project is responsive to the needs and priorities of the diverse communities it serves.

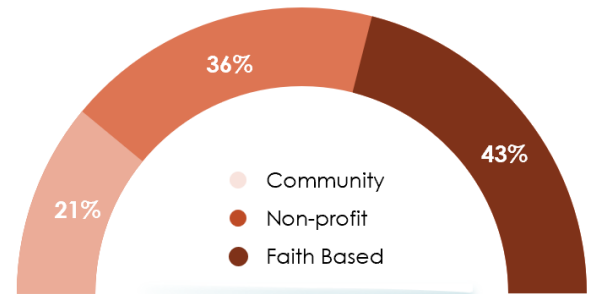
A key aspect of the engagement approach was implementing a CBO partnership program providing stakeholders various opportunities to engage with Metro.

The program currently partners with 38 Community and Faith-Based organizations with deep roots in the corridor communities the project will serve. These organizations vary in size and scope, ranging from large, established institutions to grassroots community groups.

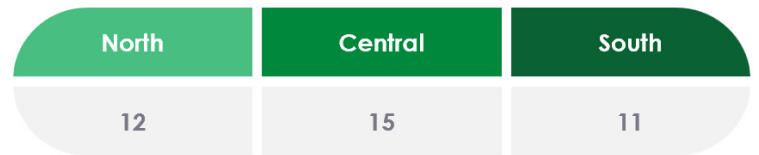
Partnering with them allows Metro to:

- Reach a wider audience: CBOs can help disseminate information about the project and encourage participation in engagement activities, especially among hard-to-reach populations and stakeholders who traditionally do not participate in the public involvement process with public agencies.
- Gain valuable insights: CBOs can provide helpful feedback on the project’s potential impacts and help identify solutions that address specific community concerns.
- Build trust: Working with trusted community partners helps foster a sense of collaboration and ensures that the project is responsive to local needs.

CBO Partners by Service Category



CBO Partners by Study Area Segment



Cultural Needs Assessment and Equity Assessments

To ensure residents had a voice in shaping the future of Vermont Av, Metro hosted a series of three (3) workshops in February 2024, spread strategically across the corridor, and specifically targeted community and thought leaders from various parts of the corridor. These workshops aimed at:

- **Identify and Prioritize Key Assets:** Participants helped refine the project’s cultural and historical assets list, highlighting those most important to the community.
- **Improve Transit Service:** Discussions focused on current transit service and proposed BRT stations, ensuring they effectively serve residents and commuters.
- **Enhance Community Spaces:** Breakout sessions allowed for detailed feedback on study area maps, identifying key community places, landmarks, and pedestrian areas that need improvement.

Metro conducted thorough assessments to understand each community’s unique transportation challenges and priorities along the corridor. These assessments considered income levels, vehicle access, spoken languages, and cultural preferences.

Station Design Workshops

Metro held a series of interactive workshops in May and June 2024 to ensure that future BRT stations along the Vermont corridor genuinely reflect the needs and character of the communities they serve. These workshops, attended by over 700 participants, provided a platform for community members to participate, ensuring that station designs were functional, accessible, and integrated well with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Key Focus Areas:

- **Station Location:** Participants provided input on the optimal placement of stations within their neighborhoods.
- **Accessibility:** Discussions centered on incorporating features like ramps, elevators, and tactile paving to ensure accessibility for all riders.
- **Amenities:** Community members shared their preferences for amenities such as seating, shelter from weather elements, real-time information displays, and public art.
- **Neighborhood Integration:** The workshops explored ways to seamlessly integrate stations with the surrounding neighborhood, including pedestrian walkways, bike paths, and community gathering spaces.





Project Update Meetings

Transparency and community involvement were fundamental priorities throughout the project. Metro conducted seven meetings in March and October 2024 to update community members and stakeholders on the project update, next steps, and anticipated timeline.

Key topics included pedestrian safety, station access, design options for the median parkway, and desired BRT amenities.

Senate Bill 922 Mandated Public Meetings

In December 2024, Metro held public meetings, which provided the opportunity for community engagement and a public comment period. In addition, Metro presented the three required reports under SB 922: 1) Racial Analysis 2) Residential Displacement 3) Business Case.

Metro offered in-person and virtual options to accommodate diverse schedules and preferences. It also held an open-house format where participants could learn about the project and engage with staff at information booths.

The meetings aimed to provide comprehensive information about the project and gather feedback on key aspects, including:

- Project plans and design
- Construction schedule and impacts
- Mitigation measures
- Community benefits

This multi-faceted approach ensured all stakeholders could engage with the project and provide valuable input.

Elected Official and Stakeholder Briefings

Regular briefings have been held with elected officials' staff members at the city, state, and federal levels to provide them with the overall project plans. These briefings have been essential throughout the project's lifecycle to seek guidance and gather input from our elected officials, who represent many of the communities and business owners along the corridor.

Key institutions and stakeholders along the corridor are also briefed to inform their representatives of the project schedule, plans, and invitations to upcoming project update meetings.





Transit Rider Survey

The transit rider intercept surveys were vital to the Vermont Transit Corridor's near-term improvement engagement initiative. These surveys gathered valuable data on rider experiences and satisfaction with the implemented changes. Metro surveyed 371 transit riders at key stops along Vermont Av and on Bus lines 204 and 754 to understand their experiences and preferences. The surveys were conducted in multiple languages during on- and off-peak times.

Metro implemented the following methodology:

- Onboard surveys: Distributing surveys on buses to gather feedback on travel times, service frequency, comfort, and amenities.
- Intercept surveys: Conduct surveys at bus stops and stations to gather information about rider demographics, trip purposes, and satisfaction with existing service.
- Online surveys: Using online platforms to reach a broader audience and gather feedback on proposed improvements and design options.

Canvassing Program

Canvassers educated small business owners, residents, transit riders, and street vendors about the project, invited them to attend upcoming meetings, and allowed stakeholders to share their opinions.

Since December 2023, Metro canvassed on 15 different occasions along the corridor during various hours on weekdays and weekends to ensure different groups of people were engaged. Canvassers engaged over 1,286 people in Armenian, English, Kiche, Korean, Spanish, Thai, and Zapotec.



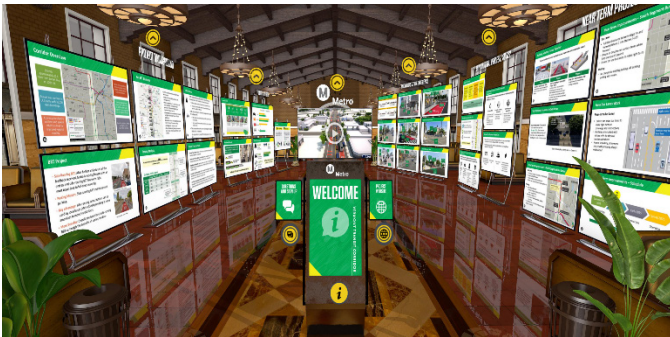
Ongoing Communication Methods

Metro has employed various communication channels to keep the public informed and engaged throughout the project's lifecycle. These channels include newsletters, [project websites](#), social media, direct contact, email notifications, and [interactive platforms](#), including virtual reality, [simulation videos](#), and virtual environments to share project information. These channels ensure stakeholders have multiple avenues to access information and participate in developing the Vermont Transit Corridor Project.

Community member participating in an interactive activity



Interactive Cultural Asst Map of the Vermont Transit Corridor



Virtual Open House for March and December Meetings



Community member experiencing a VR tour of Vermont Av