

Executive Summary

Introduction

Metro is planning to ease traffic on Interstate (I)-105 by adding two ExpressLanes in each direction. The goal of the I-105 ExpressLanes Project is to improve traffic flow, trip reliability, and travel times on I-105. The project will be implemented in three segments. Once Segment 1 is operational, the I-105 ExpressLanes will generate toll revenue, which will include net revenue. Metro reinvests a portion of the net toll revenue in projects in communities within a 3-mile radius of the ExpressLanes with benefit to the ExpressLanes. To plan how to equitably invest the future net toll revenue, Metro is embarking on a unique and first-of-its kind Equity Assessment to identify transportation projects that will further enhance mobility, accessibility, connectivity, and equity for nearby communities as well as all users of the I-105 corridor.

This I-105 ExpressLanes Segment 1 Equity Assessment (Assessment) identifies and prioritizes equity and mobility improvements in the Segment 1 area (the Assessment Area), shown on Figure 1. As part of the process to identify potential mobility improvement projects, Metro facilitated a community participation process for obtaining feedback, incorporated stakeholder and CBO input, and evaluated equity, demographics, transportation data, existing conditions, and previous studies/plans.



Figure ES-1

I-105 ExpressLanes Segment 1 Assessment Area



Equity

To improve access and opportunity for all, infrastructure, programs, and service investments must be targeted toward those with the greatest mobility needs. This I-105 ExpressLanes Segment 1 Equity Assessment provides valuable information that can guide the use of net toll revenue from the future ExpressLanes as a catalyst to positively affect the I-105 corridor communities with particular focus on EFCs.

Metro has been at the forefront of leading equitable transportation planning with the development of and/or Board adoption of the following:

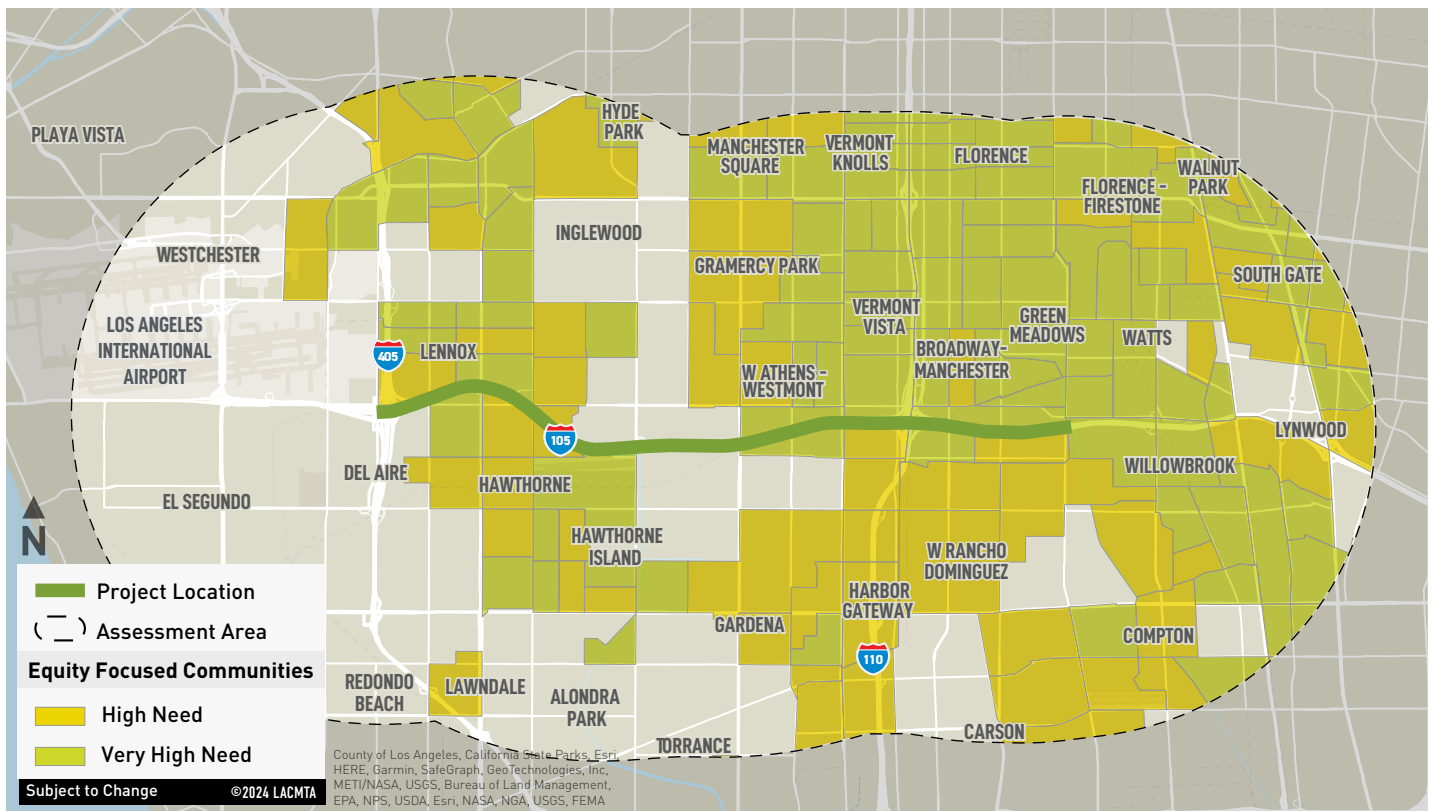
- > **Equity Platform Framework:** Policy framework for how Metro can use its influence as a transportation authority to evaluate and address disparities in mobility access while providing people opportunities for upward social and economic mobility.

- > **Equity Focus Communities (EFCs):** An analysis that maps where transportation needs are greatest by assessing low-income households, populations of people of color, and households with no access to a car. Figure 2 shows the EFCs within the Assessment Area.

Several of Metro’s equity tools have been incorporated into the equity assessment though the goals and evaluation criteria for projects that could be funded with future net toll revenue. These projects are a part of Metro’s efforts to achieve a multidimensional, multimodal strategy for improving mobility and equity while fostering social equity, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, improved public health, and access to opportunities.

Figure ES-2

Equity Focused Communities



Existing Conditions

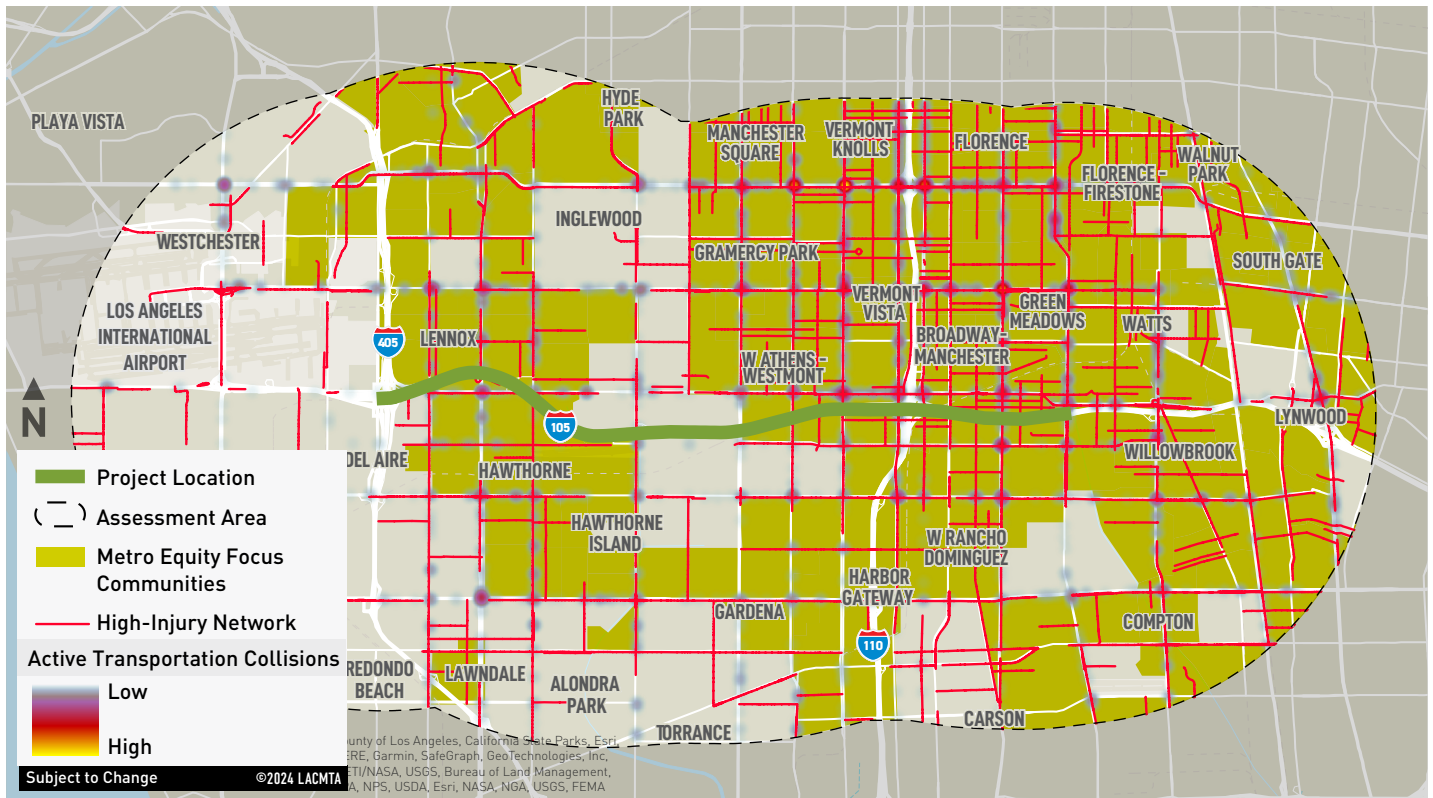
To gain an understanding of the Assessment Area and population, an existing conditions assessment was conducted that focused on demographics, socioeconomics, as well as environmental and transportation data. The existing conditions assessment focused on identifying transportation patterns and disparities in EFCs within the Assessment Area.

The findings reveal communities that are primarily economically disadvantaged, composed of people of color, and with unemployment rates higher than the county average. Households within the area have high living costs,

with about half being housing burdened, spending 30% or more of their household income on housing. With almost 10% of the population lacking a household vehicle, safe first/last mile connections are crucial, especially considering the disproportionate concentration of high-injury network corridors in the area. High-injury network corridors consist of roadway segments that account for a disproportionate share of fatal and serious injuries in the region (shown on Figure 3). The findings were critical to the development of the vision statement, project list, evaluation criteria, and recommendations.

Figure ES-3

High Injury Network and Collisions Heat Map



Source: Southern California Association of Governments and University of California, Berkeley

Community Engagement

Community-driven conversations are essential, but engagement efforts must ensure that community members are left feeling heard and respected. A successful outcome for this Study required a commitment to authentic listening and learning, and meaningful community outreach and engagement. Involving the public in decision-making processes ensures more informed and inclusive outcomes. Throughout the processes, the public has been integral, receiving project information and providing feedback through various avenues such as attending public meetings, providing comments, contributing to surveys, and engaging in community meetings and events and via partnerships with various local community-based, faith-based, and community development-based organizations.

Metro engaged 16 community-based organizations (CBOs) that represent the communities in the project area to be part of a monthly CBO roundtable meeting. These CBO roundtable meetings allowed the CBOs to provide input on the Assessment's goals, evaluation criteria, and projects. The CBOs also shared project information with community stakeholders through their resources. The CBO roundtable

partners also participated in walk audits. Concurrently, Metro participated in multiple pop-up events that engaged nearly 500 people and conducted a travel survey that engaged over 900 people within the Assessment Area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

16 CBO PARTNERS

10 CBO MEETINGS

2 WALK AUDITS

478 PEOPLE ENGAGED AT POP-UP EVENTS

922 RESPONSES TO THE TRAVEL SURVEY

2 COMMUNITY MEETINGS



Methodology for Identifying and Evaluating Projects

Using an equity lens and input from CBOs, Metro undertook a comprehensive and robust process to identify and evaluate these potential projects. This Equity Assessment consisted of a multistep technical process that identified the list of projects, established goals, project identification criteria, and scoring to recommend the most valuable and equitable projects for future net toll revenue funding.

Projects were identified by reviewing existing studies, field visits, and input from Metro departments and local jurisdictions. The projects were then scored using 5 goals and 14 evaluation criteria metrics, presented in Table 1.

For each of the evaluation criteria listed in Table 1, a project received a score between 1 and 5, with 5 being the best outcome or highest benefits. In cases where quantitative data was not available for a particular evaluation criteria, the scores are a qualitative assessment based on professional judgement of the project team.

In addition, each of the five goals were weighted based on Metro and CBO input. This process resulted in the following weights – Connect People and Places, 25%; Prioritize Equity, 21%; Create Community Value, 20%; Conserve Resources, 17%; and Cost-Effective, 17%.

The project list also incorporates feedback from the broader community. This was done through a survey that allowed the public to suggest changes in prioritization as well as suggest new projects not included in the list. In total, 140 survey responses were received. Projects were scored as high, medium, and low and grouped into three categories consistent with the existing I-10/I-110 ExpressLanes net toll grants – active transportation, transit, and roadway improvements.

Table ES-1. Goals and Evaluation Criteria

GOAL	EVALUATION CRITERIA
1. Connect People and Places	1.1 Improve and encourage transit, walking, and biking/rolling 1.2 Improve transportation access and connectivity 1.3 Reduce congestion by increasing people throughput 1.4 Make all modes of travel safer
2. Create Community Value	2.1 Provide access for economic opportunities 2.2 Align with community input, including local plans and policies 2.3 Enhance the quality of life (e.g., Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles, no displacement) 2.4 Adopt innovative technology, practice, or strategy
3. Conserve Resources	3.1 Foster local and regional environmental quality 3.2 Reduce GHG emissions 3.3 Leverage matching funds
4. Prioritize Equity Focus Communities	4.1 Minimize disruption during construction 4.2 Provide long-term benefits to EFCs
5. Cost-Effectiveness	5.1 Effectiveness in relationship to the total project cost and consideration of life-cycle costs

Prioritized Project List and Recommended Actions

The evaluation and prioritization process resulted in prioritized project lists recommended for potential consideration when the net toll revenue funding becomes available from the I-105 ExpressLanes. Of the 143 projects identified, approximately 50% of the projects are prioritized as high, 46% are medium, and 4% are low. The characteristics of high-scoring projects include Assessment Area-wide or corridor projects, projects within high EFC populations, projects near Metro rail/bus rapid transit stations to promote intermodality, and projects focused on sustainable mobility options. Figure 4 provides a breakdown of the numbers and percentages of each tier by mode. Since many of the projects on the list are in city or county right of way and net toll grants are awarded on a competitive basis, Metro can only grant funding if the local jurisdictions apply to Metro for funding. The detailed project list can be found in Appendix B.

The priority lists of potential active transportation, roadway, and transit projects serve as a living plan and represent current priorities. Priorities and projects may evolve once the

I-105 ExpressLanes are operational and generating Net Toll Revenue. Projects submitted for the future Net Toll Revenue grants will ultimately be up to local agencies.

In addition to the project list, it is recommended Metro undertake the following actions to support this Equity Assessment as the I-105 ExpressLanes project is implemented:

- > Incorporate lighting improvements at undercrossings that will be widened as part of segment 1;
- > Modify Metro’s existing I-10/I-110 Net Toll Revenue Guidelines’ evaluation criteria and process to prioritize equity above other criteria
- > Advance the project development of prioritized projects
- > Monitor and report on key equity metrics of projects funded through the Net Toll Revenue program
- > Continue to engage the community and CBOs along I-105

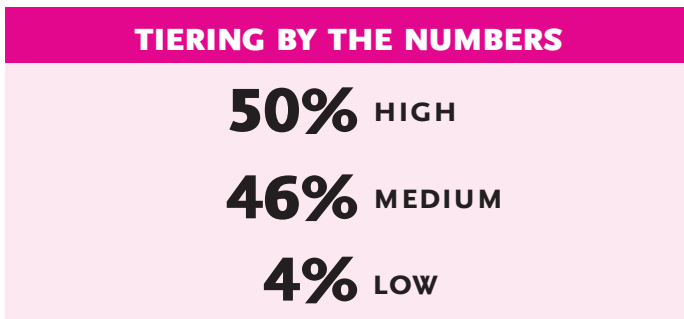


Figure ES-4

Breakdown of Projects by Mode and Tier

