

A PATH FORWARD

Metro's Recovery Task Force

FINAL REPORT – FEBRUARY 2021

Metro



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Letter from the CEO

Powered by Leadership, Rooted in Vision

When we formed Metro's Recovery Task Force in April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic we knew that unprecedented challenges would lie ahead. From the outset we were determined that Metro would not only maintain service for essential workers, but also would emerge from this pandemic stronger than when we started. This is why we created a task force, led by our Chief Innovation Officer Joshua Schank, to compose a diverse, multidisciplinary group of emerging leaders at Metro.

As we release this task force report, LA County continues to struggle with the pandemic even as the promise of a vaccine begins to provide a glimmer of hope. Residents of LA County, and in particular our low-income and minority communities, continue to suffer both the human and economic tolls of the health crisis. The central mission of the task force is to help Metro and the region respond to and recover from the effects of the pandemic as quickly and robustly as possible.

During the initial months of this crisis, we saw a glimpse of what Los Angeles can be when we prioritize the movement of people over cars. No traffic congestion, free-flowing buses and cars on roads and highways, cleaner air, open streets enjoyed by families, outdoor dining parklets, and a surge in cycling and bike sales were all inspiring. We saw a vision of what a more sustainable and more equitable mobility landscape could look like in Los Angeles County.

Now more than ever we believe in the promise of a more equitable LA that doesn't require every adult to own a car, where all people have a multitude of mobility options that are convenient and accessible, and where it is safe and healthy to live your life in public spaces no matter your race or economic status. The recommendations in this report from the Recovery Task Force offer such a promise.

While there are still many miles to go on the path to recovery, I know we are headed in the right direction. I'm proud of how Metro's staff has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic both operationally and through the Recovery Task Force's recommendations. I believe our workforce is the best in the business. For example, the dedication shown by our operators, maintenance teams, cleaning crews and frontline Customer Care personnel are a benchmark for the industry. These frontline employees continue to deliver for our customers under difficult conditions.

We are pleased to present this final report from the Recovery Task Force, which we believe can be the foundation for a new beginning for mobility and equity in LA County.



Phillip A. Washington
CEO, Metro

Dedication

This effort is dedicated to the Metro employees who passed away from COVID-19. We appreciate and recognize their invaluable service to Metro and to the broader Los Angeles County community. Our thoughts are with their families and friends.

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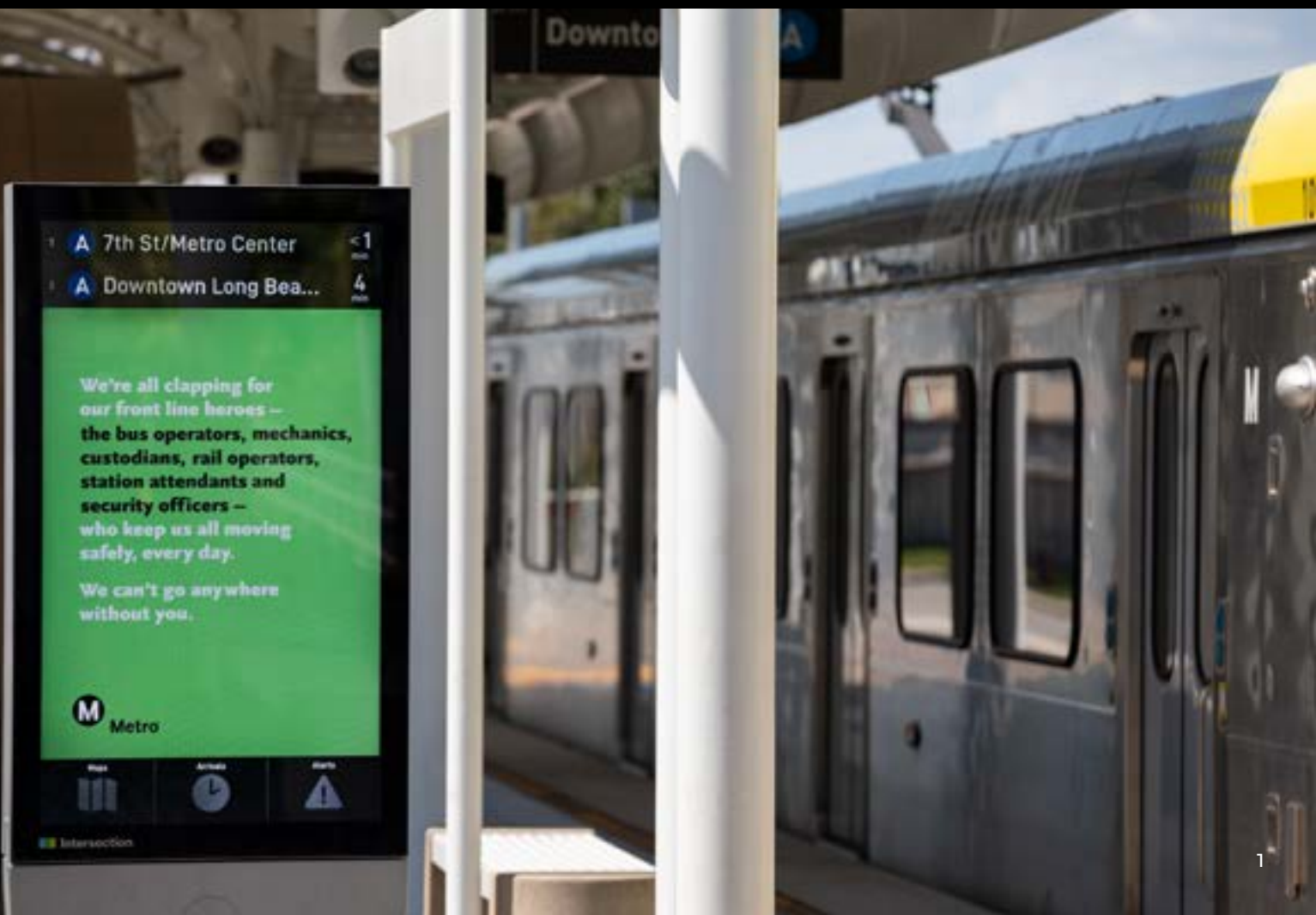


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About the Task Force

The COVID-19 Recovery Task Force is a staff committee at Metro responsible for providing advice and recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on recovery from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.



Task Force Goals and Responsibilities

The task force recommends a set of actions that Metro can take to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and recover from it. Task force goals and deliverables include:

- 1 Identifying and recommending actions Metro can take to respond to the pandemic, to recover after the pandemic, to help lead an equitable economic recovery for LA County and to advance mobility without congestion as the 'new normal' after the pandemic
- 2 Issuing periodic progress reports to Metro decision makers, the public and stakeholders on the work of the task force, including the status of early action items.
- 3 Drafting this final report, which includes updates on Metro's early actions and final recommendations with implementation plans.



Task Force Members

The task force is chaired by Metro's Chief Innovation Officer and staffed by the Office of Extraordinary Innovation and the Communications department. Members of the task force were nominated by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and chosen to represent a diversity of experiences and perspectives, with a preference for graduates of, or participants in, Metro Leadership Academy, Eno Multi-Agency Exchange Program and the Women & Girls Governing Council. Metro's Executive Officers for Equity & Race and Customer Experience are also on the task force.

Joshua Schank, *Office of Extraordinary Innovation – Chair*
Aida Berry, *Office of Civil Rights & Inclusion*
Stephanie Burke, *Human Capital Development*
Lilian de Loza-Gutierrez, *Communications*
KeAndra Cylear Dodds, *Office of the CEO*
Imelda Hernandez, *Systems Security & Law Enforcement*
Nancy Hinojosa, *Risk, Safety & Asset Management*
Kyle Holland, *Office of Management & Budget*
Rani Narula-Woods, *Operations*
Sharyne Ng, *Human Capital Development*
Olivia Nelson-Richard, *Transportation Communications Union*
Melissa Park, *Congestion Reduction*
Heather Repenning, *Program Management*
Heather Severin, *Program Management*
Fumi Sotozono, *Management Audit Services*
Jessica Spearman, *Vendor/Contract Management*
Quintin Sumabat, *Operations*
Alvin Trotter Jr., *Program Management*
Elezanbee Vue, *Operations*
Kyle Wagner, *Vendor/Contract Management*
Aaron Weinstein, *Office of the CEO*

Staffed by

Mark Vallianatos, *Office of Extraordinary Innovation*
Emma Huang, *Office of Extraordinary Innovation*
John Gordon, *Communications*



The Path Forward

In these unprecedented times, amid a deadly pandemic and an economic recession, there is still cause for optimism. Tectonic shifts are occurring in all aspects of daily life, including transportation.

The events of 2020 have taken a terrible human toll and will leave LA County with enormous economic and social challenges. But they also create opportunities to reimagine mobility in our region and to chart a return to a new and better “normal.”



In April 2020, Metro created a Recovery Task Force to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mandate was to recommend actions that address immediate, frontline safety concerns for Metro workers and riders, help the agency recover from the seismic impact of lost revenue, chart a course for an equitable economic recovery for LA County and pursue ‘mobility without congestion’ as the new normal.

We deliver this final report amid myriad challenges and at a time when LA County is still battling the worst public health crisis in more than a century. Rates of infection, hospitalization and death, already at shocking levels, were still climbing as 2020 drew to a close. And with millions out of work and public resources stretched thin, the pandemic’s incalculable physical, mental and economic impacts seem sure to reverberate for months and years to come.

For its part, Metro, like other transit systems around the country, faces a daunting combination of budget cuts and reduced ridership at a time when the need in many of the communities it serves is especially acute. Meanwhile, generational disruptions in how people get around, shop, communicate and work continue unabated with no clear roadmap for where the future leads or for how these changes will affect demand for mobility services once the pandemic ends. Recovery is a moving target, and longing for a return to normalcy can be a powerful coping mechanism.

The Recovery Task Force offers these recommendations recognizing that many of the problems highlighted by the pandemic have their roots in LA County’s pre-pandemic “normal.” Long-standing and well-documented inequities – in transportation, education and housing policies – have grown starker in the current crisis, and continue to put the most vulnerable at highest risk. In this context, Metro has a responsibility to put forward ideas that can help prevent a return to vast disparities in access to opportunity, to gridlocked and dangerous streets and to run-away climate change. Our hope is these recommendations force a reckoning that ensures we leave the congested and unsustainable normal of the past behind and move forward to a better, healthier and fairer LA County.

In this environment, recovery is a moving target, and longing for a return to normalcy can be a powerful coping mechanism. But the crisis has also highlighted the many ways that our pre-COVID “normal” was failing the people of LA County, shining a harsh light on longstanding inequities in transportation, education and housing that now, more than ever, are putting the most vulnerable at risk.

Despite these challenges we remain optimistic, not only that Metro can be a potent force for recovery, but that Metro has an opportunity – indeed, a responsibility – to take actions that will ensure a more effective, equitable and sustainable transportation system long after COVID-19 has been vanquished.

The recommendations in this report provide a partial roadmap for building that system. They build on many positive initiatives that are already underway, on the ideas and programs put forward in Metro's Vision 2028 Plan and on other initiatives that are still in the planning phase.

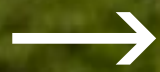
In the pages that follow we begin by reporting on the action items the task force identified during the early months of the pandemic. Some of these actions have already been completed, while others are still in progress. The second half of the report introduces 17 new action recommendations that are designed to address the longer-term goals of (1) advancing mobility and equity as Metro and LA County recover from the pandemic, and (2) finding ways to pay for these improvements.

Figure 1 shows all of the task force's recommendations for early and longer-term actions. It summarizes the status of each recommendation as of early December 2020.

FIGURE 1: TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS



*On Hold



COVID-19 Impacts on Transportation and Mobility in LA County – A year Later



As we wrote the final version of this report, LA County was approaching a year since COVID-19 triggered Safer at Home orders in March 2020. The task force has continuously monitored the impacts of COVID-19 on transportation and mobility in LA County to ensure that our recommendations are supported by data.

This section builds on findings from the last three task force progress reports to summarize the developments that have informed our analysis. As new evidence emerges, Metro will continue to adjust its response to the pandemic and its approach to implementing the recommendations in this report.

January 2021 was the deadliest month of COVID-19 in LA and California – December 2020 followed closely behind.

- > As of January 28, 2021, LA County had registered 1,092,128 confirmed cases and 15,915 deaths. Since January 21, 2021, the county has averaged 7,621 new cases per day and 214.1 new deaths per day.¹
- > Within Metro’s own workforce, as of January 27, 2021, there were 1,503 confirmed cases and 10 deaths.²
- > Hospitals were critically overcrowded and overwhelmed in December and January, with relief only beginning in late January as hospitalizations from coronavirus began to decline. At its peak, nearly 800 new patients were hospitalized daily. As of January 28, 2021 that number is now about 500 a day.³
- > Governor Gavin Newsom imposed another stay-at-home order in December as coronavirus cases worsened. The order was tied to ICU capacity dropping below 15%. This order was not lifted until late January, returning the state to a system of county-by-county restrictions.⁴
- > LA County began vaccinating frontline health care workers in December. The county began vaccinating people 65 and older in late January, and estimated that it could take until June before moving on to offer the vaccine to the general public.⁵
- > As part of a plan for how and when Metro employees can get vaccinated once it is available, the agency is identifying potential Metro-owned sites that can be used for administering vaccinations.

¹See <https://www.latimes.com/projects/california-coronavirus-cases-tracking-outbreak/los-angeles-county/>

²See <https://www.metro.net/about/about-metro/metro-tracks-covid-19-cases/>

³See <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-01-28/amid-crowded-hospitals-la-covid-cases-start-to-decline>

⁴See <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/california-covid-stay-at-home-order-lifted/>

⁵See <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/covidvaccinedistribution/>

People of color have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

- > COVID-19 has exacerbated existing social inequities, causing far higher mortality among low-income and non-white populations. Black and Latino residents of LA County are dying at disproportionate rates. Mortality among those living in the poorest areas of the county is four times higher than among people living in the most affluent areas.⁶
- > Differences in working and living conditions put low-income Black and Latino residents at greater risk of exposure. These residents are more likely to be essential workers and to hold low-wage jobs that involve frequent contact with the public. Many work at sites or in environments where health and safety precautions are not always enforced.⁷
- > The rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 1,000 residents is 3.7 times higher in neighborhoods with large numbers of people per household than in neighborhoods with lower household density. About two-thirds of Californians who live in overcrowded homes are essential workers or live with at least one essential worker. Of those, 75% live in poverty and 92% are people of color.⁸
- > The LA region had the nation's highest unemployment rate in June, magnifying existing income inequality in the region. Unemployment rates were higher for lower-income families, at around 28%, compared to 11% for workers in households earning above \$100,000. Unemployment rates for workers in informal jobs, many of whom are non-citizens, are as high as 20.5%. Immigrants without legal status, who disproportionately hold these jobs are also ineligible for traditional unemployment insurance, making them more economically vulnerable.⁹

Working moms bear the brunt of remote learning and the closure of childcare centers. LA Unified remains closed to in-person classes.

- > As of September 2020, women were leaving the workforce at four times the rate of men.¹⁰
- > In October 2020, a third of unemployed working aged women said they left the workforce because of childcare demands. This compares to 12% of unemployed men who cited the same reason.¹¹
- > Women are also more likely to shoulder the burden of closed schools and closed day care centers, on top of being more likely to have lost a job during the pandemic. This has long-lasting repercussions for women's lifetime earnings, family income, women's representation in the labor force and gender pay equity.¹²
- > Women of color and single mothers are the most burdened. Due to a variety of intersecting factors, they are likely to have the most unpredictable schedules, the fewest benefits and be the least able to afford childcare. Because they also fill most of the essential jobs that are not conducive to telework, they also face greater risks for exposure to the virus.¹³

Vehicle traffic is returning faster than transit ridership, and travel patterns are changing.

- > Vehicle miles travelled (VMT) in the Southern California region declined by nearly 80% in early April 2020 compared to January of the same year. VMT began increasing again in mid-April, and was nearing pre-pandemic levels by August 2020.¹⁴

⁶See <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/data/index.htm#info-deathrate>

⁷See <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/front-line-essential-jobs-in-california-a-profile-of-job-and-worker-characteristics/>

⁸See <https://calmatters.org/projects/california-coronavirus-overcrowded-neighborhoods-homes/> and <https://www.racecounts.org/covid/>

⁹See <https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/08/la-has-the-nations-highest-unemployment-for-some-groups.html>

¹⁰See <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/10/02/919152104/jobs-growth-continues-to-slow-in-last-employment-report-before-election>

¹¹See <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/17/business/economy/women-jobs-economy-recession.html?searchResultPosition=2>

¹²See <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/business/economy/coronavirus-working-women.html>, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/08/parents-juggle-work-and-child-care-during-pandemic.html>

¹³See <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/10/30/492582/covid-19-sent-womens-workforce-progress-backward/>

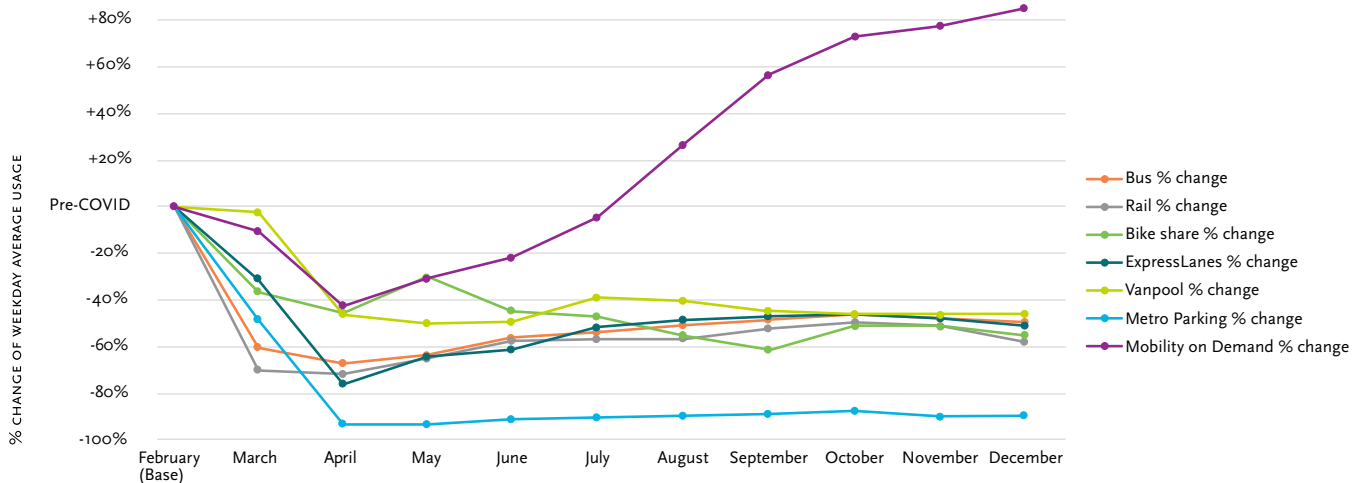
¹⁴See http://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/scag-COVID-19-Transportation_Impacts.pdf

> A VMT analysis of the LA metro region by StreetLight found tremendous changes in peak commuter travel. Instead of a sharp increase in morning travel followed by a drop and then an afternoon peak, VMT data collected in August 2020 found weekday traffic built gradually through the morning toward a more sustained afternoon high.¹⁵ Streetlight describes an additional “mini rush hour” just after lunch, with lower levels of congestion but for a longer period of time during the afternoon peak. That peak begins earlier but ends sooner, with freeways returning to normal loads as much as an hour earlier compared to the same time period in 2019.

Streetlight has hypothesized that the added flexibility of telecommuting has allowed for more midday trips.

> Figure 2 details the percent change in weekday average usage for all of Metro’s mobility services relative to pre-pandemic usage (using February 2020 as a baseline). A 0% change means complete recovery of usage in the months following February, whereas a negative percent change means a reduction in usage. All services, except for Mobility on Demand¹⁶, saw a decrease in usage due to Safer-at-Home orders and changing travel patterns during the pandemic.¹⁷

FIGURE 2: METRO SYSTEMWIDE USAGE CHANGE (ALL MODES), 2020



> The pandemic resulted in a significant decline in bus and rail ridership along with use of other Metro services, starting in March 2020. Ridership increased between May and July 2020 as Safer at Home orders were relaxed and has remained steady at about 50% below pre-COVID-19 forecasts since then, with the exception of December when bus and rail ridership declined slightly.

> Transit use has been slower to recover in the United States than in the rest of the world, and California ridership lags behind that of the country as a whole.¹⁸ Returning riders are more likely to be low-income people of color who have little or no access to private vehicles.¹⁹

¹⁵See <https://learn.streetlightdata.com/covid-transportation-trends>

¹⁶Mobility on Demand has increased usage by 60% from February 2020 largely due to new services offered for riders.

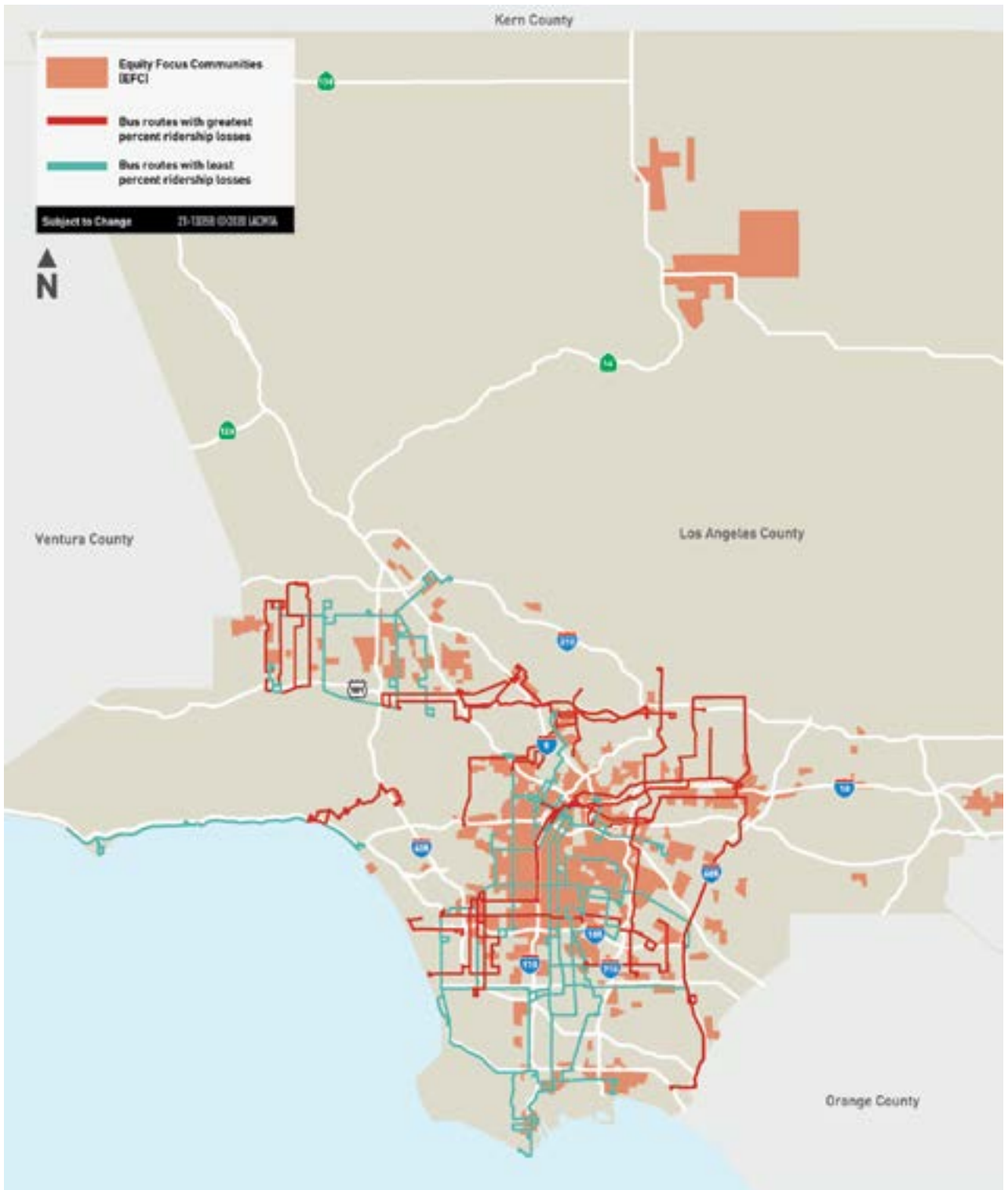
¹⁷For a more detailed analysis of COVID-19 ridership and service level analysis, see Attachment C and Attachment D of Board Report File # 2020-0709.

¹⁸See “Monitoring adjustments to transit service during a pandemic,” Brian D. Taylor; UCLA ITS.

¹⁹See “Monitoring adjustments to transit service during a pandemic,” Brian D. Taylor; UCLA ITS.

This map overlays Metro's bus service network on Equity Focus Communities²⁰ across LA County. While Metro lost ridership across its entire service area, this map shows the bus routes with the highest and lowest percent change in ridership during April and May 2020 (compared to the same period in the prior year).²¹

FIGURE 3: BUS ROUTES WITH THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENT CHANGE IN RIDERSHIP



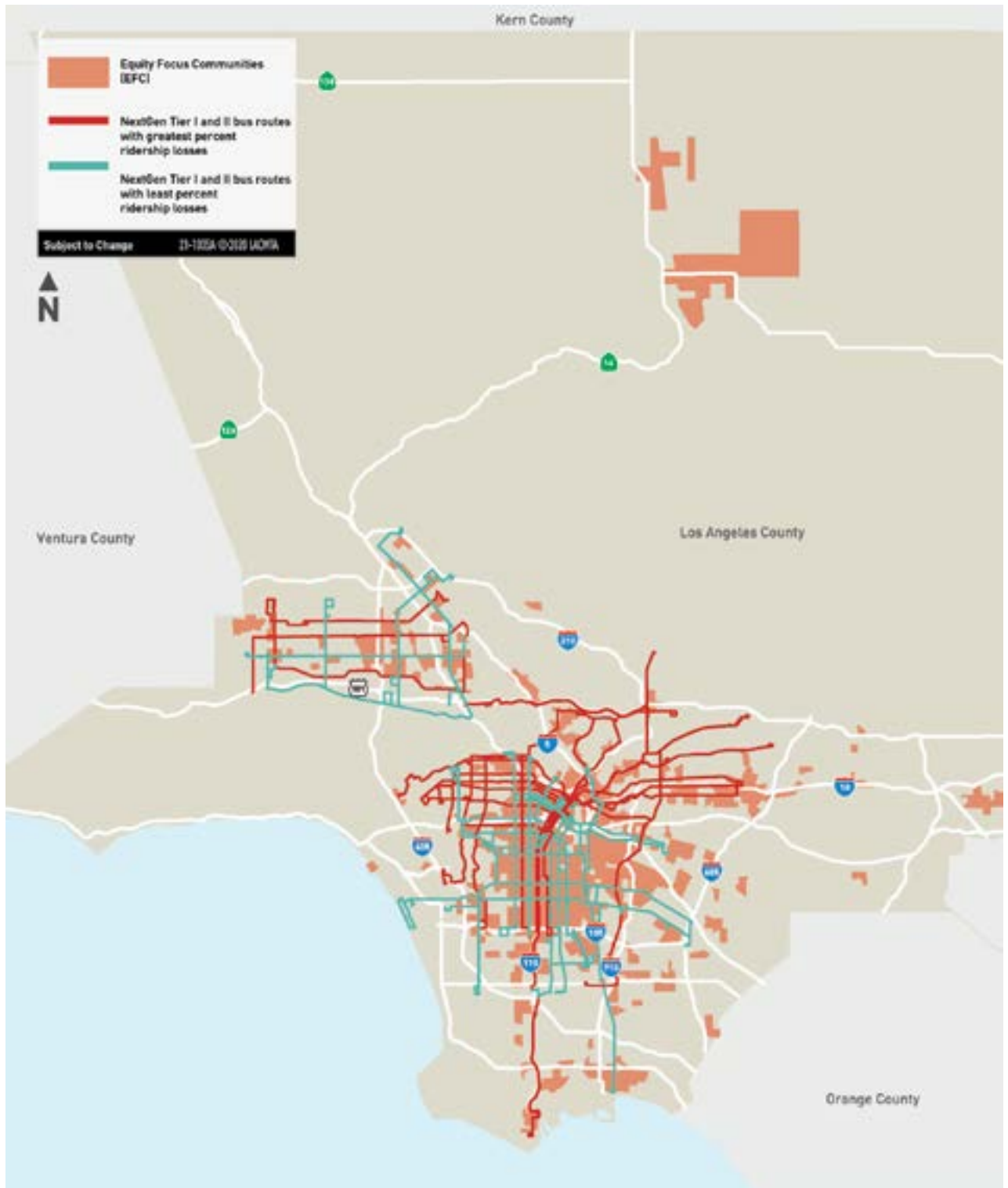
²⁰For information on how Equity Focus Communities are defined, see http://boardarchives.metro.net/BoardBox/2019/190920_Equity_Focus_Communities_Update.pdf

²¹For a more detailed analysis of COVID-19 ridership and service levels, see Attachment C and Attachment D of Board Report File # 2020-0709.

This map overlays Metro’s NextGen Tier 1 and 2²² bus service network on Equity Focus Communities across LA County. This map shows the Tier 1 and Tier 2 bus routes with the highest and lowest percent

reduction in ridership in each service tier – the top 10 highest reductions in red and the top 10 lowest reductions in green – based on ridership in April and May 2020 compared to the same time period in 2019.²³

FIGURE 4: NEXTGEN TIER 1 AND TIER 2 BUS ROUTES WITH THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENT REDUCTION IN RIDERSHIP



²²To ensure the core network has consistent frequencies and span of service, NextGen categorized all bus lines into service tiers based on ridership, transit propensity, equity and overall travel demand. Each tier is assigned a frequency designation by time of day and day of week, with Tier 1 and 2 services being the most frequent and Tier 3 and 4 being the least.

²³For a more detailed analysis of COVID-19 ridership and service levels, see Attachment C and Attachment D of Board Report File # 2020-0709.

The pandemic has had a major financial impact on individual households and small businesses, leading to food and housing insecurity.

- > The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in LA County was 11% in December 2020, up from 10.9% the month before. This was higher than the state unemployment rate of 9% and the national rate of 6.7%. By contrast, the county's unemployment rate was just 4.3% in December 2019. These numbers do not capture people who have dropped out of the job market (figures show that the overall size of the labor force has declined as a result of the pandemic).²⁴
- > In California, leisure and hospitality continues to be the sector most affected by COVID-19 (based on comparisons to October 2019). These jobs have plummeted 30% this year, and are also more likely to be held by vulnerable workers who do not have high school degrees, are more likely to be women, be Black or Latino, or be foreign-born.²⁴
- > As of December 31, 2020, total small business revenue in Los Angeles had decreased by 29.9% compared to January 2020.²⁵
- > The pandemic and resulting economic fallout have created severe hardship with many households struggling to put food on the table, pay their rent or mortgage, and cover basic household expenses. Data collected between November 25 – December 21, 2020, revealed that 19% of Californians reported that children in their household were not eating enough because they couldn't afford food, 20% reported not being caught up on rent and 40% reported difficulty covering usual household expenses.²⁶

Metro's FY21 budget has been amended from \$6.23 billion to \$6.99 billion due to slightly improved revenues.

- > More than 60% of Metro's revenue comes from sales taxes. Consumer spending in LA County directly impacts those revenues. In Los Angeles, as of January 3, 2021, total spending by all consumers had decreased by 12.8% compared to January 2020. Consumption is expected to remain well below trend for the foreseeable future.²⁷
- > Metro's adopted budget for fiscal year 2021 was \$6.23 billion, a 13% reduction from its FY20 budget of \$7.2 billion. However, Metro adopted an amended FY21 budget of \$6.99 billion, because revenues are now projected to be \$765M, 12.3% higher than the original FY21 budget.²⁸
- > In July 2019, Metro had already estimated a \$3.3 billion capital funding shortfall for four priority projects. These include the Sepulveda Transit Corridor, Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2, West Santa Ana Branch Corridor and C Line (Green) Extension projects. Funding shortfalls are likely on other projects as well, due to rising construction costs.²⁹

²⁴See <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2021-01-22/california-unemployment-spiked-december-covid-surged>

²⁵See <https://www.tracktherecovery.org/>

²⁶See <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-recessions-effects-on-food-housing-and> and <https://covid19pulse.usc.edu/>

²⁷See <https://www.tracktherecovery.org/>

²⁸See <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2020-0726/>

²⁹See <https://media.metro.net/2020/FY21-Adopted-Budget.pdf>

The public health literature finds that riding public transit can be relatively safe, with COVID-19 infection risks that are comparable to those for other public settings.

- > Early fears of rampant coronavirus spread via surfaces like poles and turnstiles proved exaggerated, as infectious disease experts identified respiration as the primary vector of transmission. Overwhelmingly, epidemiological investigations have found that major spreading events can be traced to venues where there is sustained conversation and/or physical exertion, such as gyms, clubs and restaurants – not transit.³⁰
- > A review of the public health literature by the UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies finds that traveling by public transit during COVID-19 can be relatively safe, and that the risk to riders is lower than in many other settings. This is because people generally spend less time on transit and speak less during that time, and are therefore less exposed than in many other settings such as schools, workplaces and homes. However, safer travel does depend on several factors including mask-wearing and hand hygiene, time spent and ability to social distance while riding, vehicle sanitation, air ventilation and filtration on transit vehicles and in stations, and the effectiveness of the community-wide public health response.³¹

- > Tests commissioned by other transit agencies, including Transport for London and Govia Thameslink Railway, have found no evidence of COVID-19 on touch areas across the transit network.³²
- > Public health institutions continue to recommend mask wearing in public settings and when people interact with individuals from other households, whether in public or private spaces.³³
- > On February 1, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued an order requiring travelers on airplanes and public transportation to wear face masks. This followed an executive order announced January 21, 2021 by recently inaugurated President Biden.³⁴



³⁰See <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/05/japan-ends-its-covid-19-state-emergency>

³¹See <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1s59g67d>

³²See https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/no-covid-govia-thameslink-railway-trains-london-b71450.html?utm_source=flexmail&utm_medium=e-mail&utm_campaign=newsfromnorthamerica6977697720201120t181158807z&utm_content=standard and <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2020/11/20/studies-show-riding-transit-during-pandemic-is-safer-than-you-think/>

³³See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html> and <https://covid19.lacounty.gov/face-coverings/>

³⁴See https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/pdf/Mask-Order-CDC_GMTF_01-29-21-p.pdf



A Recovery Framework for Metro



What's in the report?

The first part of this report documents progress in implementing the 20 Early Action Recommendations that the Recovery Task Force developed during the spring and summer of 2020 in immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second part of the report describes 17 Final Recommendations designed to help Metro bring back a transportation system for LA County that is more equitable, more effective and more sustainable.

Our early action recommendations can be grouped in two categories:

1. **Respond and prepare:** This category includes short-term actions that focus on safety for Metro customers and staff.
2. **Relaunch:** This category includes medium-term actions to be implemented when Safer at Home orders are loosened.

The implementation timeframe for actions in both categories overlaps to some extent and was expected to shift as pandemic conditions change.

The 17 longer-term recovery recommendations are organized into two categories and several subcategories:

1. Improve Mobility and Advance Equity in LA County
 - a. New and improved services
 - b. Responsive Metro
 - c. Vibrant future
2. Help Pay for these Improvements
 - a. Save money
 - b. New revenues

Because the Recovery Task Force is a recommending committee, not a decision-making body, decisions about whether and how to implement these recommendations will be made by the responsible parties. Based on our extensive collaboration with multiple Metro departments in developing these recommendations, however, we believe that there is significant buy-in within the agency to undertake the actions described in this report.

How did the task force choose its recommendations?

The Recovery Task Force began by identifying and researching a large number of ideas. We then applied a defined set of criteria to narrow our recommendations to those actions that we believe are most promising and most critical to post-pandemic recovery. As a package, these recommendations reflect the mix of pragmatism and optimism that has defined the task force's approach from the outset. In particular, we have tried to "follow the evidence" in terms of how the pandemic is impacting Metro and LA County, while also building on Metro's strengths, leveraging existing programs and embracing bold goals for mobility and equity. In selecting recommendations, we asked whether particular actions:

- > Fulfill the Recovery Task Force Charter?
- > Are based on evidence of COVID-19 impacts?
- > Advance Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan?
- > Advance equity?
- > Build on Metro plans, programs and progress?
- > Reflect global best practices?
- > Are timely, feasible and fiscally responsible?

What were the specific goals of the Recovery Task Force?

Fulfill Task Force Charter

Our charter identifies four interrelated COVID-19 recovery goals.

1. Respond to the pandemic by adjusting Metro operations to prioritize the health and safety of customers and staff. For example, one of our early action recommendations focuses on measures to improve air flow in Metro vehicles and stations through open windows, safe ventilation and air exchange.
2. Recover after the pandemic, by taking steps that help Metro get back to the business of providing the critical mobility services on which people rely. For example, the task force has supported the Service Recovery Plan developed by Metro's Operations Department as a way to bring back service, while staying ahead of overcrowding – and doing so in a way that aligns with the NextGen Bus Plan.

3. Help lead an equitable economic recovery for LA County by looking beyond aggregate trends to acknowledge and address the disparities in income, wealth and opportunity that pre-date the pandemic. This is especially important in light of the disparate impacts of the pandemic on low-income people and communities of color. Several task force recommendations, such as Green Jobs, *Destination Discounts* and Incentives, will help advance Metro's equity goals.
4. Advance mobility without congestion as the 'new normal' after the pandemic. This goal aligns with several key elements of Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan:
 - a. Increased prosperity for all by removing mobility barriers
 - b. Swift and easy mobility throughout LA County, anytime
 - c. Accommodating more trips through a variety of high-quality mobility options

Reduced congestion has been one of the few silver linings of the pandemic. Therefore, many of our longer-term recommendations aim, through new or improved services and incentives, to improve mobility and keep congestion lower even after the pandemic wanes and the economy recovers.

Address Real-world Impacts

Figure 5 shows how task force recommendations are tailored to help address the real-world impacts of COVID-19.

We also considered how these impacts might worsen – or ameliorate – challenges that pre-date the pandemic, which include:

- > High levels of congestion and slow travel speeds on LA roads and freeways
- > High levels of solo driving and policies that favor drive-alone trips
- > Rising car ownership and declining ridership on Metro services
- > A worsening housing and homelessness crises
- > Lack of direct ability to manage streets to allow faster and more reliable transit
- > High and rising construction costs for capital projects

- > Inequities in access to opportunity and mobility in both its transportation and economic meaning in LA County

Fortunately, Metro can draw on a number of assets and resources to address these challenges:

- > An established network of transportation services, including bus, rail and bike share, that are already providing mobility options across much of LA County
- > Permanent sources of local funding, thanks to tax measures approved by voters
- > A transit system expansion program that was underway before the pandemic, with several projects in the construction and planning phase
- > A strategic plan for the agency that is clearly focused on improving and expanding mobility for those who need it most

Advance Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan Goals

Metro Vision 2028 articulates five core goals, together with specific actions and initiatives to advance each goal:

1. Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling
2. Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system
3. Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity
4. Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership
5. Provide responsive, accountable and trustworthy governance within the Metro organization

In our discussion of each COVID-19 recovery recommendation, we list the specific elements of the Vision 2028 goals that would be advanced by the recommendation.

FIGURE 5: HOW RECOVERY RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESS COVID-19 IMPACTS

MAJOR COVID-19 IMPACTS + DATA	RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAN HELP ADDRESS IMPACTS
COVID-19 was and remains a dangerous pandemic.	Expand and innovate cleaning, increase ventilation, distribute masks to riders, allow mask vending, fund safe streets, survey riders, allow and promote teleworking, use more customer ambassadors, launch “We’re here for you” communications, restore service, better address homelessness
People of color have been disproportionately impacted.	Distribute masks to riders, allow mask vending, launch “We’re here for you” communications, restore service, improve public engagement and strengthen rider voices
Working moms bear the brunt of remote learning.	Support working parents, allow and promote teleworking, expand region’s broad infrastructure
Vehicle traffic is returning faster than transit ridership.	Survey riders, restore service, install more bus lanes, study new Bike Share models, promote biking, run express buses on Improved HOV and Express Lanes, accelerate network of complete streets, fully integrate transit in LA region, study how Metro can reduce capital construction costs, improve station amenities, offer incentives to reduce car ownership, allow and promote teleworking, gather more data on equity and travel patterns, accelerate Joint Development and Transit-oriented Communities
Returning transit riders are more likely to be low-income people of color with little or no access to private vehicles.	Survey riders, restore service, distribute masks to riders, install more bus lanes, improve station amenities, gather more data on equity and travel patterns, better address homelessness, improve public engagement and strengthen rider voices, offer incentives to reduce car ownership
The pandemic has had a major negative financial impact on individual households and small businesses.	Reimagine <i>Destination Discounts</i> , offer incentives to reduce car ownership, create green jobs and green infrastructure, accelerate Joint Development and Transit-oriented Communities, study how Metro can reduce capital construction costs, share data and information more effectively and openly
The pandemic has caused Metro’s own budget to be reduced by 16.5% due to lower sales tax revenues.	Study how Metro can reduce capital construction costs, build staff capacity, use Measure M and R ordinances, expand revenue opportunities, identify funding and incentives to reduce car ownership, share data and information more effectively and openly
Riding public transit can be relatively safe with mask usage.	Distribute masks to riders, allow mask vending, expand and innovate cleaning, increase ventilation, use more customer ambassadors, survey riders, launch “We’re here for you” communications, install more bus lanes, accelerate network of complete streets

Advance Equity

The task force used a **Rapid Equity Assessment Tool** to analyze how Metro’s recovery planning and actions can support this goal. Specifically, the task force considered the following questions:

1. Will the action impact any equity groups?
2. Could it present an equity opportunity?
3. Who will benefit from or be burdened by the action?

4. How will implementation prioritize the needs of historically marginalized communities and others most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis?
5. What are strategies to mitigate any potential negative impacts of the action?
6. Should we consider changes to the action based on the equity assessment?

Our discussion of each recommendations summarizes key takeaways from the equity assessment.

Build on Metro Plans, Programs and Progress

Because task force members are drawn from diverse departments within Metro, the task force was attuned to actions the agency is already taking to respond to the pandemic and prepare for recovery. In fact, many of our recommendations are meant to reinforce, support and build on ongoing Metro actions and programs. For each of our longer-term recommendations, we summarize related activities that Metro is already undertaking.

In the last year, Metro has also launched several major new internal initiatives and supported some important external partnerships and policies that did not arise from this task force but strongly align with our recommendations.

Internal Initiatives with Recovery Synergies

Customer Experience Plan. Metro's first Customer Experience was approved by the Board in December 2020. The Plan can help Metro understand customer perspectives during and after the pandemic and enhance ridership.³⁵

Fareless System Initiative. Metro CEO Phil Washington launched a new internal Metro exploratory task force that started working in September 2020 on a proposal to eliminate fares for riders on Metro buses and trains. Reduced or free fares can expand ridership after the pandemic.³⁶

LA County Goods Movement Strategic Plan. This plan was adopted by the Metro Board in January 2021. Implementing the strategic initiatives in the plan will support the region's economic recovery. The importance of delivery has grown during the pandemic.³⁷

Long Range Transportation Plan. The 2020 LRTP lays out how Metro will plan, build, operate, maintain and partner for improved mobility in the next 30 years. The plan was adopted by the Metro Board in September 2020; its strategies can help advance mobility without congestion.

Moving Beyond Sustainability Plan. The Metro Board adopted this plan in September 2020. It provides a framework for green investments and jobs and cleaner transportation.³⁸

NextGen Bus Plan. This plan aims to implement a new, competitive bus system in LA County that is fast, frequent, reliable and accessible. It was shaped with significant rider and public input and adopted by the Board in October 2020. Our recommendations for bringing back and improving bus service are based on elements of the NextGen Bus Plan.³⁹

Traffic Reduction Study. Public outreach on this study, which is examining a pilot congestion pricing program and other options, was launched in 2020 and shared potential pilot areas with the public in February 2021. Congestion pricing is among the most promising strategies for improving mobility without congestion.⁴⁰

Transit App Partnership. In May 2020, Metro partnered with *Transit* app,⁴¹ to let Metro customers use Transit's popular trip-planning functions. In August 2020, Transit introduced a feature that predicts crowding levels on Metro buses based on past ridership levels. These types of features promote safety and can help retain and grow ridership.⁴²

Transit Oriented Communities Implementation Plan. This plan was adopted by the Metro Board in October 2020. Its implementation can advance equity goals and promote transit-supportive communities where fewer trips are made by solo drivers.⁴³

External Partnerships and Policies with Synergies for Recovery Efforts

American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Recovery and Restoration Task Force. Metro CEO Phil Washington chairs this national-level task force, which launched in April 2020 to develop a post-pandemic roadmap for public transportation services. The report of the APTA task force, released in November 2020, contains a number of recommendations that align with Metro's recovery plan.⁴⁴

CARES Act. Metro received funding from the federal CARES Act, which was intended to cushion the economic impacts of the pandemic on Metro and on LA County residents and businesses.⁴⁵

³⁵See <http://metro.legistar.com/metro/attachments/42dc3a77-de0a-46ba-bfd1-fe78aa526c6a.pdf>

³⁶See <https://www.metro.net/news/media-kits/fareless-system-initiative/>

³⁷See <https://metro.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9072361@GUID=B6B0F1BF-5B8B-4C30-B1FA-BA8D9B0180BE>

³⁸See <http://media.metro.net/2020/Moving-Beyond-Sustainability-Strategic-Plan-2020.pdf>

California Senate Bill 288 was signed into law in October 2020. It creates a two-year exemption from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for many transit and active transportation projects.

This provision, which Metro supported, can help the agency plan and implement mobility projects more rapidly.⁴⁶

Global Best Practices

In developing recommendations, the task force looked to global best practices that can help Metro more effectively respond to, recover from and advance mobility without congestion after the pandemic. In some areas, clear world-class standards already exist. In others, Metro has an opportunity to help establish new best practices. We highlight best practices for each of our recommendations where these examples exist.

Key Considerations: Timeliness, Feasibility and Fiscal Impacts

Timeliness was a key consideration for our early recommendations given the urgency of the immediate health and safety crisis. Timeliness was also a consideration for our longer-term recommendations, in the sense that the task force prioritized recommendations for which implementation can begin soon. Political and technical feasibility were also important considerations, which required balancing the need for bold action against the likelihood that a recommendation would be implemented. In light of the additional budget challenges created by COVID-19, the task force sought to make its overall package of recommendations revenue neutral or revenue positive. We discuss budget impacts, including potential cost savings and revenue opportunities for each of our recommendations.

³⁹See <https://www.metro.net/projects/nextgen/>

⁴⁰See <https://www.metro.net/projects/trafficreduction/>

⁴¹See <https://thesource.metro.net/2020/05/18/metro-partners-with-transit-app-to-making-riding-and-trip-planning-easier-and-more-accurate/>

⁴²See <https://thesource.metro.net/2020/08/13/how-full-is-your-metro-bus-transit-app-will-tell-you/>

⁴³See <https://media.metro.net/2020/Metro-TOC-Implementation-Plan-Final.pdf>

⁴⁴See https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/APTA-Task-Force-Report_11-23-2020.pdf

⁴⁵See <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/748>

⁴⁶See https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB288



Task Force Progress to Date

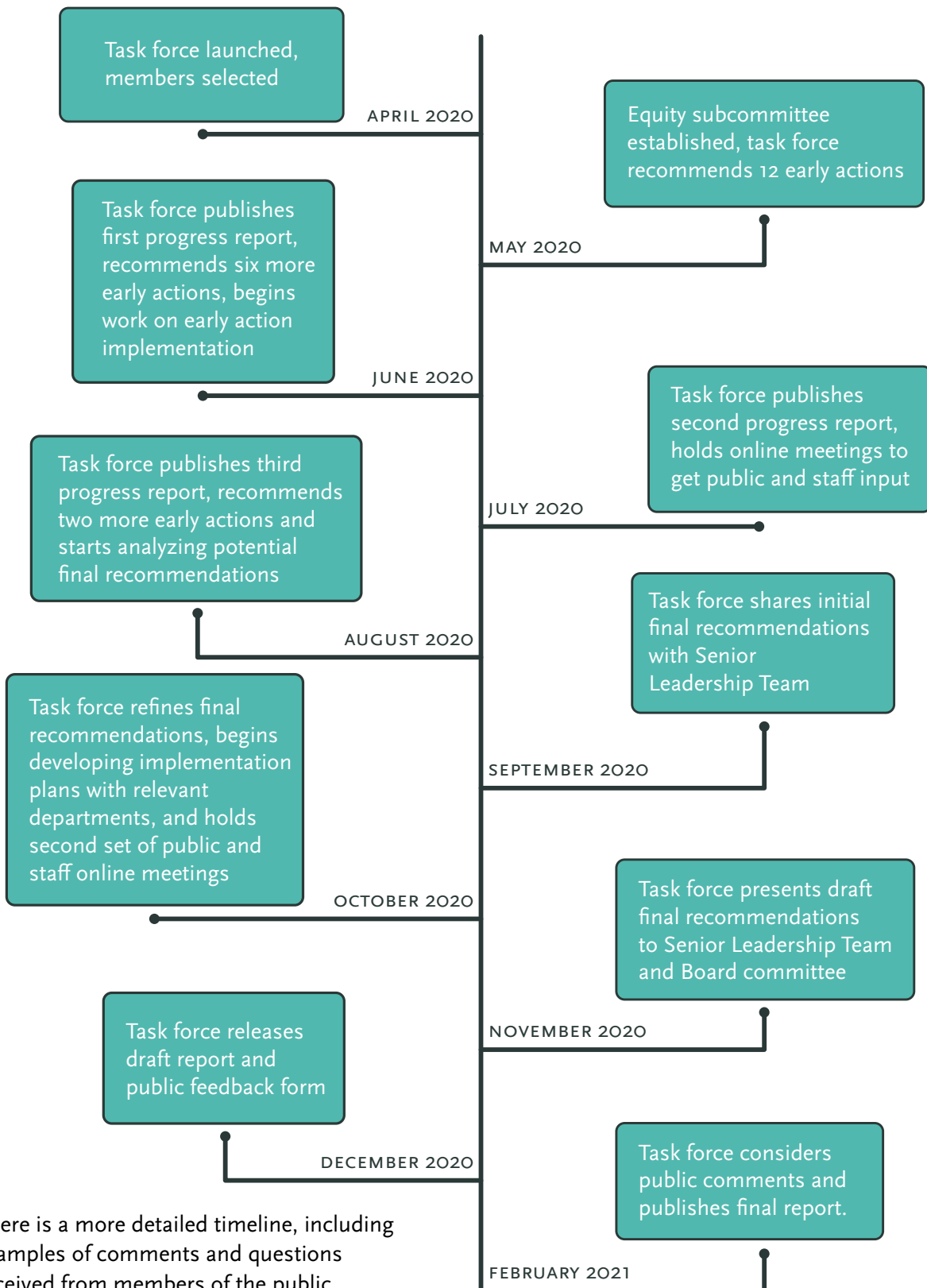


Metro

Welcome Aboard
Bienvenidos



FIGURE 6: STEPS THE TASK FORCE HAS TAKEN



There is a more detailed timeline, including examples of comments and questions received from members of the public and from Metro staff, provided in the appendix.

A Sample of Actions Metro Took Outside of the Recovery Task Force to Respond to COVID-19

- > Adapted service in response to Safer at Home orders
- > Implemented COVID-19 safety customer messaging and signage
- > Launched the TAP mobile app which gives customers a safe and contactless way to pay for transit using an iPhone or Apple Watch
- > Persisted to finalize public outreach to advance NextGen
- > Increased cleaning and sanitation in facilities and on Metro's fleet
- > Expedited capital project delivery
- > Implemented rear-door boarding and relaxed fare enforcement
- > Received FTA Grant to test innovations in air filtration
- > Launched crowding information on *Transit* app
- > Partnered with First Five LA to provide food delivery through the Mobility on Demand Pilot Program
- > Discounted Metro Micro fares in consideration of financial hardships associated with COVID-19
- > Improved Access Services response time – in some cases, same day service was provided to patrons
- > Created human resources learning tools for FFCRA leave, reporting of COVID-19 cases and provided return to work resources
- > Instituted an emergency telecommuting policy to support low-risk workplaces
- > Developed an internal Path Forward Plan to provide guidance in transitioning Metro's workforce back to Gateway Headquarters
- > Maintained strong communication with all labor unions through weekly meetings
- > Allocated transit-related funding provided by the CARES Act to regional transit agencies
- > Allowed electronic bids/proposals and conducted pre-proposal/pre-bid meetings and small business and workforce events virtually
- > Collaborated with business associations and local jurisdictions to share resources with small businesses and encouraged more businesses to become small business enterprise and/or disadvantaged business enterprise certified



Early Action Recommendations

Beginning in May 2020, the task force recommended early actions that the agency could take in immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis. These were time-sensitive measures that would be more effective the sooner they were implemented. Some of these early actions respond to near-term health and safety priorities. Others are steps that can help Metro prepare for and position itself for recovery.

Some early action task force recommendations have already been substantially accomplished, some are no longer needed due to changing circumstances and many are still being pursued. We provide updates on all 20 early action recommendations in this report, in the interests of transparency and to provide a full picture of the work of the Recovery Task Force.

For each recommendation we provide the following information:

- > Summary of the recommendation
- > Justification for the recommendation based on how it helps recovery efforts
- > Summary of equity impacts
- > Relevant goals from Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan
- > Cost estimate for the item
- > Update on implementation progress
- > Relevant best practice examples from other organizations



Phase One: Respond and Prepare



1. Survey Riders

Recommendation

Survey Metro customers on their current transportation patterns and modes, future transportation plans and overall customer experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justification

Help identify how quickly ridership may recover and gain insights on customer experience priorities, including what makes customers feel safe to use our Metro services.

Equity

Surveys can determine how different racial, ethnic and income groups have experienced transportation during the pandemic and how they plan to travel in the future.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 2.3 Improve customer experience at all customer touch points.
- 3.3 Conduct genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.

Cost Estimate

Costs were negligible. The effort was entirely in-house.

Update

The survey was conducted May 29 – June 24, 2020. A link to an online questionnaire was emailed to approximately 11,000 Metro customers who previously filled out Metro on-board surveys over the last three years. The response rate was 23%. Data from the survey was then weighted to match the income and race characteristics of Metro riders.

Survey responses pointed to the importance of masks, cleaning and disinfecting, and addressing homelessness on the system. Metro has incorporated this feedback in efforts around mask distribution, audio messages about the importance of mask wearing, and disinfection practices.

Metro conducted a follow-up online survey in October 2020 and will resume on-vehicle surveys when it is safe to do so.



Best Practices

Denver Rapid Transit District conducted a survey of nearly 2,700 people that showed the public remains apprehensive about engaging in social activities amid the spread of the coronavirus, including using public transit services. The majority of those who had not used transit in the past 30 days said they will take a wait-and-see approach to the pandemic before riding again.⁴⁷

The Port Authority of Allegheny County surveyed riders before restrictions were gradually eased. Riders were asked a series of questions about whether they were aware of safety precautions the authority had taken, whether they expected to return to work soon and how often they expect to use transit.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See metro-magazine.com/management-operations/news/738409/public-cautious-about-using-transit-rtd-survey-shows

⁴⁸ See post-gazette.com/news/transportation/2020/05/13/Port-Authority-survey-increase-service-Campos-Allegheny-County-COVID-19/stories/202005130135

2. Fund Safe Streets

Recommendation

Work with the Metro Board to authorize cities that received 2020 Open Street grants to repurpose some or all of funding on safe/slow street programs. Explore ways to encourage other LA County jurisdictions to implement safe/slow streets.

Justification

Create more space for safe, distanced walking and biking for transportation and recreation; showcase how road space can be repurposed for more multi-modal transportation.

Equity

Safe street efforts offer an equity opportunity to serve low-income communities, which tend to have more overcrowding, less access to parks and open space, higher levels of vehicle collisions and injuries, and fewer bike lanes. To ensure marginalized communities are engaged in a solution, Metro should encourage cities to partner with community-based organizations for outreach and education.

Cost Estimate

This is a no-cost program since grants have already been awarded.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system and reduce roadway collisions and injuries.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 3.2 Catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize communities where these investments are made.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan (including improving multi-modal transportation options).
- 5.1 Leverage funding and staff resources to accelerate the achievements of goals and initiatives prioritized in the Vision 2028 Plan.

Update

Metro's Board of Directors passed Motion 40 implementing this idea at its May 2020 meeting.⁴⁹ Four cities that are grantees in the current Open Streets funding cycle have approached Metro about the possibility of repurposing their funding. The City of Long Beach has repurposed their entire funding for their local Open Streets Program. The City of Santa Monica has partially repurposing their funding. The City of Los Angeles has also indicated their intent to submit a request to partially repurpose funding. Other cities have decided to postpone their events.

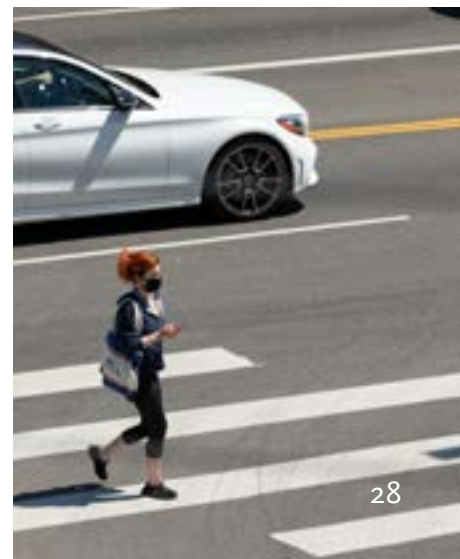
Best Practices

Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) launched a "Slow Streets" initiative that designates 74 miles of neighborhood streets for bicycle, pedestrian, wheelchair and local vehicle use only across the city. Oakland utilized streets identified in its 2019 bike plan update and relied on a "light-touch" approach that leveraged volunteers and existing in-house resources.⁵⁰

Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles and dozens of other cities have also enacted some policies related to Slow Streets/ Safe Streets/Open Streets.

⁴⁹See <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2020-0375/>

⁵⁰See oaklandca.gov/news/2020/city-of-oakland-announces-oakland-slow-streets-program-starting-saturday-to-enable-safer-walking-cycling





3. Expand and Innovate Cleaning

Recommendation

Test, adopt and publicize new cleaning methods, such as UV, ozone and autonomous robotic floor cleaners, while also better publicizing existing cleaning practices, especially through videos.

Justification

Testing and implementing new cleaning practices will help protect the health and safety of riders and Metro staff. Publicizing current and new cleaning practices will help inform and reassure riders who are currently using the system and people who will be making transportation decisions as Safer At Home orders are modified. Innovative cleaning technologies can help maximize productivity and offer revenue generating opportunities. For example, utilizing robotic floor cleaners allows maintenance crews additional time to clean other station areas while the autonomous robots clean and sweep floors.

Equity

Enhanced cleaning will benefit Metro's riders, a group that disproportionately includes low-income people, people of color and people with underlying health conditions that make them more vulnerable to COVID-19. Metro can also look for opportunities to support small and DBE businesses in any new cleaning contracts and should study the side effects of new cleaning methods to protect sensitive riders/staff.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Cost Estimate

The estimated cost for enhanced cleaning is an additional \$2.2 million per quarter. Metro also recently ordered 30 portable UV light tripods at a cost of \$168,000 to test this technology on our buses, rail vehicles and facilities.

Update

Currently, Metro is using disinfectants on our trains, buses and facilities that have been tested by the EPA and shown residual efficacy against viruses for several weeks. Metro has also increased the cleaning frequency for the public high touch point areas at stations, platforms and restrooms.

Metro Operations is conducting research and engineering work on new ways to disinfect infrastructure and high touch point areas. Metro tested the use of UV-C lights in coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency. The tests showed that an extended amount of time was needed for UV-C exposure to kill surrogate viruses (MS2 and PHI6). This timeline does not work with Metro cleaning protocols and timelines. Metro Operations has therefore ceased UV-C research activities.

The agency continues to investigate other cleaning methods including electrostatic foggers, autonomous floor cleaning and copper wrap solutions. The unsolicited proposal process is being used to evaluate the efficacy of copper wrap solutions. Metro is expecting to install copper in one bus, one train and some locations within Union Station by February. Additionally, Metro is researching how to equip buses and trains with hand sanitizer dispensers.

Best Practices

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has launched a \$1 million pilot program to kill COVID-19 on buses and trains and at stations using UV light.⁵¹

Pittsburgh International Airport is utilizing autonomous robots with Ultraviolet Light Technology.⁵²

⁵¹See <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/20/us/new-york-transit-uv-light-trnd/index.html>

⁵²See <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2020/05/05/202748610/en/Pittsburgh-International-Airport-to-Become-first-U-S-Airport-to-Utilize-Autonomous-Robots-with-Ultraviolet-Light-Technology.html>

4. Distribute Masks to Riders

Recommendation

Explore ways to distribute masks to riders. Distribution of masks can focus on hot spots identified by bus operators, riders and public health data.

Justification

Distributing masks can increase compliance with face covering requirements, enhancing health benefits. It can also help avoid conflicts and uncertainty if customers try to ride without masks.

Equity

Mask distribution presents an equity opportunity if efforts are focused in areas with high concentrations of COVID-19 cases, particularly where residents lack resources to purchase masks. Distribution can be accompanied by culturally-competent education.

Cost Estimate

Approximately \$25,000 a week.



Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Update

Metro's Public Relations department organized mask distribution from July 6, 2020 to August 27, 2020, and then again from September 8, 2020 through September 24, 2020. Four times a week, 22 street team members were assigned to major bus and rail hubs, and boarded trains and buses for six hours to distribute individually packaged masks to Metro riders. Street teams were able to reach 80 Metro bus lines and all six rail lines. The distribution strategy was based on areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, Equity Focus Communities and high ridership locations. Visual counts by operations personnel suggest that distribution of masks helped increase compliance with the face-covering requirement. From December 7 through December 24, 2020, 16 street team members again distributed masks to Metro riders. Metro plans to distribute masks, hand sanitizer and travel tips between late February and mid-March. Continued mask distribution will help respond to a new federal executive order requiring masks on transit and airlines.

(See the recommendations Use Budget to fund recovery for task force support of continued mask distribution.)

Best Practices

As supply chains have improved, and with new CDC guidance, several transit agencies across the nation have begun distributing free masks to customers. Some are relying on ambassadors to distribute, others are installing mask dispensers on buses. These agencies include SEPTA, CapMetro, Greensboro Transit, Montgomery County's Ride On Bus System, Detroit DOT, RTC Rashoe, etc.⁵³

⁵³See <https://whyy.org/articles/septa-is-giving-masks-to-riders-after-backlash-to-face-covering-mandate/>;
<https://whyy.org/articles/septa-is-giving-masks-to-riders-after-backlash-to-face-covering-mandate/>;
<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/tx/austin/news/2020/04/18/capmetro-to-distribute-free-masks-to-riders>;
https://www.greensboro.com/news/local_news/greensboro-transit-agency-offers-free-cloth-masks-to-riders-on-thursday/article_f8fb9b3c-15ae-5e4e-8fo8-7c9720bo868.html;
<https://www.silive.com/coronavirus/2020/07/mta-rolls-out-ppe-vending-machines-at-some-subway-stations.html>;
https://www.greensboro.com/news/local_news/greensboro-transit-agency-offers-free-cloth-masks-to-riders-on-thursday/article_f8fb9b3c-15ae-5e4e-8fo8-7c9720bo868.html;
<https://www.silive.com/coronavirus/2020/07/mta-rolls-out-ppe-vending-machines-at-some-subway-stations.html>

5. Allow Mask Vending

Recommendation

Supplement mask distribution by licensing vendors to sell masks and potentially personal hand sanitizer at some of Metro stations. Mask distribution should continue based on equity considerations and need. Metro should also establish a program for quickly licensing vendors at some stations where Metro is not distributing free masks.

Justification

There is increasing evidence, from Hong Kong and elsewhere, that public transit is fairly safe to ride if there is widespread use of face coverings by riders and operators. (See discussion of *covid impacts* on page 10.) Allowing one mask vendor per station at stations where Metro is not distributing free masks will allow riders who forgot to bring a mask to purchase one before they ride. This program will also help vendors, some of whom were previously selling food before sidewalk food vending was banned due to COVID-19.

Equity

This program will support street vendors who tend to be low-income, immigrants and people of color – all demographics that continue to be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. It will be especially helpful to vendors who have not been allowed to go back to work at their old locations. In organizing a mask vending program, Metro should incorporate lessons learned from the MacArthur Park Community Market and engage street vendor leaders.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.5 Expand opportunities for small and emerging businesses.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Cost Estimate

Depending on program design, Metro may be able to use the existing vending program structure and staffing at no additional cost.

Update

Metro has agreed to minimal fees for vendors. In addition, staff is exploring issuing a limited number of permits so as not to overcrowd existing individual vendors' sales areas.

Best Practices

Cities, including Los Angeles, have waived permit processes, created more flexible rules and/or supplied infrastructure to help restaurants and other retail establishments to operate outside.⁵⁴

⁵⁴See <https://ladot.lacity.org/coronavirus/apply-al-fresco>

6. Implement Visual Payment on *Transit* App

Recommendation

Rapidly introduce a contactless, visual ticket purchase and payment option in Metro's new official app, *Transit*, as an option to accompany TAP card payment. To smooth out demand, make off-peak service free or discounted for a limited, promotional period when ridership rises and there is a risk of crowding on Metro bus and rail. Note: this recommendation is not intended to change enforcement practices.

Justification

A non-contact payment option will reduce physical risks and can help reassure customers. It may also increase payments during a period when fares are not being enforced. A limited-time promotion with free or reduced non-peak fares can help encourage customer to download the *Transit* app and can help reduce crowding during peak times.

Equity

Providing new, safer ways to pay presents an equity opportunity by reducing risks and increasing access for Metro customers. Contactless payment modes will be available to all people with smart phones who can use the *Transit* app, regardless of income, race, or other demographics. Metro will continue to offer options for customers who do not own smart phones.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system that is reliable, convenient, and attractive to more users for more trips.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

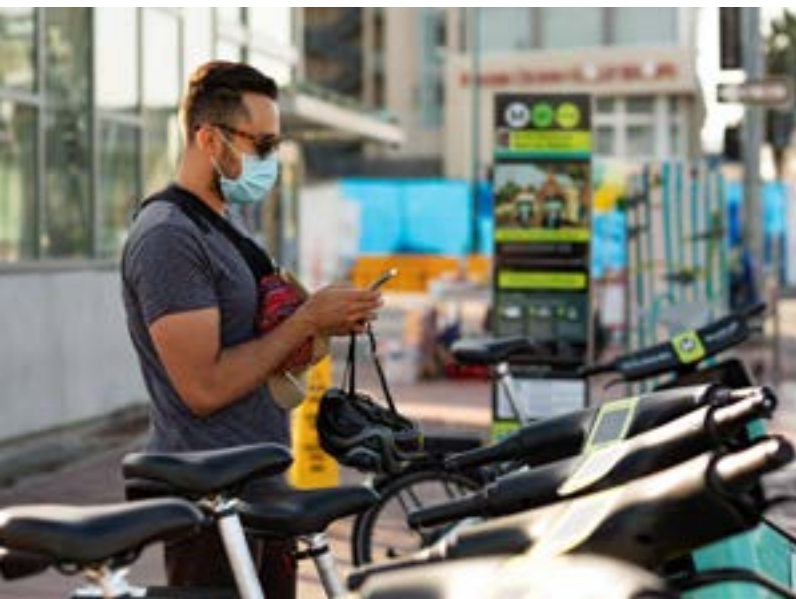
Cost Estimate

Revenue positive. Revenue would come from fare purchases that would not otherwise be paid (because many bus riders are not paying for rides due to rear boarding during the pandemic).

Update

Launch of contactless payment on *Transit* app is on hold. Contactless payment option is currently available via TAP app.⁵⁵ Could be revived if customers need additional visual payment options.

⁵⁵See <https://thesource.metro.net/2020/08/27/metro-to-study-and-consider-eliminating-bus-and-rail-fares/>



Best Practices

At least nine transit agencies have accelerated or started the process of introducing mobile ticketing in response to COVID-19. Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority, for example, is already integrated with *Transit*, and moved up the launch of mobile ticketing to May.

7. Improve Online Meetings

Recommendation

Metro should refresh, share and follow protocols for online public meetings. This should include establishing accounts with software platforms that can provide the features needed to ensure inclusive and equitable community engagement, such as closed-captioning in multiple languages, chat, hand raising, polling, break-out rooms, and moderation tools. To ensure that stakeholders who may not have internet access can participate, Metro should deploy staff or vehicles and work with local partners to provide free WiFi hotspots and potentially distribute laptops/tablets to help community members during online meetings.

Justification

With all public meetings moved online due to the pandemic, Metro should ensure that all staff and projects follow best practices and agency protocols when hosting external meetings online. Adding new software platforms to the agency's set of online meeting tools will be beneficial if these platforms offer useful accessibility features. Not all LA county residents have reliable online access, so bringing WiFi hotspots to the community can, in certain cases, provide more opportunity for participation.

Equity

Combining virtual platforms with translation and accessibility features and potential deployment of WiFi hotspots will support better access for marginalized and vulnerable communities, including people who do not have internet access, do not speak English and/or have hearing or visual impairments.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 3.3 Genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.
- 5.4 Apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more efficient agency.

Cost Estimate

Cost for ten Zoom licenses is \$3,200. Each WiFi hotspot costs \$50 and can be set up at different meetings. If set up by a staff member, the cost would be time for that staffer; setting up WiFi on a bus requires a full shift and costs approximately \$1,400. This approach makes sense only if there is no other method or location to provide a WiFi hotspot.

Update

- > Metro's Communications Department purchased 10 Zoom business licenses to host virtual community meetings. Successful use of this platform and the desire of other Metro departments to likewise utilize Zoom for external communications prompted Metro's Information Technology Services (ITS) department to begin the process of purchasing 100 Zoom Enterprise accounts.
- > Metro's Community Relations Department will be partnering with local activity centers and community-based organizations to provide WiFi access while also deploying Metro-owned mobile hotspots within targeted communities.
- > See long-term task force recommendation #30, on expanding broadband.

Best Practices

Sacramento Regional Transit is providing free WiFi hotspots.⁵⁶

⁵⁶See <https://www.kcra.com/article/sacramento-transit-buses-free-wi-fi-hot-spots/32371876#>

Washington's Pierce Transit is launching a pilot program to provide free mobile WiFi hot spots for students who do not have reliable Internet access but still need to complete remote school assignments during Washington's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order.⁵⁷

⁵⁷See <https://www.metro-magazine.com/10112745/pierce-transit-using-buses-to-create-wi-fi-hot-spots-for-students>

8. Increase Ventilation

Recommendation

Assess options to improve air flow and air filtering to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This could include keeping bus windows open and enhancing cleaning and filtration for HVAC systems in vehicles, stations and buildings.

Justification

Evidence increasingly suggests that most COVID-19 transmission occurs through airborne droplets when people are in sustained, close contact – especially when people are coughing or talking loudly in enclosed spaces. Improving air flow and air filtration in vehicles and buildings should help reduce transmission.

Equity

Increasing ventilation will help protect Metro riders, who are mainly low-income persons of color.

Cost Estimate

This is a new issue so more research is needed to develop cost estimates. There will likely be costs to upgrade HVAC systems and filters and add new capabilities.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Update

Typically, buses start service with all windows closed to maintain a controlled HVAC environment. If a patron boards a bus with operable windows, it is up to the patron to open the windows or leave them closed. In the summer of 2020, Metro tested the approach of opening both the operator window and the rear hatch to create more directed air flow, without overtaxing HVAC systems or compromising climate control for passengers. Findings from this test are under review. Staff are also considering posting signs that explain the safety benefits of partially open windows. In parallel with Metro's open window studies, staff is exploring the possibility of increasing fresh air intake by HVAC systems and improving the frequency of fresh air exchange in buses during normal operations.

For Metro rail, vehicle engineering is testing a three-stage HVAC filtration system that has shown good efficacy based on independent lab results. Currently, these results are under review with the EPA. If proven effective as a means of enhanced air cleaning, vehicle engineering staff will continue to design integration for rail vehicle installation and develop cost estimates for systemwide implementation for Metro's consideration.

Best Practices:

East Japan Railway encourages passengers to open windows and educates them about air flow benefits from ventilation systems, opening and closing of doors at stops, and open windows. This information is intended to reassure customers. East Japan Railway also asks customers to refrain from talking while riding.⁵⁸

Bus drivers in Jerusalem have been instructed by the transportation ministry to keep windows open.⁵⁹

The American Public Transportation Association recommends that windows be opened slightly while revenue vehicles are in use and that ventilation rates on HVAC systems be maximized.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Akiko Ito, JREast Representative to APTA; Director, East Japan Railway Company. Via APTA.

⁵⁹See <https://hamodia.com/2020/03/09/coronavirus-bus-rules-windows-open-no-standing-stay-away-driver/>

⁶⁰See https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19_Transit_Guide_FINAL_04132020.pdf

9. Support Working Parents

Recommendation

Explore long- and short-term actions to support Metro employees with children or guardianship responsibilities, including those who work from home and those who cannot work from home. Such actions could include:

- > Research the possibility of a time off with pay (TOWP) donation for family leave for classes of employees who cannot telecommute (i.e. frontline staff)
- > Create an employee resource group to support working parents and guardians through peer-to-peer support.
- > Develop a parental support matching program to connect employees who live close to each other for childcare support.
- > Utilize the LA County Voucher Program, which serves essential workers and low- income families.
- > Create a supportive work culture that reinforces compassion in supervising employees who need accommodations during this time.
- > Create “Metro Villages” at key stations that are supportive of distance learning/ telecommuting in outdoor settings.

Justification

This recommendation aims to support employees with children and guardianship responsibilities as they deal with new challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. As Metro continues operating essential transit services, these strategies can support Metro employees and help reduce financial stress and anxieties related to parental and guardianship responsibilities. Helping employees increase their productivity without the added stress of caring for family members will also increase employee motivation and further Metro’s goal of building a world-class workforce.

Equity

While equally valid and important, the needs of employees who can work from home and those who cannot are different. This recommendation will benefit women, as data indicates that more women have taken on the role of primary caregiver in the COVID-19 crisis (see impacts section of this report for details). However, this recommendation will benefit all parents and caregivers, providing support, flexibility and options to ensue that Metro employees can do their jobs while also meeting their family obligations. Thoughtful consideration is being given to options for addressing these employees’ disparate circumstances and ensuring that Metro supports all its workers during the pandemic, when childcare centers and schools are closed and elder care options are limited.

Vision 2028 Goal

5.7 Metro will build and nurture a diverse, inspired, and high-performing workforce.

Cost Estimate

Costs for this recommendation are revenue-neutral.

Update

Metro is currently operating under an emergency telework policy. Metro has also extended FFCRA leave provisions through March 31, or until another law is passed, for employees who have not yet exhausted their entitlements.

Metro’s Human Capital & Development Department has finalized an agreement with Care.com that can assist working parents with finding child or senior care, meeting other household needs or supporting long-distance learning. Additionally, Employee & Labor Relations partnered with Well-Being Services and Accounting to work with Metro’s labor unions on a side letter agreement, which will expand options for employees to donate paid leave to other Metro employees.



Phase Two: Relaunch



10. Restore Service

Recommendation

Restore more frequent transit service to stay ahead of demand, and retain rear-door boarding as an option.

Justification

Restoring more frequent bus and rail service in stages and retaining rear-door boarding on buses as an option can allow physical distancing, reduce overcrowding and make transit a more competitive choice. There is evidence that service cuts during past crises led to long-term reductions in ridership.

Equity

Prioritizing more frequent service and retaining rear-door boarding on lines that currently experience overcrowding can help essential workers and Metro's primarily low-income, minority ridership access mobility services and stay healthy.

Cost Estimate

Increasing service will have costs, but even with early phased increases, revenue service hours (RSH) will still be below pre-COVID levels. RSH was at 7.0 million on an annualized basis as of December 2019. Post-COVID, the annualized RSH for April 2020 was 5.0 million. In Phase 1, Metro is planning for 5.5 million RSH on an annualized basis.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 1.3 Develop simplified, sustainable, and comprehensive pricing policies to support the provision of equitable, affordable, and high-quality transportation services.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Update

Metro entered Phase 1 of its four-stage service recovery plan on June 21, 2020, increasing service hours by 7%–8%. This included adding service to 95 lines (over half of all Metro lines) and increasing frequency on certain select Tier 1 and Tier 2 lines.⁶¹ On September 24, 2020, the Metro Board of Directors requested the development of a FY 2021 Operations Recovery Plan to outline a decision-making framework for restoring service. The NextGen Bus Plan was approved by the Metro Board of Directors on October 22, 2020, with first-phase implementation of service changes expected to begin in December 2020. A board motion passed in January 2021 dedicated \$24.3 million to restore service on highly-traveled bus routes and pursue capacity that would allow full restoration of service by the June 2021 shake-out.



Best Practices

Pittsburgh Port Authority is assigning longer, articulated buses to trips with the highest ridership to allow riders to maintain a safe distance from each other. It is also maintaining off-peak service.⁶²

⁶¹See <https://thesource.metro.net/2020/06/18/service-changes-begin-this-sunday-june-21-with-more-trips-on-95-bus-lines/>

⁶²See post-gazette.com/news/transportation/2020/04/07/Port-Authority-nonessential-riders-COVID-19-bigger-buses-pittsburgh/stories/202004070119

11. Study New Bike Share Models

Recommendation

Study options to enhance the Metro Bike Share program, with the goals of adding locations (especially in Equity Focus Communities) and promoting increased use. Two options to study are:

- > Re-bid contract to a third-party operator or develop a business partnership to manage the program under a cost-effective or revenue-neutral configuration.
- > Bring Metro Bike Share operations and maintenance in house, to be performed by Metro staff.

Justification

Many cities around the world are promoting biking as an alternative to driving during and after the pandemic. Other bike share systems in the region are struggling, providing an opportunity to reexamine bike share in LA County.

Equity

Expanding bike share can enhance equity if more bikes are available in areas where residents of low-income and marginalized communities live and work. Expanded service should be accompanied by safety improvements to reduce collisions and injuries, which tend to be higher in these neighborhoods. Study should examine locations, cost and payment options and messaging/promotion to diverse communities.

Cost Estimate

Cost estimates will be developed as part of the study, which is being conducted in-house on staff time.



Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 3.2 Catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize communities where these investments are made.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan (including improving multi-modal transportation options).
- 5.1 Leverage funding and staff resources to accelerate the achievement of goals and initiatives prioritized in this Vision 2028 Plan.

Update

Metro's Planning Department is managing the revisioning of the Metro Bike Share study. As part of the study, staff released an RFI in July 2020 seeking information pertaining to a cost-effective and expandable bike share program for the region. The RFI received nine responses. Metro is currently working on a parallel study of bike share options as an in-house operation. Staff plans to present options to the Board in early 2021.

Best Practices:

Capital Bike Share in the Washington D.C. region has made rides of up to 30 minutes free for essential workers during the pandemic.⁶³

⁶³See capitalbikeshare.com/blog/essential-workers-program

12. Promote Biking

Recommendation

Promote the quick roll-out of more bike infrastructure and bikes. This could include partnering with cities on strategies for rapid deployment of bike improvements, fully funding Metro Active Transportation (MAT) Cycle 1, accelerating Measure M regional bike capital projects, and developing and launching a pilot to distribute bicycles.

Justification

Encouraging more cycling in Metro's service area can help prevent overcrowding on transit. It can also help avoid a surge in driving when Safer At Home orders are lifted, thereby contributing to Metro's strategic goal of fewer single occupancy vehicle trips.

Equity

The MAT program targets high-need locations, based on equity factors. In supporting bike programs, Metro should learn from community recommendations related to community outreach, over-policing and racial profiling. We also recommend community education to ensure safe riding, and exploring the potential to donate unclaimed bikes collected on our system and at stations to high-need communities.

Cost Estimate

MAT Cycle 1 and capital projects would draw from existing funding. The cost to develop and launch an "Adopt-A-Bike" program using abandoned bikes is estimated at \$120,000.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Improve connections to provide seamless journeys.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system and reduce roadway collisions and injuries.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.

Update

MAT Cycle 1 funding was passed by the Metro Board of Directors in January 2021. Each month, Metro collects 400–500 bicycles that are left on the Metro system and on Metro property. The current Metro procedure dictates that unclaimed bicycles are to be sold at auction. Staff developed an "Adopt-a-Bike" program that would allow unclaimed bicycles to be offered free of charge to LA County residents and the unhoused. Metro's Board approved the program in August 2020.⁶⁴ Bike adoptions are anticipated to begin in 2021.

Best Practices:

Paris has plans to create 650 kilometers (over 400 miles) of bike lanes. Fifty km (30 miles) were rapidly installed, almost overnight. Mayor Hidalgo recently announced that these temporary bike lanes will become permanent, which will vastly improve traffic flow and cycling connectivity. The regional government in Paris is also providing subsidies of around 500 euros for residents to purchase electric bikes and 50 euros toward bike repairs. Public bike rentals are seeing record demand.⁶⁵

England is reallocating public space to cyclists by widening pavements and creating cycle and bus-only corridors. The government is investing \$310 million toward this effort.⁶⁶

Milan created 35 km of new paths for cyclists and pedestrians, and the Italian government introduced a 70% subsidy for buying bikes.⁶⁷

⁶⁴See <https://metro.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4617385&GUID=DDF06C69-FB0F-47C2-8364-807C3C20FD28&Options=ID|Text|&Search=>

⁶⁵See <http://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20200701-paris-temporary-bike-lanes-to-be-come-permanent-after-hidalgo-re-election-mayor-green-pollution-cars>

^{66,67}See <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/business/paris-bicycles-com-mute-coronavirus.html>



13. Allow and Promote Telework

Recommendation

Update Metro’s telework policy to allow more staff to telework – even after the pandemic – and engage with major employers, agencies and other stakeholders to promote expanded teleworking and implement staggered work hours where feasible.

Justification

Teleworking can help avoid a surge in single occupancy vehicle trips and congestion when more businesses open. It can also reduce crowding and related COVID-19 spread in offices, and reduce costs of leases and office supplies.

Equity

Expanded teleworking presents an equity opportunity by increasing job opportunities for people with disabilities and for workers who can work from home but need flexibility in their work schedule to care for family members. Workers who can work from home are less likely to be from marginalized communities, so employers should track the demographic characteristics of teleworkers to understand who benefits and if there are unintended consequences.

Cost Estimate

Costs for telework include costs to purchase laptops, remote work software and training for employees and software (approximately \$2,000 per employee). These outlays can be more than offset by savings from reduced need for office space outside of Metro headquarters (estimated at \$13 million annually), and from reduced job turnover, which can result in savings of \$10,000 to \$30,000 per employee.⁶⁸

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.3 Manage transportation demand in a fair and equitable manner.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.
- 4.2 Drive mobility agendas, discussions, and policies at the state, regional and national levels.
- 5.4 Apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more effective agency.

⁶⁸See <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/publications/does-working-home-work-evidence-chinese-experiment?pid=>

Update

Metro is currently operating under an emergency telework policy, which encourages flexibility in allowing telework wherever feasible. Existing telework guidelines, provisions and procedures have been relaxed to expedite decisions regarding teleworking arrangements. Approximately 14% of Metro's workforce is currently teleworking.

An inter-departmental team, led by Human Capital & Development, developed Metro's new telework policy. It was adopted in January 2021 and will give departments flexibility to allow many employees to continue to work remotely after the pandemic. In addition, Metro ITS has convened an internal working group to ensure that Metro and its employees are technologically equipped for an effective teleworking culture under the new policy.

Metro's Shared Mobility Program has held a telecommuting workshop for large employers, included telecommuting information in newsletters to employers, provided individual assistance to employers that wish to write or update telecommuting policies and hosted a regional telecommuting workshop in January 2021.

Best Practices

The U.S. federal government, the nation's largest employer, has issued new guidance on liberalizing telework and has urged other agencies to maximize telework flexibilities.⁶⁹

LA County administers a Telework Program designed to be an innovative workplace option contributing to the improvement of work quality, increased productivity, and achievement of air quality and traffic reduction goals.⁷⁰

The State of North Dakota estimates a cost savings of \$1.2 million a year in lease savings if employees were to telework.⁷¹

Large private employers, including Twitter, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, Google, Apple, Airbnb, Lyft, Chevron, Square, The Washington Post, The New York Times and The Los Angeles Times, have either encouraged or mandated employees to telework as a result of the pandemic and some have announced that options for remote work will be made permanent.⁷²

Twitter and Square have announced that employees will have the option of working from home indefinitely.⁷³

⁶⁹See brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/03/17/covid-19-makes-the-benefits-of-telework-obvious/

⁷⁰See <https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Telework-Procedures-4.0-Fillable.pdf>

⁷¹See <https://www.govtech.com/workforce/North-Dakota-Could-Realize-1-2M-Savings-in-Telework-Switch.html>

⁷²See latimes.com/business/story/2020-03-12/amazon-google-workers-work-from-home-coronavirus

⁷³See <https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/articles/2020-06-29/how-teleworking-may-accelerate-the-shift-away-from-big-cities>

14. Install More Bus Lanes

Recommendation

Partner with local jurisdictions to accelerate implementation of bus-only lanes and other speed and reliability measures in areas that Operations has identified as congestion hot spots in the past. Pursue consistent and equitable enforcement of bus-only lanes to realize the mobility benefits of existing and future lanes. Implementation and expansion of bus priority lanes, transit signal priority, all-door boarding and layover optimization are part of Metro's Speed and Reliability toolkit.

Justification

The current period of lighter-than-usual vehicle traffic offers an opportunity to implement more bus lanes with fewer conflicts with traffic and parking. Bus-only lanes will allow greater speed and reliability, helping keep buses competitive with single occupancy vehicles. Faster travel can also contribute to greater frequency and less crowding. Speed and reliability measures are also key tools within Metro's adopted NextGen Bus Plan.

Equity

This approach offers an equity opportunity by prioritizing bus lanes on routes used by essential workers, who are primarily low-income people of color, and routes that connect Equity Focus Communities. To allow input from and to get information to non-English speaking populations and riders without smart phones, staff can streamline outreach and rapidly introduce lanes and survey riders for feedback.

Cost Estimate

Funds for planning and installing bus lanes and other priority measures are included in the current budget and in the NextGen Bus Plan's capital program.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.0 Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling. Improving the speed and reliability of the bus network will reduce transit travel times, while also improving competitiveness with other transportation options.
 - 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
 - 2.0 Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system. These initiatives help to move more people within the same street capacity, where currently transit users suffer service delays and reliability issues because of single occupant drivers.
 - 3.0 Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. With faster transit service and improved reliability, residents have increased access to education and employment.
 - 4.0 Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership.

Update

The LA Department of Transportation (LADOT), in collaboration with Metro, has installed bus lanes and protected bike lanes on 5th Street and 6th Street in downtown Los Angeles. Metro, in coordination with LADOT, is on schedule to implement the bus signal queue jumper at 5th Street/Flower Street and curb treatments on the Aliso Street bus-only lane. Metro and LADOT continue to analyze potential prioritization measures for other corridors, with a target to complete two to three corridors per year for bus lanes, along with a gradual expansion of transit signal priority and all door boarding.

Best Practices

MBTA is considering adding more dedicated bus lanes to speed up travel to meet expected demand as ridership slowly returns and congestion returns. MBTA believes that dedicated bus-only lanes will allow buses to move faster, allowing the buses to make more trips with people safely spread out on the buses.⁷⁴

⁷⁴See wbur.org/bostonmix/2020/05/11/mbta-reopening-service-plan

15. “We’re Here for You.”



Recommendation

Launch a communications campaign with multiple goals as Safer At Home orders are relaxed, including messages to:

- > boost brand and ridership
- > encourage use of non-single-occupancy vehicle services
- > encourage safe use of services
- > convey equity and that everyone is welcome

Justification

A communications campaign is an opportunity to address questions and inform riders and the public about how Metro is bringing back more service and how riders can travel safely. It also provides an opportunity to refresh Metro’s brand in the context of all of the major changes and events of 2020.

Equity

Messaging and outreach can provide an equity opportunity if it is focused on targeting and hearing from historically marginalized/underserved communities. The campaign should acknowledge riders who continued using Metro services for essential trips. Messaging should also reflect input from riders gathered through customer surveys.

Best Practices

NY MTA has launched a “Welcome Back” PSA Campaign as New York reopens. A public service announcement that reminds customers they must wear a face covering when riding public transportation was played across 22 radio stations in the five borough area, in English and in Spanish.⁷⁶

CTA has launched a new ridership information dashboard to help customers travel smarter

Cost Estimate

\$500,000

Vision 2028 Goals

- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 3.3 Commit to genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.

Update

Metro’s “We’re Here for You” campaign was launched in English and Spanish in July 2020 with two objectives: (1) let riders know what they can do to create a culture of safety while on the system and (2) inform the public about what Metro is doing to keep operators and riders safe. The first objective falls under the banner of “Travel Safe” and features in-system messaging and tactics, including digital ads, social media ads, printed posters and voice announcements that reinforce wearing face coverings, maintaining social distance when possible and washing hands. The second objective targeted current and lapsed riders using Facebook, Instagram and digital display ads. It included messages about enhanced cleaning efforts, service adjustments, rear-door boarding and the bus crowding feature Metro launched within the *Transit* app. As of September, “We’re Here for You” has generated over 21.5 million paid media impressions. The paid campaign finished in December, but we will continue to promote through our system signage and adjust messaging to reflect the latest updates to COVID-19 policy and safety - for example to encourage customers and employees to get vaccinated. Metro has also adopted APTA’s Safety and Health Commitment program and is integrating its Seal of Commitment into safety-related marketing.⁷⁵

and more safely. The dashboard will provide a bus crowding report that shows available capacity of each route is. CTA is also posting new signs and stickers to encourage use of masks and social distancing.⁷⁷

⁷⁵See <https://www.apta.com/commitments/>

⁷⁶See <http://www.mta.info/press-release/mta-headquarters/mta-launches-%E2%80%98welcome-back%E2%80%99-psa-campaign-new-york-reopens>

⁷⁷See <https://www.masstransitmag.com/technology/miscellaneous/press-release/21142380/chicago-transit-authority-cta-cta-launches-new-ridership-information-dashboard-customer-awareness-campaign>

16. Use More Customer Ambassadors

Recommendation

Deploy non-security staff at stations as customer service agents and ambassadors to encourage safe riding (mask usage, distancing, etc.). The design of this program and roles for ambassadors can draw on recommendations from Metro Leadership Academy teams and their capstone projects, from customer survey results and from public conversations and Metro Board motions on how to improve security on Metro.

Justification

Expanding the number of non-security staff who can help and interact with riders advances three goals: It can help riders use services safely. It can provide better customer service in general and address specific concerns identified through customer surveys. And it can address concerns about disparities in policing.

Equity

Utilizing non-security personnel can help ensure that Black, Latinx and other riders who are not comfortable with law enforcement, feel safe approaching and listening to customer service agents. Agents that speak various languages, have had cultural sensitivity training and are instructed to focus on education will maximize benefits for marginalized communities.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 2.1 Improve security.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 3.3 Commit to genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.

Cost Estimate

Annual cost estimates from the leadership academy proposals for staff, equipment and training vary depending on the source and number of staff, as well as equipment and training needs:

- > \$55,000 for 25 repurposed FTEs
- > \$740,000 for 25 part-time staff
- > \$7.4 million for 50 new FTEs

Staff are looking at partnering with a community organization to conduct a pilot.

Update

Staff are working to respond to Metro Board Motion #37 on re-envisioning security, and are establishing a committee of community members that will provide input concerning what an Ambassador Program would look like. An internal steering committee working on Board Motion #37 recently met to discuss the program concept and and potential partnerships with community organizations. This effort is being aligned with the Fareless System Initiative.



Best Practices

Phoenix's Valley Metro has implemented an ambassador program successfully utilizing "Customer Experience Coordinators" who engage with riders, assist them however possible as well as to support system safety, ensure station cleanliness and, ultimately, contribute to an overall positive experience for customers.⁷⁸

⁷⁸See <https://www.valleymetro.org/news/customer-experience-coordinators-welcome-riders>

17. Explore New Mobility Solutions

Recommendation

Pilot and expand alternative mobility services that incorporate lessons learned from Metro pilot programs and plans, such as the MicroTransit and Mobility on Demand contracts. This effort may include partnerships with public, private and community operators for complimentary programming.

Justification

Additional mobility programs and services can expand transportation options, reduce crowding on some high-demand transit routes and offer new learning on non-single-occupancy-vehicle options.

Equity

As with Metro’s on-demand pilots, efforts to expand alternative mobility services can and will prioritize Equity Focus Communities and people who face challenges accessing either traditional transit or private services.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys; explore opportunities for expanding access to shared, demand-responsive transportation options for everyone.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.

Cost Estimate

N/A

Update

On August 11, 2020 Metro released a Mobility Services RFI. The original due date for submissions was September 4, 2020, but was extended to September 18, 2020.

Metro received 10 responses, which reflected a range of modes, models and perspectives on the RFI’s problem statement. Staff reviewed responses, briefed members of Senior Leadership, and set up cross-functional review teams. The review teams have met several times to evaluate the proposals and are developing recommendation and work plans and pursuing partnerships.



Best Practices

LA Metro’s on-demand services have effectively adapted and adjusted service models to accommodate essential trips for customers who need to access services, such as grocery stores, pharmacies and medical centers.⁷⁹

The Portland Department of Transportation has temporarily waived e-scooter daily fees in exchange for Spin, reducing the cost of a ride by about 50%. Healthcare workers can apply online for free, unlimited 30-minute Spin rentals and a helmet.⁸⁰

⁷⁹See thesource.metro.net/2020/03/25/metros-mobility-on-demand-service-now-running-point-to-point-trips-within-service-zones/

⁸⁰See www.week.com/bikes/2020/04/07/the-portland-bureau-of-transportation-is-slashing-fees-for-biketown-and-e-scooter-rides/

18. Use Budget to Advance Recovery

Recommendation

Metro's Fiscal Year 2021 budget can advance important recovery priorities. We support several FY21 budget elements:

- > Show a funding line-item for the NextGen Bus Plan and other bus improvements.
- > Prioritize funding for mask distribution through the end of calendar year 2020" to "through mid-2021.
- > Accommodate the launch of the Measure M Visionary Seed Fund in FY21.

Justification

While Metro is facing budget challenges due to the pandemic, there is still some flexibility to use funds to advance recovery. NextGen is important, both to prevent overcrowding as ridership shifts and rises, and to achieve better mobility. Promoting mask wearing is crucial to protect rider and operator health and to address concerns about the safety of using buses and trains. The Visionary Seed fund is a potential tool to incentivize new ideas that can help Metro address recovery challenges.

Equity

More and better bus service and masks benefit low-income riders. The Visionary Seed fund can apply an equity lens in choosing topics and submissions.

Cost Estimate

Mask distribution costs approximately \$50,000 per week. The visionary seed fund is part of Measure M; the budget for an initial two-year grant program would be \$1 million.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system.
- 5.1 Align financial resources to reflect Vision 2028 plan.
- 5.4 Free up capacity for innovation.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Update

- > Metro's adopted FY21 budget included funding levels for NextGen: "\$7 million for speed and reliability improvements and other service enhancements; \$16.3 million for station and bus plaza expansion, and \$106.8million for enhancement of service on BRT routes and other transit corridors."
- > Mask distribution was paused in October and November and resumed in December.
- > In early 2021, OEI will submit a request to launch the visionary seed fund.

19. Reimagine Capital Projects

Recommendation

Improve major capital projects based on criteria such as enhancing mobility and ridership, advancing equity and Title VI compliance, and supporting health and economic development. Projects can be examined and improved within the parameters of funding measure ordinances.

Justification

Budget challenges, the economic and job benefits of capital construction, and the opportunity for a new normal of mobility without congestion provide motivation to help projects proceed on schedule and maximize their recovery impacts.

Equity

As projects are planned and built, equity analysis should be used to maximize their benefits for vulnerable populations and to avoid harm to those populations. Equity Focus Communities should be considered, along with impacts on small business enterprises, disadvantaged business enterprises and disabled veterans business enterprises.

Cost Estimate

The initial cost of this recommendation is for staff time to consider how recovery criteria can help improve projects.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system that is reliable, convenient, and attractive to more users for more trips.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 3.1 Leverage its transit investments to catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize neighborhoods where these investments are made.
- 5.1 Leverage funding and staff resources to accelerate the achievement of goals and initiatives prioritized in the Vision 2028 Plan.
- 5.2 Exercise good public policy judgment and sound fiscal stewardship.

Update

The Recovery Task Force's major capital projects subcommittee developed a project assessment matrix tool that is intended to help inform decision making on projects within the parameters of funding ordinances. The tool was not used to determine which projects should proceed during the pandemic, but the research may be useful to help maximize the benefits of capital projects.

Best Practices

King County Metro, an agency with a similarly large capital infrastructure program, has also been negatively impacted by tax revenue shortfalls. KCM has projected a 30-40% reduction in their Capital Improvement Program. To tackle this, KCM developed criteria and is using a newly created Mobility Framework, an equity focused policy tool, to re-evaluate their capital program.⁸¹

⁸¹See <https://www.theurbanist.org/2020/06/23/deeper-transit-cuts-loom-as-metro-faces-serious-financial-constraints-in-2021-and-2022/> and KCM's "Update on Metro's COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Regional Transit Committee and Mobility & Environment Committee" dated June 17, 2020

20. Better Address Homelessness

Recommendation

Expand social service resources and partnerships, including on-site services, to better connect unhoused riders on the Metro system with services and housing. Explore use of Metro property for transitional housing.

Justification

The presence of riders who are taking non-essential trips prevents social distancing, threatens the public health of all riders and makes some feel uncomfortable. Research shows that enforcement is not effective in addressing homelessness. Transit agencies cannot solve the problem of homelessness alone, but with the right policies, partnerships and programs, they can create a safer and more comfortable environment for all transit users. Additionally, helping unhoused riders find housing and services contributes to Metro's strategic plan goal 3.4 which calls for helping to solve homelessness.

Equity

Helping unhoused people find housing and services directly addresses equity issues and allows essential riders to socially distance while reducing public health risks.

Vision 2028 Goals

- 2.1 Improve security.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 3.4 Play a strong leadership role in efforts to address homelessness in LA County.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.

Cost Estimate

Metro initiated new, no-cost partnerships with the Dream Center and LA Door. Substantially expanding outreach would have costs; for benchmarking, the current main service contract is \$5 million per year. Efforts to explore the use of Metro property are at an early stage.

Update

Metro is continuing to partner with service providers to help place homeless riders. The agency also added two new service provider partners and has been working with Judge David O. Carter's team in securing 100 beds with social services at a discounted rate. Staff is reaching out to community organizations within pre-identified council districts to secure partnerships. Metro has not yet identified property that could be used to build transitional shelters.

Best Practices

Transit agencies in Durham, Minneapolis/ St. Paul and Edmonton have helped transport homeless people to shelters during the pandemic.⁸²

⁸²See <https://www.masstransitmag.com/safety-security/article/21132995/agencies-work-to-transport-homeless-populations-to-shelter-as-threat-of-covid19-intensifies>



Final Recommendations

Final recommendations aim to improve mobility and equity after the pandemic, and to help pay for these improvements.

For each recommendation we provide the following information:

- > Summary
- > Justification
- > Benefits
- > Costs or cost savings
- > Equity analysis
- > Which Vision 2028 goals does this help implement?
- > Best practices
- > Current practices
- > Recommendation
- > Implementation Plan



New and Improved Services

21. Run Express Buses on Improved HOV and Express Lanes

Summary

Metro will work with Caltrans and elected officials to explore the possibility of increasing capacity to run express and commuter buses on high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. This could be accomplished by raising minimum occupancy requirements on select HOV lanes in LA County as a way to maximize the efficiency of the transportation system as a whole. Metro will also work with Caltrans and other stakeholders to explore ways to rapidly implement planned Express Lanes.

Justification

Although the pandemic temporarily reduced traffic on LA roadways, the county's freeway and arterial system experiences heavy recurring congestion under normal circumstances.

On congested freeway corridors in LA, HOV lanes are frequently as slow as general-purpose lanes. Carpool occupancies are minimal and do not effectively reduce the burden on the general purpose lanes. Running buses on HOV lanes under current congested conditions has not encouraged higher ridership.

Costs or cost savings

Major costs include:

- > Staff time
- > Funding Express Lanes faster
- > Infrastructure updates due to upgrading HOV lane occupancy requirements
- > Funding for new express bus service
- > Marketing and outreach
- > Technical analysis for HOV lane occupancy changes

Benefits

Providing safe, reliable and efficient express bus service on HOV and Express Lanes could reduce traffic congestion on freeways, specifically during the peak congestion periods for long distance commuters. This would encourage mode shift and reduce the number of vehicles on our freeways.

Raising the occupancy requirements for some HOV lanes could mitigate degradation of the lanes. When HOV and Express Lanes operate efficiently, the entire system works more efficiently and effectively, which allows more people to move faster and could benefit transit services that operate on these routes. This improves reliability and travel-time consistency and, thus, transit operations for Metro and other providers.

A more efficient system also allows incident response to occur faster, which improves safety for all motorists. When freeway incidents are addressed quickly, the probability that secondary incidents will occur is reduced.

2014-2016 STATEWIDE HOV LANE DEGRADATION

YEAR	JANUARY TO JUNE	JULY TO DECEMBER
2014	784 lane miles (59%)	844 lane miles (63%)
2015	817 lane miles (62%)	874 lane miles (67%)
2016	864 lane miles (65%)	902 lane miles (68%)

Equity analysis

A rapid equity assessment of this recommendation identifies the need to ensure that low-income drivers – whether carpooling or driving solo – have more rather than fewer mobility options. Adding express buses could help this population, depending on routes and cost. Low-income discounts for Express Lanes and express buses, as well as express routes that expand access to jobs and amenities for vulnerable populations, would help ensure equity.

Which Vision 2028 goals does this help implement?

- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system that is reliable, convenient and attractive to more users for more trips.
- 1.3 Implement the Express Lanes Tier 1 network within the next 10 years
- 4.2 Help drive mobility agendas, discussions, and policies at the state, regional and national levels.
- 5.2 Exercise good public policy judgment and sound fiscal stewardship.

Best practices

- > For the 1984 Olympics, the Southern California Rapid Transit District (one of Metro's predecessor agencies) successfully implemented additional service for attendees and athletes that included express buses on freeways and bus lanes on streets.⁸³
- > A 2019 redesign of express bus routes between Staten Island and Manhattan led to increased frequency and ridership.⁸⁴
- > Other counties in the region (San Bernardino,⁸⁵ Riverside and Orange⁸⁶) are starting to upgrade their HOV occupancy levels to 3+ to improve mobility on those managed lanes.
- > In late 2019, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority in the Bay Area increased occupancy requirements in one of their express lanes from 2+ to 3+.⁸⁷

Current practices

- > Metro currently operates Express Lanes and has a strategic plan to deploy additional Express Lanes throughout the county over the next 30 years.
- > During peak hours, Express Lanes offer users a significant time savings as compared to driving in the general purpose lanes.

MORNING PEAK DRIVE	AVERAGE SPEED	AVERAGE TIME SAVINGS (FULL LENGTH OF EXPRESSLANE)
I-110 ExpressLanes	51.6mph	12.6 minutes
I-10 ExpressLanes	53.2mph	13.7 minutes

- > Several transit agencies in the region currently operate commuter bus service. Those routes and services can be enhanced with this recommendation.



⁸³See <http://metroprimaryresources.info/28-years-ago-this-week-the-world-returns-for-los-angeles-gold-medal-performance-in-olympic-traffic-relief/4310/>

⁸⁴See <https://new.mta.info/SIM-Bus-Network-Redesign>

⁸⁵See <https://www.gosbcta.com/project/i-10-corridor-project-phase-i/>

⁸⁶See <https://www.ocregister.com/2019/12/10/toll-lanes-on-the-5-in-orange-county-it-could-happen-in-a-decade/>

⁸⁷See <https://www.vta.org/faq/what-are-carpool-occupancy-requirements>

Recommendation

This recommendation includes several components that would require coordination with partner transit agencies and Caltrans:

1. Raise the HOV occupancy requirement to mitigate degradation and bring degraded lanes back into compliance. This could be implemented as a uniform increase across Metro’s service area or on a freeway-specific basis depending on current conditions.
2. Explore ways to deploy Express Lanes more rapidly. This could include legislation to allow conversion of general-purpose lanes, as well as quicker funding and review of proposed new Express Lanes.
3. Ensure that HOV lanes and Express Lanes can be easily and fairly enforced, which may require legislation to allow automated camera enforcement.
4. Promote existing express and commuter bus service on HOV lanes. Explore how to expand and implement new point-to-point express bus service on corridors with improved occupancy requirements and on future Express Lanes. This effort could be supported through partnerships and grant funding.

Implementation Plan

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET (IN FTE OR DOLLARS)
Collaborate with Caltrans, Metro Congestion Reduction groups and existing taskforce on HOV degradation to evaluate the performance of the HOV system in LA County and identify opportunities for system improvements.	●	●	●	●	Metro Highways	Staff time
Select routes for higher vehicle occupancy pilot project(s) combined with express buses on HOV lanes to test/identify the effectiveness of combined use for higher passenger throughput without significant impact on general purpose lanes.	●	●			Metro Highways with Caltrans and Metro Congestion Reduction group	
Prepare a plan of action with a list of activities to be performed, agencies that will have to be involved and their roles and responsibilities, and an implementation schedule for planned actions. Present plan to a Steering Committee comprised of Metro CEO, Caltrans District 7 Director, select Metro Board members and other key decision-makers to be identified during the plan development process.	●	●			Metro Highways and Congestion Reduction	
Identify existing service opportunities to leverage selected corridors and/or investigate pilots for potential additions to point-to-point express bus service.		●	●		Metro Operations (Service Planning & Scheduling)	
Work with Metro Highways and Congestion Reduction to explore legislation that would make it easier and faster to deploy new Express Lanes and raise occupancy requirements for HOV lanes.		●	●	●	Government Relations	

22. Accelerate Networks of Complete Streets

Summary

To fulfill our mission of delivering world class transportation, Metro needs to be able to consistently, rapidly and cost-effectively influence street designs and infrastructure to allow people to move through LA County without needing to drive alone. The types of complete street improvements that would benefit Metro's mission include networks of bus lanes, measures to prioritize bus and light rail, networks of protected bike lanes and better bus stops.

Justification

Most trips on Metro's services use on- or cross-surface streets. The design and condition of streets profoundly impacts customer experience, safety, travel speeds and ridership. Metro, however, does not typically have decision-making authority with respect to whether there are bus lanes on high ridership routes or with respect to other street improvements that might be critical to, for example, provide bike lanes that feel safe to the majority or residents or bus stops that are well designed and offer a dignified place to wait (as opposed to just poles with blades). Partly as a result, LA County lacks full and effective networks of measures that prioritize transit and complete streets.

Benefits

If Metro had additional tools for working with jurisdictions on street design and infrastructure, complete street networks could be implemented more consistently, quickly and cost-effectively. This would provide LA County residents with more high- quality transportation options. It would also reduce congestion, fatalities and injuries from vehicle collisions, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Costs or cost savings

Implementing more complete street infrastructure more rapidly could increase costs in the short to medium term. Bus prioritization measures are already included in the NextGen capital budget so these would not be new costs. And innovative, cost-effective approaches to partnering with jurisdictions and delivering improvements could offset some or all remaining costs.

Equity analysis

A rapid equity analysis of this recommendation indicates that low-income people of color, who account for the majority of Metro riders, would benefit from bus prioritization and more bus stop amenities. Vehicle-related fatalities and injuries are most prevalent in Equity Focus Communities, so better active transportation infrastructure would improve health equity. Planning and implementation to rapidly expand networks of complete streets should reflect input from disadvantaged communities.

Which Vision 2028 goals does this help implement?

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system.
Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
Reduce roadway collisions and injuries.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support Vision 2028 goals.
- 4.2 Help drive mobility agendas, discussions and policies.



Best practices

- > King County Metro collaborated with Seattle and other local cities on a RapidRide program to implement bus speed improvements on six key corridors.
- > Transport for London manages a 350-mile 'red route' network consisting of 5% of street miles within its service area that carry 25% of trips.⁸⁸
- > Bogota, Mexico City and other metro regions in Latin America have implemented large networks of bus rapid transit service.
- > Transport for London invests in its own bus stops and then uses advertising money to pay back the capital investments.
- > The Paris region is planning to implement hundreds of miles of cycleways to help avoid a surge in driving related to the pandemic.

Current practices

- Metro advances its complete street goals in a variety of ways, including by partnering with other organizations.
- > Metro and the City of LA's joint speed and reliability working group recently implemented a bus-only lane pilot and built two new bus-only lanes and protected bike lane corridors in downtown Los Angeles.
 - > Metro is planning several Bus Rapid Transit corridors as capital projects. Metro is also identifying future BRT corridors via a BRT Vision + Principles Study.
 - > Metro's NextGen Bus Plan includes a capital program to invest in bus prioritization measures.
 - > As part of its 2016 Active Transportation Strategic Plan, Metro funds and provides technical assistance on complete streets through a variety of programs.⁸⁹

⁸⁸See <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/red-routes>

⁸⁹See <https://www.metro.net/projects/active-transportation/>

Recommendation

This recommendation seeks to build on existing efforts and expand the toolkit of partnerships through which Metro can encourage networks of complete streets. Options include:

- > Continue the speed and reliability working group – which has a technical planning and design component and a public outreach component – to focus on more corridors and expand to collaborate with more jurisdictions.
- > Bring together existing plans for different types of complete street infrastructure to create an internal Metro complete streets plan. The plan would identify priority corridors to fill gaps in complete street networks. Consider partnering with cities on a countywide major streets plan.⁹⁰

- > Consider planning appropriate active transportation, BRT and light rail projects using SB288.
- > Consider innovative project delivery methods for complete streets, such as co-investing with cities and offering funds to cities to build out the map of priority complete street networks.
- > Prioritize extension of complete street networks in places with high levels of injuries and deaths from vehicle collisions.
- > If discussions with partners indicate that Metro should play a larger role on regionally significant corridors, state legislation could grant Metro partial planning authority for a network of major arterial streets.

⁹⁰In 1924, a joint County and City commission sponsored “a comprehensive plan for the reconstruction of the ill-arranged collection of streets of Los Angeles into a well-ordered system of traffic arteries.” The resulting report, A Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles, was influential in encouraging street construction and widening and in envisioning a future network of grade-separated high-speed roads (the genesis of LA’s freeway network). A 21st century major streets plan could advance complete streets and accompanying mobility, safety and environmental benefits.

Implementation Plan

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET OR FTE(S) REQUIRED
Continue and expand speed and reliability working group.	●	●	●	●	Operations and Community Relations	
Create plan of complete street networks on major streets in LA County (overlying existing plans and identifying and filling gaps)	●	●			Planning, Operations, OEI	
Partner with jurisdictions on better bus stop amenities.	●	●	●	●	Service Planning, Community Relations, Stops and Zones and OEI, via Better Bus Working Group	
Partner with jurisdictions on active transportation infrastructure.	●	●	●	●	Planning	
Convene partner cities and agencies to discuss master plan of LA County arterials.		●			Planning, OEI, Community Relations	
Explore new ways to collaboratively plan and fund complete streets.	●	●			Program Management, OEI	
Pilot new way(s) to plan and fund complete streets.		●	●	●	Program Management, Planning	
Seek state legislation if needed to allow/encourage better coordination on complete streets.		●	●	●	Government Relations, Planning, OEI	

23. Fully Integrate Transit in LA Region

Summary

As a result of COVID-19, many transit agencies in LA County are adjusting service offerings, level of service, service span and service frequency. In an effort to establish an efficient and cohesive transportation network, Metro and its partners should integrate fare structures and service provisions, while also providing customers with a single, unified location for obtaining information on transit and transportation services across the region.

Justification

With less service during the pandemic from all agencies, customers need their transit experience to be as seamless as possible, from trip planning to trip completion. Greater integration will also help make the system more accessible to returning and new transit patrons after the economy reopens and people decide how to travel.

Benefits

Leveraging existing inter-agency relationships throughout the region to integrate transit service will allow customers to experience better connectivity, avoid redundancy and spend less time traveling. An integrated transit experience in LA County will result in better schedule coordination, improved customer experience and more ridership across all providers. Customers will be able to navigate the region with ease when all information is available at one centralized location to better enable trip planning.

Equity analysis

Transit patrons region-wide, regardless of service provider, will benefit from greater integration of transit service, fares and information. These changes will improve the travel experience for all, especially for those who need to navigate multiple transit operators within the same trip. All transit operators should be involved in coordinating their planning.

Costs or cost savings

Integrating transit throughout the region will take an investment of staff time. In addition, there will be costs associated with:

- > Enhanced data management and partner coordination through RIITS
- > Updates and enhancements to SoCal 511 (funded through LA SAFE)
- > Marketing and communications
- > New signage at shared bus stops; costs to fund any new coordination entities and to update information technology

Which Vision 2028 goals does this help implement?

- 1.1 Expand the transportation network and increase mobility for all users.
- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system that is reliable, convenient and attractive to more users for more trips.

Partner with Metrolink to increase the capacity of the regional transportation system.

Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 1.3 Develop simplified, sustainable and comprehensive pricing policies to support the provision of equitable, affordable and high-quality transportation services.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use and trip information on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 4.2 Drive mobility agendas, discussions and policies at the state, regional and national levels.

Best practices

A number of regions in Canada, Europe and Australia that, like LA County, have a mix of urban and suburban jurisdictions, have metropolitan transit coordination bodies with responsibility for transit planning, setting a single fare and pass, marketing, procurement, monitoring and, sometimes, operations. In these regions, which include Toronto, Milan, Frankfurt, Stockholm and Sydney, coordination has led to gains in transit ridership.⁹¹



Current practices

- > Metro supports collaboration across regional service providers by regularly convening the general managers of these services through ongoing “General Managers Meetings.”
- > TAP offers integrated fare payment across 26 transit agencies in LA County.
- > Metro is currently investigating the viability of going fareless on our system. Decisions made as part of this effort will affect fare integration across the region.
- > Metro’s regional rail program collaborates with Metrolink.
- > Metro currently provides routing, scheduling and fare information for 70 transit agencies, from Santa Clarita to Riverside, providing the patron starts in LA County. Updating Metro’s trip planner to include real-time data from the other transit agencies would give riders consistent information.
- > 511 is the federal standard for traveler information, and SoCal 511 provides multi-modal transportation information across five counties (Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino).

⁹¹See <https://transweb.sjsu.edu/sites/default/files/2001-DeRobertis-Characteristics-Effective-Metropolitan-Transit.pdf>

Recommendation

Fully integrating transit across the county should be looked at in two ways:

(1) operationally integrating services across cooperating service providers in the region and (2) ensuring that the public has one place to go for information.

Operational integration will ensure that customers have an improved and seamless experience while traveling across the county. To effectively integrate transit service, Metro should:

> Pursue greater coordination with partner transit agencies.

> Work toward better integrated and expanded service, such as by coordinating schedules so transferring is easier, synchronizing shakeout dates (the times when agencies update service), and working with Metrolink and other regional rail services to provide more mid-day service and build towards frequent, through-running regional rail.

> Transition county service providers to one consistent fare (or fareless) structure.

Customers need a unified and centralized location to plan their trips. To integrate transit information for the public, Metro should leverage and optimize 511 service, TAP and third party apps to ensure a seamless experience for users, potentially including touchless payment functionality.

Implementation Plan

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET (IN FTE OR DOLLARS)
Create subcommittee of Metro staff (Operations, Planning [Regional Rail], CP&D, TAP, RIITS, OEI, OCEO [Customer Experience]; general managers of other transit agencies; and other stakeholders to lead planning for integration.	●				Planning, Operations with general managers	Staff time
Consider and begin implementing Fareless Transit Initiative recommendations.	●				FSI, OCEO, TAP	
Gather data on schedules and fares and make recommendations to regularize operations.	●	●			Integration subcommittee	
Develop 511 optimization plan based on integration plan.		●	●		Congestion Reduction (LA SAFE)	
Make recommendations and take steps towards seamless integration.		●	●	●	Integration subcommittee	
If needed, develop and pursue legislation to authorize formal metropolitan transit coordination entity.			●	●	Integration subcommittee and Government Relations	

24. Offer Incentives to Reduce Car Ownership

Summary

Develop a program that provides options, such as free or discounted bikes, e-bikes and similar personal mobility devices, mobility wallets, free transit, better bus operations and other incentives for households willing to go car-free or car-light.

Justification

LA County residents have been acquiring vehicles at an unsustainable rate for many years. If other cities around the world are any indication, the pandemic could increase that demand. More effective mobility alternatives to car ownership need to be incentivized quickly to prevent another surge in car purchases. In addition, substantial discounts should be provided to those who travel by other means, whether by choice or necessity.

Benefits

Well-designed incentives could potentially help shift many Angelenos away from driving as their default mode, thus enabling a more equitable and sustainable transportation system for LA County. Benefits would include reductions in traffic congestion, pollution, and vehicle deaths and injuries. Buses would move faster and come more frequently, offering a more viable alternative for people who, by necessity or choice, don't own a car.

Costs or cost savings

A separate recommendation looks at how to raise funds for incentives to reduce car ownership this idea. The cost will depend entirely on the size of the program, which will be limited by the amount of funding that can be raised. However, as a rough estimate, the cost of a new e-bike – approximately \$1,500 – could be used as a benchmark for the level of incentive needed per person who agrees to give up their car. Applying this figure, the cost to get 10,000 cars off the road and bring 10,000 new people to transit and other alternative modes would be approximately \$15 million. Compared to the several-billion-dollar

cost of new rail lines that typically garner fewer than 100,000 passengers per day, this type of program would appear to be a bargain.

Equity analysis

This recommendation will distribute benefits to people who do not own vehicles or who are willing to sell their vehicles to make their households car-free or car-light. In LA County, households without vehicles are disproportionately low income. The intention is to fund the program through a progressive fee that exempts low-income people.

Which Vision 2028 goals does this help implement?

Vision 2028 includes a goal of doubling the share of trips taken in non-drive-alone modes.

- 1.3 Explore opportunities for expanding access to shared, demand-responsive transportation options for everyone.
- 3.2 Catalyze transit-oriented communities.
- 4.2 Drive mobility agendas, discussions and policies at the state, regional and national levels.

Best practices

- > This concept resembles the Obama-era federal “Cash for Clunkers” program where Americans were encouraged to trade in their old vehicle to get a new one that would be less polluting. However, this national program was meant as a federal stimulus to boost car purchases, which is the opposite of the program described here.
- > California’s Clean Cars 4 All program was recently updated to allow funds to pay for e-bikes and memberships in bike share programs.⁹²
- > Lithuania is providing incentives for people to trade in their cars for scooters.⁹³
- > British Columbia provides a range of incentives for owners to scrap their vehicles.⁹⁴

⁹² See <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/scrap-and-replace-program-helps-low-income-californians-afford-cleaner-cars>

⁹³ See <https://thenextweb.com/shift/2020/10/29/lithuania-cash-for-clunkers-scheme-old-cars-out-escooters-in-ebikes/>

⁹⁴ See <https://scrapit.ca/otherincentivechoices/>

Current practices

Metro is currently looking at providing free fares for all transit riders through the Fareless System Initiative. However, even if fares are eliminated, there are numerous other incentives a new incentives program could offer, including bike/scooter share discounts, TNC discounts and vouchers for bikes and e-bikes.

Metro is about to test an incentives program called “Travel Rewards” under a grant from the Federal Transit Administration. This program will use a technology platform to provide incentives for people to switch away from driving alone toward other modes. If successful, it could offer lessons for the larger program proposed here.

Recommendation

Metro should develop a program that offers residents of LA County the opportunity to sell their vehicles in exchange for a set of supplemental mobility benefits, in addition to the value of the vehicle (those who do not currently own a vehicle will also be eligible for these benefits). The benefits would be contingent on participants agreeing to not purchase a vehicle for one year. Metro will research best practices to frame the benefits packages to be offered, but they may include giving away or providing vouchers for bicycles or e-bikes or similar mobility devices, providing mobility wallets that enable a package of mobility options, including TNC rides, free transit, bike/scooter sharing or simply free transit. Implementation of the program will be contingent upon funding, ideas for which are included in a separate recommendation.

Implementation Plan:

Implementation Structure

This project will be led by OEI in partnership with Planning and Operations.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET (IN FTE OR DOLLARS)
Internal analysis. Research and analyze potential benefits packages that could be offered in exchange for agreeing to forgo vehicle ownership. This will include a robust analysis of similar programs, such as “Cash for Clunkers,” and their outcomes to identify lessons learned.	●				OEI, Planning, Operations	Staff time
Internal refinement. Circulate proposed program within Metro to receive more feedback and improve the proposal.	●				OEI, Planning, Operations	
Outreach. Bring the idea to the public for additional feedback in order to refine further.	●				Integration subcommittee	
Final recommendation. Bring final recommendation to Metro’s Board of Directors, including specific implementation plan and direction. Further implementation will be contingent upon identifying funding.		●	●		Congestion Reduction (LA SAFE)	

25. Improve Station Amenities

Summary:

Test and expand amenities at transit stations including more retail, surface-level restroom facilities and technologies that enable customers to enjoy a better customer experience while also generating revenue for Metro.

Justification

To benefit essential riders, bring riders back to the transit system and encourage more people to use its services, Metro must focus on improving the customer experience. One of the primary challenges to a better customer experience is the lack of amenities in our stations. These amenities can often be provided at no cost or they offer revenue potential that could help Metro's budget.

Benefits

Station amenities can be a mechanism for bringing riders back into our system, while also providing existing riders with more comfort and convenience. An added benefit can be to increase foot traffic in and near stations, which can potentially improve security.

Costs or cost savings

Many station amenities can be installed at limited cost to Metro and some of them have the potential to generate revenues. However, if new amenities generate trash or food waste, they could potentially increase operational costs for Metro. Other amenities that do not create revenue streams, such as surface-level restrooms or shelters, can add both capital and operating costs.

Equity analysis

Special attention should be paid to location, with an eye toward ensuring that Equity Focus Communities are a priority for new station amenities.

Which Vision 2028 goals does this help implement?

2.3 Improve customer experience at all customer touch points.

Best practices

Station amenities, including retail outlets, are a prominent feature of metro systems worldwide, particularly in Asia.⁹⁵ In some cities, the stations become destinations unto themselves, as well as strong revenue generators. While this is not necessarily realistic for Metro in the near term, Metro could be a leader in this area in the U.S.

Current practices

Metro Operations already has a group focused on station improvements; in addition, Metro recently established a Test Station Working Group as a component of the Integrated Station Design Solutions group. This will enable ideas for new station amenities, received through unsolicited proposals or other means, to be fast-tracked and tested at one station location before being expanded throughout the system. Current practice for Metro is to prohibit eating or drinking on the system (though this rule is rarely enforced), and typically Metro does not encourage selling food in stations due to the potential costs associated with increased cleaning.

⁹⁵ See <https://www.nippon.com/en/features/jg00055/>; https://www.mtr.com.hk/en/corporate/properties/mtrshopping_centres.html

Recommendation

Elevate and accelerate the development of passenger amenities at stations in order to improve customer experience, generate revenue, and increase transit ridership. Work to solicit and rapidly test ideas at proposed test stations as LA county emerges from the pandemic, with an emphasis on Equity Focus Communities.

Analyze the anticipated costs and benefits of adding food and other retail outlets at stations, which could potentially increase maintenance costs, but could also improve customer experience and deliver ridership and mobility benefits. Build on Metro Systemwide Design’s analysis of global best practices and estimated costs and benefits of installing restroom facilities (for both customers and employees) in strategic locations, such as transfer, terminus and high-volume stations.

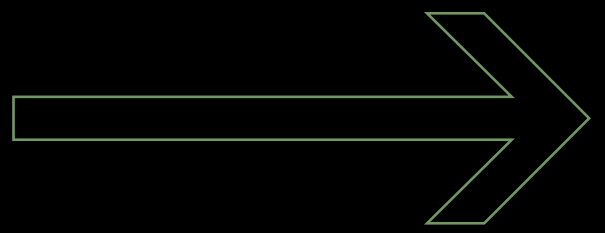
Implementation Plan

Implementation Structure

Implementation will be divided into two separate strategies. One component will be the installation of amenities and retail at rail stations. This will be a joint project of Planning, OEI, Operations and the existing Test Station Working Group.

A second component will focus on bus station amenities off of Metro property and will be included in the Better Bus initiative, which is multi-departmental.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET (IN FTE OR DOLLARS)
Develop and run rider survey to determine which types of improvements are most desired at rail stations and bus stops.	●				OEI, OCEO (Customer Experience), Planning, Operations	\$50,000 for survey
Assess survey results and consider market outreach on highly rated amenities through an RFI and/or pursuing implementation through an RFP or lease agreement.	●				OEI, OCEO (Customer Experience), Planning, Rail Operations; Better Bus Working Group for bus stops	1 FTE combined
Bring information to the Test Station Working Group for consideration. That group will determine which amenities to test, and will develop key performance indicators (KPIs) – including revenues – to measure success.	●				Test Station Working Group for rail; Better Bus Working Group for bus stops	
Test amenities, evaluate KPIs, survey customers on their experience with amenities, and implement highly performing amenities at more stations.		●	●	●	Test Station Working Group, Planning, Operations; Better Bus Stop Working Group for bus stops	



Responsive Metro

26. Improve Public Engagement and Strengthen Rider Voices

Summary

Public engagement is a framework for guiding strategies and approaches that are tailored to each unique effort or community. This recommendation seeks to enhance public engagement in all of Metro's programs, initiatives and projects and to help Metro prioritize feedback from our customers and under-represented populations.

Justification

COVID-19 has required Metro to develop alternative ways of engaging with and involving the public. As we continue to reach stakeholders utilizing diverse methods, we want to enhance public engagement activities to allow for better substantive input to Metro's decision-making. Enhanced public engagement will ensure that Metro's Vision 2028 goals are met along with the our Equity Platform and Public Participation Plan.

Benefits

Enhancing public engagement activities, tools and processes with an equity lens to ensure all engagement activities are inclusive will allow Metro to better understand how we can meet the needs of all our stakeholders. This is especially important to benefit our riders and to reach and involve those stakeholders who are harder to reach, who have been most impacted by COVID-19 and who have been historically disenfranchised from public investment.

More engagement will allow Metro to develop solutions that support community needs and improve the overall customer experience.

Vision 2028 goal

- 3.3 Metro is committed to genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.

Costs or cost savings

A small investment to enhance public engagement can help improve services and projects, reduce delays in project schedules and ensure meaningful involvement in all Metro policy decisions via more effective engagement tools. These recommendations can be delivered within the existing staffing framework and allocated FTEs within Communications. The FTE resources assume filling all existing vacant positions within the department.

Equity analysis

This recommendation supports the implementation of activities that will encourage all stakeholders to meaningfully participate in planning and decision-making activities for the agency. Some populations find it challenging to participate in person and/or online meetings. Metro will seek alternative and diverse ways to engage these stakeholders. For example, Metro will:


- > Partner with community centers or community-based organizations to offer WiFi access in targeted areas throughout LA County.
- > Ensure all virtual meetings include telephone connections that allow stakeholders to participate via phone.
- > Record proceedings so that stakeholders can view these proceedings on demand and be able to provide comments via mail, phone, email, etc.
- > Host in-person and online meetings during diverse timeframes to ensure there are various convenient times for working individuals, students and families to participate.

Best practices

Metro goes above and beyond just "checking the box" for inclusive and meaningful public engagement activities. For all engagement programs and activities, we consider everything from ADA compliance, language needs, literacy needs, the need to communicate in simple and easy-to-understand terms, infographics, and many other considerations. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement and the recommendations outlined below will go a long way in enhancing our already robust public engagement practices.


Current Practices

COMMUNITY MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING NOTICING




- > Stakeholders will be given a minimum of 10 days notice for all Metro-hosted community meetings and public hearings.
- > Notices will be provided in English and Spanish at a minimum and translated into other languages as demographics indicate.
- > Ads and take-one notices will be placed on adjacent buses and trains for specific area meetings whenever possible.
- > Meeting and hearing materials will also be posted online for those who are unable to attend in person. Additionally, when possible, meetings will also be shared digitally using webcasts, webinars and other online platforms.

COMMUNITY MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING LOCATIONS AND TIMES



- > Metro-hosted community meetings and public hearings will be held at ADA-compliant venues, and will be accessible or convenient for transit riders and bicyclists.
- > Meetings will be held at times that are flexible around working hours, and when most convenient for stakeholders, such as at night and on weekends.
- > Venues will be near the communities of interest, which can include faith-based and community-based institutions.


COMMUNITY MEETING LANGUAGE TRANSLATION



Metro's 2019 LEP Plan Four Factor Analysis can be found in the Title VI Program Update, which will be available at metro.net/civilrights.

- > Community meeting materials and live translation will be provided in English and other languages spoken by significant populations in the project area, as resources allow, and as outlined in [Metro's LEP Plan Four Factor Analysis](#).
- > Language translation will be performed by fluent speakers.
- > Additional languages and ADA accommodations, such as large print and Braille, will be provided on request with at least three working days (72 hours) notice.

PUBLIC HEARING LANGUAGE TRANSLATION & DOCUMENTATION



- > Public hearing materials and live translation will be provided in English and Spanish at a minimum.
- > Other languages and ADA accommodations, such as large print and Braille, will be provided on request with at least three working days (72 hours) notice. Language translation will be performed by fluent speakers.
- > Court reporters will also document hearing proceedings and public comments.

NEIGHBORHOOD/ COMMUNITY LENSES



- > Metro will look at community decision-making processes through several lenses, including neighborhood and community values, LA County community structures, urban and rural areas, and ethnic and cultural groups.
- > Metro will pay attention to users who are underrepresented, including users who have limited education attainment and/or disabilities.

NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS



- > Whenever possible, Metro will strive to use videos, pictures, examples, participatory planning tools (such as interactive maps and activities), real-life examples, art and other available digital tools to explain harder-to-decipher technical details, and increase public awareness and understanding.

ONLINE LANGUAGE TRANSLATION



- > Metro's website *metro.net*, which was updated within the last few years, provides web visitors with transportation information assistance in seven languages in addition to English.
- > Additionally, Metro will offer Google Translate on every webpage for language accessibility above Title VI requirements.
- > Metro's website content will also be ADA-accessible; it will be compatible with screen-reading devices for individuals with visual impairments.

TELEPHONE INTERPRETATION



- > Metro's Customer Care Department will provide patrons with Limited English Proficiency with transportation information assistance in over 200 languages by utilizing a third-party language interpretation service.
- > Telephone interpretation will also be ADA accessible; Metro's Customer Service line will be accessible with California Relay Line ddtp.cpuc.ca.gov/default1.aspx?id=1482.
- > In addition to Customer Care, Metro Rail Operations will utilize the third-party languages interpretation service to provide information and emergency response to LEP patrons who contact the Rail Operations Center (ROC) using the communication devices (G-Tel, P-Tel and E-Tel) located on rail platforms.

Recommendation

- > Include metrics for geographic, ethnic, income, ridership and other demographic characteristics to ensure that we are reaching the most impacted stakeholders and giving voice to those hard-to-reach communities that rely on transit by:
 - Using census and other available data sets to create engagement guidelines and targets for each project
 - Establishing clear priorities and weights for public engagement based on levels of project benefit and potential impact.
 - Collecting “participant” demographic and mobility behavior data to ensure we are reaching the right people and getting the right input.
 - Establishing data standards for both technical and public engagement efforts that inform the questions we ask, the feedback we solicit and the categorization of public comments so, however and wherever stakeholders weigh in, the impact of the comment is equal and the analysis is consistent.
- > Develop a comprehensive “toolkit” of all Metro resources for riders (*Transit App*, LIFE, On the Move Riders, Student/Senior/Unincorporated County Resident Fare Programs, Transit Safety Programs, Customer Care numbers, etc.). Currently, there are various take-ones highlighting each program, but there is no one piece that educates riders on all Metro programs, projects and initiatives.
- > Elevate the role of the legally-mandated Metro Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to give the community a greater voice on Metro programs, projects, initiatives and policies.
 - Ensure the CAC focuses on transit riders, is diverse and represents a cross-section of various stakeholders (e.g., prioritizing frequent transit riders who can also speak to issues. That are relevant for businesses, community-based organizations, homeowners, renters, advocates for the environment, etc.).
 - Provide additional staff support to the CAC so it can provide more meaningful input and strengthen its voice before the Metro Board of Directors.
- > Consult Community Relations staff to ensure consistency of messages and content across all Metro-organized community advisory groups (Policy Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Area Service Councils, Accessibility Advisory Committee, Public Safety Advisory Committee, etc.)
- > Include a section on Metro Board Reports for documenting public engagement activities, including feedback heard and who was reached, and focusing on feedback from Equity Focus Communities, transit users and impacted stakeholders. Documenting this information will provide valuable input to policy decisions.
- > Implement APTA’s Seal of Commitment to ease rider concerns related to COVID-19. The marketing initiative will communicate the agency’s and the public’s shared responsibility to deliver a safe, clean, healthy, reliable system utilizing video and other collateral materials.
- > Prioritize the UX/UI overhaul of the metro.net website. This overhaul is necessary to ensure our public information is easily accessible, is presented in a more user-friendly/simpler-to-navigate manner and contains the information that customers need.
 - The redesigned metro.net must require modern UX/UI techniques that enhance the customer experience and improve the efficiency of the site for the user.
 - Interim changes include replacing the trip planner and dynamic map from the homepage and instead having three to four buttons (plan your trip, arrivals, service alerts, and maps and schedules) that take customers directly to the information they are looking for.
- > Centralize all external public-facing meetings/ activities into one metro.net master calendar that is easily accessible to the public.
- > Employ creative arts and cultural strategies to expand public engagement and connect with communities through innovative Metro Art programs.
- > Where budget permits, create incentives for in-person participation by stakeholders. These can include providing refreshments, on-site children’s activities and other support services that make it easier for stakeholders and families to participate.

Implementation plan

These recommendations will be implemented by the various units within the Communications Department. The Community Relations unit will lead public engagement efforts in collaboration with the Public Relations, Marketing, Arts & Design, Government Relations and Customer Care units; the Office of Civil Rights & Inclusion; the Office of Extraordinary Innovation and the Customer Experience and Equity and Race Officers.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2020	2021	2022	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET
For public engagement efforts, include metrics to ensure impacted stakeholders and hard-to-reach communities are included in all outreach activities.	●			Community Relations, Office of Equity and Race	
Develop comprehensive toolkit for Metro riders.	●			Marketing	
Elevate role of the Metro Citizen Advisory Committee.	●			Office of the CEO, Community Relations	
Consult Community Relations when setting agendas for all Metro Advisory Committees to ensure consistency of message and information.	●			Community Relations	
Include Engagement Activities section on Metro Board Reports.	●			Board Relations Office, Communications	
Recognize heroic frontline workers through local artist portrait series.	●			Arts & Design	
Creatively showcase APTA Seal of Commitment and COVID-19 protocols as part of the “We’re Here For You” campaign.	●			Marketing	
New metro.net website with UX/UI techniques.	●	●		Marketing	\$3M
Centralize public-facing meetings into one master calendar that is prominent on metro.net website.	●			Communications	
Curate arts/cultural programming to foster public engagement and advance cultural equity.	●	●	●		\$500,000
Create incentives for in-person participation (e.g. child care, refreshments).	●			Communications	\$1–2M

27. Gather More Data on Equity and Travel Patterns

Summary

Metro should use location-based services (LBS) data to better understand and makes decisions related to travel patterns, levels of access to key destinations and demographics of mode share throughout the region. RIITS should purchase an expanded license that would allow for additional uses of the data that was purchased for NextGen, including to pilot enhanced data sharing and collaboration with regional partners.

Metro should also improve its collection of demographic data across all Metro programs and services. This would help the agency establish performance baselines and assist in decision making as Metro strives to offer more equitable service, investments and programs across the region.

Justification

Without accurate data on travel patterns and demographics, it is harder to improve services and advance equity. LBS data proved its worth during the development of the NextGen Bus Plan. As Metro works to create equitable outcomes for all stakeholders, Metro needs to collect better data to identify disparities and effectively measure program performance and impact.

Benefits

Collaboration and coordination through RIITS will lead to better, data-driven decisions. Demographic data can help Metro understand and address key disparities in services, programs and investments, and evaluate existing levels of access to key destinations, such as jobs, health facilities and grocery stores, on a county-wide basis. Additionally, travel pattern data can help with service planning to better meet customer needs, improve access to key destinations and measure progress toward Vision 2028 goals.

Costs or cost savings

- > Staff time from OCEO, ITS, Operations and Congestion Reduction (RIITS).
- > Initial RIITS purchase of expanded license for LBS data. This license is funded through RIITS for FY21; future renewals will need to be budgeted annually.

Equity analysis

Demographic data will help Metro identify and address social disparities that exist in Metro's services, program and investments. Additionally, collecting travel pattern data will help Metro adjust transit services and programs to expand mobility and access to opportunity, particularly disadvantaged communities. However, affected communities must be engaged throughout planning and decision-making processes to ground-truth the data, plan in a way that prioritizes positive impacts for marginalized communities and be able to identify and mitigate potential negative consequences.

Vision 2028 goals

This recommendation supports the Vision 2028 goal of doubling the share of trips that use non drive-alone modes.

- 1.1 Expand the transportation network and increase mobility for all users.
- 1.2 Improve LA County's overall transit network and assets.
- 1.3 Manage transportation demand in a fair and equitable manner.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 3.2 Leverage transit investments to catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize neighborhoods where these investments are made.
- 5.2 Exercise good public policy judgment and sound fiscal stewardship.



Best practices

- > Using a tenth of their Better Bus Stop budget, Minnesota's Metro Transit paid community groups to conduct outreach in low-income neighborhoods of color. Metro Transit used this qualitative data to redesign its approach to prioritizing bus stop improvements.
- > With data on the senior population, educational attainment, home values, race, poverty, minority population and at least proxy data on workforce participation, service needs, employment prospects and household wealth, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) uses Equitable Target Areas (ETAs) as origin points to compute transit travel sheds to schools, grocery stores, institutions of higher education, hospitals, libraries and parks. These travel sheds demonstrate the lack of access to community services and amenities faced by ETA residents and are used to help direct resources to areas where they are needed most.

Current practices

- > Metro purchased 2017 LBS data for NextGen services and many of our partner agencies have been asking for access to that data, which the current license does not allow. This data buy will expand Metro's license privileges and allow Metro to pilot data sharing within the region.
- > Very few programs or data collection efforts gather data that is disaggregated by race. Examples of programs that do collect such data include the semi-annual customer satisfaction surveys, Metro Bike Share Surveys and the fare subsidy program applications.

Recommendation

This recommendation is aimed at obtaining and managing more data in a well-organized, centralized location so that the data can be used to better understand travel patterns, levels of access to key destinations, demographics of mode share and user demographic characteristics, including race, gender, income, English proficiency and disability. This data will be shared within Metro and with partners across the region. It will help ensure that Metro's decisions are based on the underlying needs and demands of LA County residents. Specifically, the task force recommends that Metro:

- > Purchase historical travel pattern data through RIITS to refresh Metro's knowledge of travel patterns and other available data sources (e.g. cellular data). Use this comprehensive data set for service planning, to establish baselines and to track progress toward Vision 2028 goals.
- > Create a data management position within ITS to help manage the use of equity data across Metro, as well as the use of all other internal data.

Implementation Plan

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2020	2021	2022	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET
Identify what demographic data exists for Metro services and programs, and identify purposes for which this data is needed.	●	●		OCEO, ITS	Staff time
Create a standard for collecting demographic data (variables) and work with Metro programs to update their collection processes.	●	●		OCEO, OCR, ITS	Staff time
Make a plan to gather demographic data where there are gaps.		●		OCEO, ITS	
Buy travel data through RIITS and include demographic disaggregation where possible.	●	●		Congestion Reduction	Funded through RIITS
Make data available in RIITS for Metro departments and partners.		●		Congestion Reduction	Part of RIITS contract
Initiate data sharing pilot with partner agencies.		●	●	Congestion Reduction	Funded through RIITS
Identify a data manager to provide regular updates and manage the collection of demographic data.	●	●	●	ITS	
Leverage ESRI to develop a dashboard and analytical tools.		●		ITS, OCEO	

28. Share Data and Information More Openly and Effectively

Summary

Data is one of the most valuable assets in the digital age and it is used and generated throughout Metro's business units. To fulfill its mission of providing world-class transportation, Metro needs to be able to provide transparent, open and accessible Data, to the public and to all staff, in an equitable and efficient way that supports data-driven studies and decision making. Collaborating through information systems can make it easy to acquire, analyze and respond to Metro's public data. Additionally, open data practices improve information delivery to transit customers.

Justification

Metro produces an immense amount of data and information that is often siloed, unstructured and inaccessible to all staff and the public. As we adopt and deploy new technologies, these technologies will generate new types of data that will be key to making effective service delivery decisions. This recommendation will help Metro recover, support an equitable economic recovery for the region as a whole and advance transparency for internal and external users.

Benefits

Making data and information more accessible builds trust, helps identify disparities, enables efficiencies and cost savings in the delivery of Metro services, reduces redundant work and enhances equitable and sustainable outcomes by promoting collaboration and participation with citizens and stakeholders. Exploring new technologies and tools for data management, communication and data sharing between departments will enable Metro to plan and deliver services better, faster and more effectively.

Open data sharing will also empower staff with increased and informed decision-making authority where appropriate. A streamlined process for sharing data internally will

eliminate delays when actions require making data requests and waiting on information from other departments. Greater public access to Metro data will help stakeholders understand Metro's operations and decisions. Third parties will also be able to analyze and remix open data, which can inform Metro and/or Metro customers..

Costs or cost savings

Exploring and potentially developing in-house data management software will cost staff time in the short term, particularly for ITS and RMC, but it will likely save costs in the long term by streamlining and centralizing the process for sharing data and responding to public records requests. In addition, developing and utilizing in-house software could produce cost savings by eliminating vendor contract payments.

Equity analysis

A rapid equity analysis indicates that effectively sharing data is beneficial to internal and external stakeholders because it provides a basis for informed decision-making. It is important for data to be made available and ADA accessible.

Vision 2028 goals

- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use and trip information on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 3.3 Commit to genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.
- 5.3 Develop a transparent data management policy that addresses open data, data storage, and data protections.
- 5.4 Metro will apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more effective agency.

Best practices

- > FTA Open Data Policy Guidelines identify best practices from transit agencies that have implemented open data practices to improve operational efficiency and increase customer satisfaction.⁹⁶
- > The Open Data Web Site of the City of Los Angeles contains significant amounts of data from city departments. Much of this data can be downloaded and also visualized as maps and charts.⁹⁷

Current practices

As required by the California Public Records Act (CPRA), Metro currently identifies documents and makes them available for public inspection during regular office hours. Metro also provides copies upon request, per CPRA standards. Currently, all public records requests are forwarded to Metro's Records Management Center (RMC), including requests received by other departments.

At this time, Metro encourages requests for public documents to be made online via the Public Records Request System at <https://records.metro.net/>.

Recommendation

- > Develop/update internal policies on data access, protection of personally identifiable information and data generated under Metro contracts.
 - Deploy a digital asset management (DAM) system to publish and organize documents and reports so that they are easier for staff and the public to utilize.
 - Develop an open data policy and data portal through which the public can access information with the aim of encouraging transparency and innovation.
 - Make Metro data and information more open and accessible, and share in multiple languages as stated under Metro's Language Assistance Plan or requested by the community.
- > Measure completion and adoption of data management policy.
- > Re-evaluate public records software contract with NextRequest to identify potential changes/upgrades and to review any gaps in this vendor's product relative to Metro's needs.
 - Assess data needs to see if Metro can manage public records requests with software developed in house, and, if so, whether this approach would reduce costs relative to paying a vendor.
- > Embrace open data as both a policy and practice across the agency.
 - Publish datasets to a central repository using a standardized, machine-readable format.
 - Publish data used for decision-making.
 - Engage with data users to validate and improve usability.

⁹⁶See <https://www.transit.dot.gov/research-innovation/fta-open-data-policy-guidelines-report-0095>

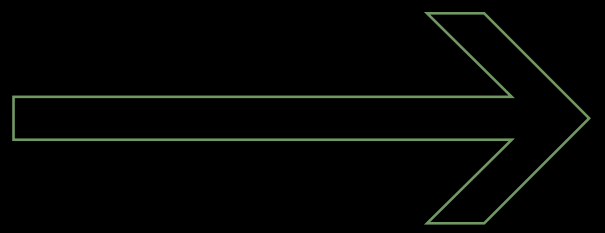
⁹⁷See <https://data.lacity.org/>

Implementation

Implementation Structure

To reinforce existing efforts and examine new options to pursue transparent, open and accessible data, Metro could form an internal working group that includes Information Technology Services (ITS), the Records Management Center (RMC), and the Board Relations and Policy & Research departments.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024-2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET OR FTE(S) REQUIRED
Convene working group.	●				ITS, RMC	½ FTE to convene and manage
Compile map, timeline and budget of projects Metro is currently planning/funding to improve data management and sharing.	●				Working group	
Identify goals and timeline to achieve key deliverables.	●	●			Working group	
Determine best path forward in terms of developing in-house software versus upgrading vendor product.	●	●				
Explore new ways to collaboratively plan and fund in-house development or vendor upgrades.	●	●	●	●	Working group	
Develop an internal instruction manual and online training for selected software.		●	●	●	ITS, RMC	
Pilot new/updated data management software/process.		●	●	●	ITS/RMC/select test users in other depts.	
Implement mandatory, agency-wide training on data-sharing software/process.	●	●	●	●	ITS	



Vibrant Future

29. Accelerate Joint Development and Transit-Oriented Communities

Summary

Accelerate joint development (JD) on Metro property and partner with LA County jurisdictions to increase transit-supportive plans, policies and programs that capture the value created by transit and promote community stabilization and equitable development around Metro stations.

Justification

Expansion of the public transportation system under Measure M can bring positive change to LA County – especially if land use creates synergies with transit and active transportation. Metro must simultaneously lead and partner with communities across the county to leverage the benefits that come from the public transportation system, while also guarding against potential unintended consequences, especially within vulnerable communities.

Benefits

One of the most powerful ways Metro can improve county residents' access to opportunity is by leveraging Metro property for housing and other community benefits and by pursuing strategic partnerships with LA County jurisdictions to leverage transit investments for equitable community development.

Allowing more people to live, work, shop and access community services near transit stations can help address the region's housing crisis, grow transit ridership, expand access to opportunity, and reduce drive-alone trips and pollution.

Costs or cost savings

JD projects ultimately bring revenue to Metro in the form of ground lease proceeds and increased ridership.

Equity analysis

Updating Metro's JD policy can help provide transit-oriented housing units at a variety of income levels, including for low-income individuals and marginalized communities.

In addition, partnering with local jurisdictions to increase equitable, transit-supportive plans through an array of Metro tools and programs, such as Corridor Baselines, grant writing and technical assistance, will promote equitable outcomes by embedding equity both as a process (e.g., through deep and ongoing stakeholder engagement and equity criteria to prioritize resources) and as an outcome (e.g., through needs-based assessment of transit corridor communities' opportunities to leverage transit investments and safeguards for protecting vulnerable populations).

Vision 2028 goals

- 3.2 Seek to catalyze transit-oriented communities with affordable housing and help stabilize neighborhoods.
- 3.4 Play a leadership role in addressing homelessness.
- 3 Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.
- 4 Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership.

Best practices

> In the San Francisco Bay Area, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system's 10-year TOD Workplan includes a top priority strategy to "Advance racial and economic equity by prioritizing housing for lower-income residents in areas experiencing displacement, and high-opportunity communities in the core of the system." BART also has a goal to reach 20,000 homes on its properties by 2040.⁹⁸

⁹⁸See https://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/docs/BART%20TOD_Workplan_FINAL_Spreads_200814%20Reduced.pdf

⁹⁹See Sound Transit. (2018). Resolution No. R2018-10 Adopting an Equitable Transit Oriented Development Policy.

- > In the Seattle area, Sound Transit gives local governments, housing authorities and non-profits the first offer to surplus land to construct housing where 80% of the units are affordable for households below 80% of area median income (AMI).⁹⁹
- > The City of Los Angeles already has a “Transit-oriented Communities Policy” that expands density bonuses and reduces parking requirements near transit stations. This policy has resulted in the permitting of more than 20,000 homes, nearly 5,000 of them deemed affordable, in its first four years.¹⁰⁰
- > Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway (MTR) owns and manages more than 104,000 homes plus a large portfolio of commercial properties. This helps the MTR fund very frequent transit service.¹⁰¹

Current practices

Metro’s current JD policy was adopted in 2017. It has a portfolio-wide goal that 35% of housing units are affordable to households at or below 60% of AMI. There is currently no per-site affordability requirement. The policy also allows for Metro-owned land to be discounted by up to 30% of its market value to accommodate affordable units. Metro currently administers a TOD Planning Grant Program that funds LA County jurisdictions to pursue transit-supportive planning efforts. Metro introduced tax increment financing feasibility studies in the fifth round of the program. In addition, in 2020 Metro launched TOD planning grants targeted at jurisdictions along the future West Santa Ana Branch project.

Metro has long been a trailblazer in partnering with local jurisdictions to advance transit-supportive planning and community development initiatives. Transit-supportive places are locations near transit stations where the use of effective and predictable transit services can be enhanced through appropriate patterns and types of development. Research has shown that the presence or absence of certain physical design features, transit characteristics and

other supportive policies can reduce driving and increase transit ridership, walking and biking.

Recommendation

- 1) Adopt updated JD policy that:
 - > Broadens the range of household types and incomes served.
 - > Prioritizes communities with the deepest need and expands benefits to support economic development.
 - > Counteracts displacement and delivers community benefits.
 - > Reduces the amount of motor vehicle parking.
 - > Creates a laboratory for exploring and piloting new methods for delivering housing more quickly, more cost-effectively and more equitably.
 - > Reinvests proceeds from JD projects to invest in an affordable housing trust fund, a strategic acquisition fund and JD pilot projects.
 - > Sets an ambitious but feasible goal for the number of homes that can be constructed through JD by 2030 during the build-out of capital corridor projects, and a more ambitious target for 2050, the agency’s LRTP planning horizon.
- 2) Partner with LA County jurisdictions to increase transit-supportive plans, policies and programs that capture value created by transit and promote community stabilization and equitable development around Metro stations:
 - > Partner with cities to complete TOC Corridor Baseline analyses.
 - > Provide LA County jurisdictions with assistance in pursuing grant sources to fund TOC activities.
 - > Support LA County jurisdictions with annual convenings that focus on best practices and training and technical assistance for TOC planning activities.

⁹⁹ See <https://planning.lacity.org/resources/housing-reports>

¹⁰¹ See <https://www.mtr.com.hk/archive/corporate/en/investor/annual2019/EMTRAR19.pdf>

Implementation Plan

Implementation Structure

> The **JD Policy Update** will be led by Planning/ TOC and will include internal (Real Estate, Corridor Planning, Community Relations, Equity and Race and the Office of Extraordinary Innovation) and external working groups, as well as stakeholder engagement activities and technical analyses.

> **TOC Implementation** efforts will be led by Planning/TOC and will encompass the TOD Planning Grant Program, WSAB TOD SIP, Baselines, and TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance Program. The efforts will include collaboration with Corridor Planning, Communications, Government Relations, Office of Extraordinary Innovation, Equity and Race, and Program Management.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2020	2021	2022–2030	2031–2050	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET OR FTE(S) REQUIRED
JD Policy Update: Policy paper to facilitate discussion; convening/town hall to gather external input; updated JD Policy to Board.	●	●			Planning, Community Relations, OCEO (Race + Equity), OEI	Consultant funding in FY2021 budget
TOC Implementation Plan: [plan adopted Oct 2020] TOC convening/town hall to gather external input; initiate baseline solicitation, launch TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance Program.		●			Planning, Community Relations, Government Relations, OCEO (Race + Equity), OEI, Program Management	FY21 work funded
Launch housing laboratory.		●			Planning, OEI	
More joint development on Measure M capital project corridors.			●		Planning	
Increase joint development efforts.				●	Planning	

30. Expand the Region's Broadband Infrastructure

Summary

At a time when digital connectivity is more important than ever, Metro should partner with telecommunications providers to leverage existing real estate assets and capital construction projects to place fiber and above-ground facilities. This partnership should generate new revenue, expand capacity for internal operations and increase resources to support communities with improved WiFi.

Justification

Given the ongoing need for social distancing, affordable and high-quality wireless connectivity is more important than ever. Metro can support high-need communities, including Metro riders, by offering its facilities for the co-location of telecommunications infrastructure in exchange for better service for Metro staff and increased connectivity for riders.

Benefits

A more robust broadband network benefits Metro's critical operations, Metro riders and the communities Metro serves. Leveraging Metro assets has the potential to generate significant revenue.

Costs or cost savings

Partnering with telecommunications providers can generate significant new revenue for Metro and save money on other services that Metro might need to procure given existing network capacity.

Equity analysis

Benefits to Equity Focus Communities should be prioritized. In addition, Metro's community outreach and environmental clearance activities should be aggressively inclusive.

Vision 2028 goals

- 1.2 Optimize speed, reliability and performance of the existing system by revitalizing and upgrading Metro's transit system.
Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 1.3 Improve legibility, ease of use and trip information on the transit system.
- 3.2 Catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize neighborhoods where these investments are made.
Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity;
4. Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership.

Best practices

In January 2020, BART and the San Francisco MTA ratified a \$243 million, 20-year agreement with Mobilitie to improve cell phone connectivity and WiFi coverage on the system.¹⁰² This will help with customer communications and internet usage, and allow the agencies to upgrade mobile ticketing and other services.

Current practices

> WiFi is available on Metro's B and D Lines for customers with some cellphone providers; in addition, free WiFi is available on many Metro buses.

¹⁰²See <https://www.bart.gov/news/articles/2020/news20200107>

Recommendation

Metro should leverage its real estate assets and construction program with telecommunications partners to co-locate infrastructure, including fiber and above-ground facilities. These partnerships should allow Metro to generate new revenue, benefit from new capacity for internal network operations, support telework and offer expanded WiFi access to riders and potentially to other community members.

Implementation Plan

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET (IN FTE OR DOLLARS)
Assess Metro assets (properties and capital projects) and research where broadband partnerships may make sense.	●				Operations, ITS, Congestion Reduction, Planning, OEI	
Issue RFP(s) and be open to unsolicited proposals for partnerships.	●				Planning, ITS, OEI	
Evaluate proposals and make recommendations to Metro decision makers.		●	●		Operations, ITS, Congestion Reduction, Planning, OEI	

31. Create Green Jobs and Green Infrastructure

Summary

Create new green jobs by partnering with utilities and other local agencies on sustainable projects supporting greenhouse gas and criteria air pollutant emissions mitigation, clean and renewable energy, transportation electrification and charging, water conservation, solid waste reduction and climate resilience.

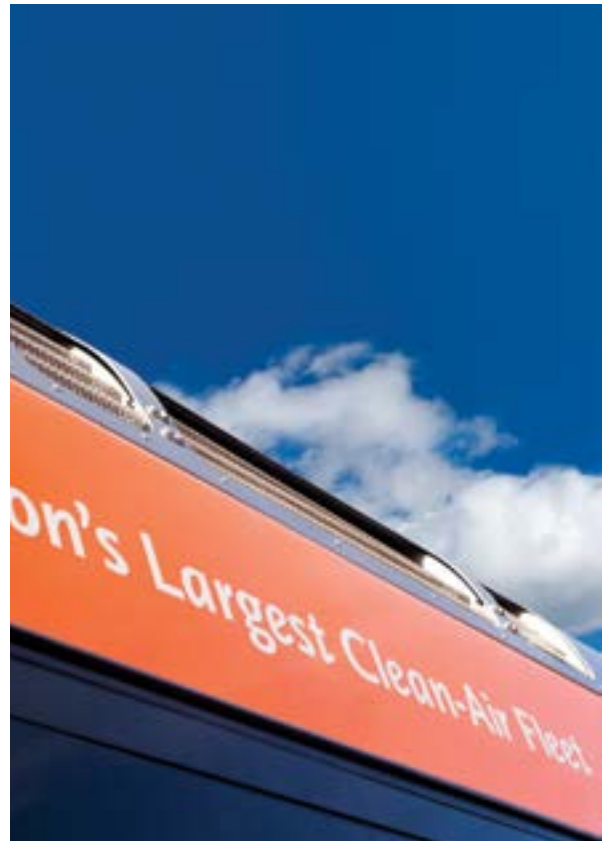
Justification

Green infrastructure is needed to meet Board adopted sustainability goals, including the electrification of our bus fleet and the implementation of the Moving Beyond Sustainability strategic plan. As we design and build these green infrastructure projects, we will create new jobs that support the regional economic recovery.

Benefits

The installation of green infrastructure yields many benefits for LA Metro and the communities we service, including but not limited to:

- > Short- and long-term job creation that not only supports the local economy, but will also support the growth of workforces in the energy, environment and transportation sectors;
- > Improved, safer, and healthier mobility options, facilities, and service access for Metro patrons and employees;
- > Improved air quality as fleet and facility electrification reduces criteria air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG); and
- > Increased reliability and resilience of existing and future energy and water supplies, mitigating short- and long-term environmental, climate and financial risks for Metro.



Costs or cost savings

Some green infrastructure projects can be structured through Public-Private Partnerships or P3s, such as Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) for solar arrays, as a means of sharing and mitigating costs. They can also be partially financed through state programs such as the State of California's Cap and Trade program. Other projects can leverage existing funding for capital projects and attract grant funding.

Equity Analysis

By reducing air pollution and GHG emissions, green infrastructure projects can help mitigate the impacts of climate change and regional environmental justice concerns. Projects that provide tangible community benefits including improved air quality should be prioritized for Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) in Metro's service area.

Vision 2028 goals

- 3.1 To lift up local communities, Metro will create jobs and career pathways in transportation.
- 3.2 Metro will leverage its transit investments to catalyze transit-oriented communities.

Best practices

In May 2020, the Antelope Valley Transit Authority purchased 10 parcels of vacant land near their headquarters. Thirty-three acres of this parcel will be dedicated to solar energy development in a 25-year power purchase agreement with Petaluma-based REC Solar Commercial Corp.¹⁰³

In July 2020, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) reached a deal worth up to \$50 million over 25 years, with SunPower Corp. and Goldman Sachs Renewable Power LLC, to install 12.8 megawatts of solar paneled carports or canopies over surface lots and above parking garages at four rail stations.¹⁰⁴

Current practices

Metro is currently expanding our green infrastructure program, including but not limited to:

- > The Moving Beyond Sustainability strategic plan was approved by the Board in September 2020. ECSD is now developing an Implementation Plan that will be completed and available by June 2021.
- > A forthcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) for solar power purchase agreements at four maintenance divisions;
- > Installing the necessary charging infrastructure for G Line (Orange) bus electrification;
- > Installing stormwater capture infrastructure along the Rail-to-Rail ATP and the Metro G Line (Orange);
- > Evaluating opportunities to Install stormwater capture Infrastructure across Metro's territory;
- > Developing a Master Implementation Plan for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at Metro facilities for employee and public use;
- > Evaluating opportunities at our facilities and ROWs to integrate Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) to add renewables, decarbonize our system and reduce costs associated with power Intensity activities;
- > Training and educating people through our Environmental Training Institute (ETI) with our Growing a Greener Workforce (GGW) courses on green rating systems for project management, resilience strategies, sustainability and others. The Greener Working Group (GWG) at Metro work to incorporate sustainability and environmental compliance Into their own jobs and work environments;

- > Working with sister agencies and utilities to evaluate opportunities for joint installations and use of energy infrastructure;
- > Measures to mitigate climate change, emissions and other pollutants are developing and will continue to be Integrated Into our processes and systems.
- > Transitioning to recycled water, where available, to reduce potable water use.
- > Assessing, designing and installing energy management systems and building management systems at Metro facilities to manage, monitor and track energy usage. Energy audits will be performed on a regular basis to ensure energy systems are operating efficiently and effectively.

Recommendation

Metro should continue to develop and implement green infrastructure projects. The agency’s diverse real estate assets and historic capital program present a unique opportunity to help support a green economy and the region’s economic recovery with strategic investments that make LA County more resilient to the effects of climate change. Employment opportunities advanced by these types of projects can link to Metro career and training partnerships, and help workers transition to jobs in sustainable industries.

Implementation Plan:

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET (IN FTE OR DOLLARS)
Assess Metro assets (properties and capital projects) where joint sustainability projects may make sense.	●				ECSD, Operations, Planning	
Issue RFP(s) and be open to unsolicited proposals for partnerships.	●	●	●		ECSD, OEI	
Develop and track targets, data and KPIs for sustainability projects.	●	●	●	●	ECSD	
Consider how green energy projects can support goal of bus fleet electrification.	●	●	●	●	Operations, ECSD	

¹⁰³See https://www.avpress.com/news/avta-board-says-yes-to-buying-solar-power-equipment/article_6fo44546-eb2e-11ea-b396-3b4c5d07ad7d.html

¹⁰⁴See <https://www.wmata.com/about/news/Metro-solar-contract-announcement.cfm>

32. Reimagine Destination Discounts

Summary

After Safer at Home orders are relaxed, promote transit ridership to businesses and entertainment venues that have been impacted by COVID-19 by leveraging and building on existing communications programs.

Justification

This recommendation aims to help rebuild Metro ridership and to keep areas around Metro stops and stations vibrant and healthy, including restaurants; sporting arenas; arts, culture and entertainment venues; and fairs and festivals. The safety and use of Metro stops and stations is closely tied to the safety and prosperity of surrounding neighborhoods. This recommendation also complements the NextGen Bus Plan, which is based on data that shows midday, evening and weekend ridership has the most potential for growth.

Benefits

Promoting ridership to local small businesses, including arts and entertainment venues, can boost sales, employment and sales tax revenue. It can also help promote an equitable economic recovery and increase transit ridership. To make up for the likely loss of peak period ridership due to continued telecommuting after COVID-19 ends, this program could help Metro build off-peak ridership.

Costs or cost savings

- > Public Relations (PR) would require two additional FTEs.
- > Budget and FTEs for Marketing and Arts & Design are to be determined depending on the size and scope of the program.

Equity analysis

An important objective of this program is to ensure that promoted venues are diverse and representative of the community, including local small and minority-owned businesses, and arts, culture and entertainment venues, as well as the people they employ.

Vision 2028 goal

- 3.2 Metro will leverage its transit investments to catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize neighborhoods where these investments are made.

Best practices

In the San Francisco area, Bartable is a program that promotes venues, events and activities that are accessible by BART services. The program has built a following of more than 150,000 subscribers and followers.¹⁰⁵

Current practices

Metro's [Destination Discounts](#) program cross-promotes exclusive offers and discounts available at destinations in LA County that can be reached by showing a valid TAP card, Metro Employee ID or LA County Employee ID. The program is currently on pause due to COVID-19 but is expected to restart when Safer at Home orders are relaxed.

Metro's [Eat, Shop, Play](#) program supports local businesses in neighborhoods impacted by rail project construction: Crenshaw, Inglewood, Beverly Hills, Century City, Koreatown, Miracle Mile, West LA, DTLA, Little Tokyo. Businesses who sign up receive a free personalized profile on the website, print and digital ads, and social media and email marketing.

¹⁰⁵See <https://bartable.bart.gov/>

Recommendation:

Details and Options

1. Build on the *Destination Discounts* program to be ready with a robust, customer-centric program that promotes a steady stream of relevant and compelling discounts, destinations and contests after the pandemic eases.
2. Review leading event listing services in LA, emulate best practices and develop features that uniquely differentiate Metro as a “go-to” place for event listings for transit-oriented Angelenos. Work with County Counsel as needed to establish event listings as a legitimate Metro strategy to increase off-peak ridership on the system.
3. Conduct focus groups and/or surveys to test potential new program features and determine an optimal path forward after the COVID-19 pandemic eases.
4. When screening potential partners, give extra consideration to businesses and organizations that have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis, as well as entities impacted by Metro construction.
5. Continue to work with the Operations Special Events Group to ensure there is frequent, quality service to large events promoted by Metro. Secure sponsorships from major venues and events to support shuttles and/or enhanced transit services, especially for sports and concert venues.
6. Collaborate with business and travel organizations that support art, culture, tourism and entertainment and with local jurisdictions to help LA venues recover from the COVID pandemic.
7. Work interdepartmentally to utilize all Metro communication assets, including media relations, advertising campaigns, partnership programs, web, apps, email, social media and digital signs and posters on the Metro system.
8. Piggyback on existing Community Relations work in Metro neighborhoods.
9. Develop a rider engagement strategy that encourages riders to recommend their favorite destinations to other Metro users via *Destination Discounts* and to share their experiences taking Metro to featured destinations.
10. Continue to promote transit-friendly destinations and educate riders about new destinations that are accessible via the Metro system.



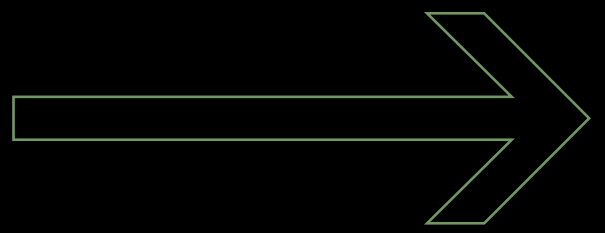
Implementation plan

The Metro *Destinations Discounts* Program will promote ridership and enhance outreach strategies by leveraging the promotional channels and assets of external brands and organizations. Beyond the *Destination Discounts* program, Public Relations will explore additional programmatic strategies to promote a more equitable and diverse array of destinations.

This initiative will be led by Public Relations' Special Events & Partnerships team, in collaboration with the following departments:

- > Equity and Race
 - PR will explore alternative tactics to attract local, small and minority-owned business participation.
- > County Counsel
 - PR will explore paths to create an event listing site.
- > Marketing & Customer Experience
 - PR will work with the Customer Insights & Strategy team to conduct focus groups/surveys to test new program features.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	FY21 Q4	FY22 Q1	FY22 Q2	FY22 Q3	FY22 Q4	FY23 Q1	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET OR FTE(S) REQUIRED
Develop expanded plan to relaunch the <i>Destination Discounts</i> program when LA County reopens.	●						Communications – Public Relations	
Hire full-time employees.			●				Communications – Public Relations	1 FTE
Rename “ <i>Destination Discounts</i> ” as “Metro Destinations.”				●			Communications – Public Relations	
Redesign the new Metro Destinations website.				●			Communications – Public Relations	
Develop a B2B and B2C strategy.				●	●		Communications – Public Relations	
Develop an interdepartmental outreach strategy.				●			Communications – Public Relations	
Hire FTE to implement programs.						●	Communications – Public Relations	1 FTE



Help Pay for Recovery Recommendations

33. Study How Metro Can Reduce Capital Construction Costs

Summary

Metro will study its major capital projects and best practices from across the industry to develop specific recommendations for reducing future costs and gaining more cost-certainty.

Justification

Transportation construction costs are high and rising in the United States. Increasing construction project costs coupled with cost uncertainty is a serious issue that threatens to slow Metro's ability to deliver capital projects. Even if there are no easy answers, identifying recurring cost drivers and learning from industry trends and best practices can help Metro deliver mobility benefits sooner.

Benefits

Reducing costs for major capital projects would allow Metro to expand the system more quickly, thereby increasing accessibility and providing service to more customers, achieving greater connectivity and advancing the agency's goal of better mobility for all.

Costs or cost savings

Initially, moving this recommendation forward will require the time and effort of existing staff. Support staff may eventually be necessary.

Equity analysis

A rapid equity analysis of this recommendation found that Metro should not attempt to cut project costs by reducing accessibility features such as elevators or tactile wayfinding. The analysis also raised the possibility that if Metro is able to reduce capital construction costs, some portion of the savings could be reinvested in services or amenities that benefit Equity Focus Communities.

Vision 2028 goals

- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 3.3 Commit to genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.
- 4.1 Drive mobility agendas, discussion and policies at the state, regional and national levels.
- 5.2 Exercise good public policy judgment and sound fiscal stewardship.
- 5.4 Apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more effective agency.

Best practices

Construction costs vary worldwide and are often driven by location-specific market conditions and policy requirements. Construction costs for transportation projects in the United States are generally high. Metro can learn lessons from its own projects, as well as from high-cost-of-living regions with lower capital construction costs, such as Stockholm, which has lower than global average costs and Paris and Tokyo, which have close-to-world-average costs.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶See <https://pedestrianobservations.com/2020/08/01/case-selection/>

Current practices

Program Management has started taking steps to identify and reduce costs through the following measures:

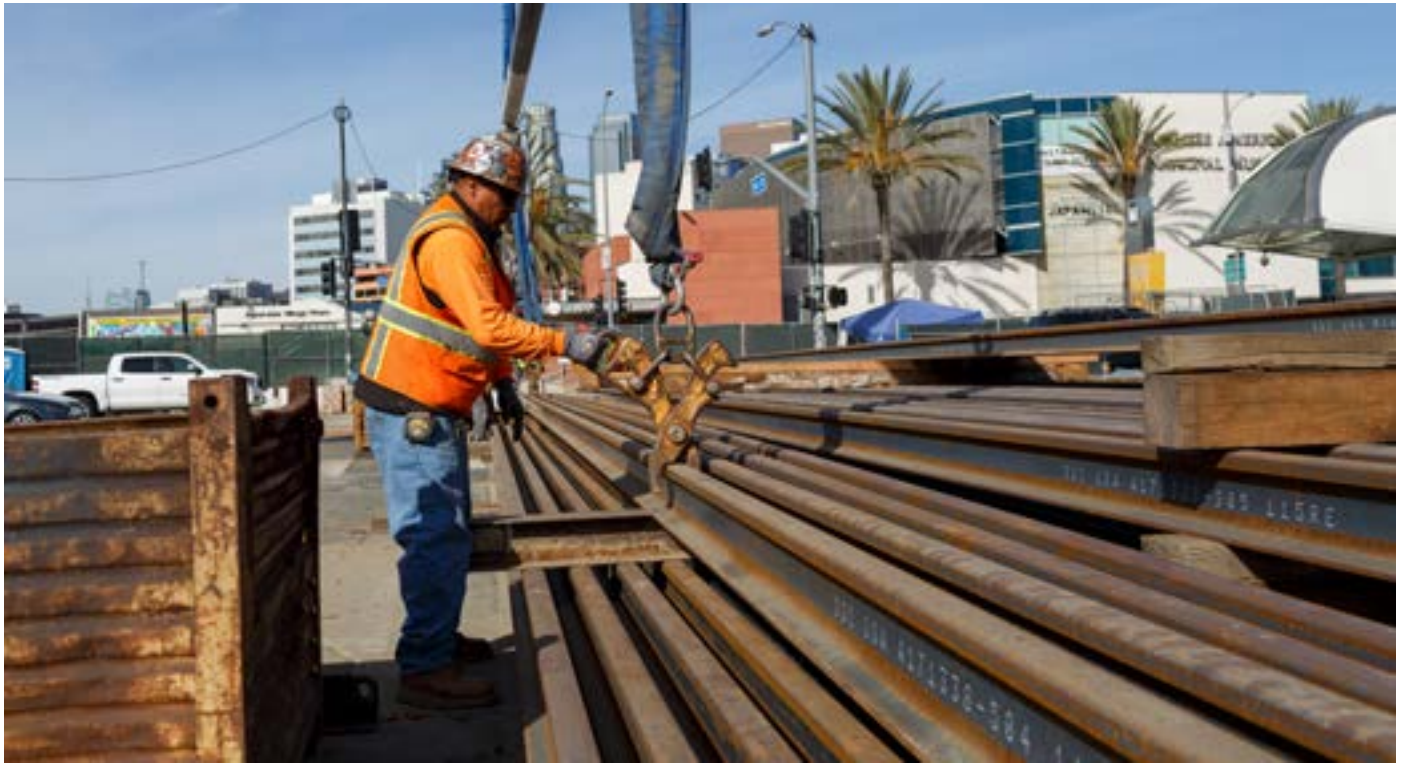
- > Implementation of Project Readiness Reviews and development of Project Risk Registers.
- > Establishment of a team to collaborate with Planning.
- > Implementation of a peer review study.
- > Launch of first formal value engineering study for East San Fernando Valley.
- > Re-examination of delivery methods.
- > Ongoing, high-level engagement with the City of Los Angeles to work through issues that have substantial cost implications for Metro projects.
- > Current engagement in academic studies of cost and utilization of study findings to develop solutions.



Recommendation:

This recommendation proposes that Metro, led by Program Management, work to further develop and implement cost reduction and cost certainty measures. The goal is to identify, explore and implement cutting-edge cost reduction strategies that will, at a minimum, enhance transit expansion and Capital Program Management by leveraging institutional knowledge, peer review, greater fiscal resource management and stakeholder partnering (internal and external) to deliver a world-class transit system that serves as an industry model. Cost reduction and cost certainty measures that could be investigated include:

- > Conducting more advanced utility relocation and geotechnical studies.
- > Ensuring master construction contracts are in place and updated before construction.
- > Exploring additional contracting methods, including design-bid-build, breaking contracts into smaller components, and more in-house design.
- > Pursuing value engineering (that does not negatively impact safety and customer experience), including for number of stations, station spacing and standard station designs.
- > Analyzing feasibility of more cut-and-cover construction.
- > Expanding in-house staffing for more in-house project management and design, and potentially fewer change orders.
- > Better integrating planning, program management and operations across all phases of capital projects.
- > Exploring ways to expand competition (number of bidders) in the LA market.
- > Examining regulatory cost drivers.
- > Allocating risks to maximize benefits to Metro and reduce construction costs.
- > Others to be identified.



Implementation Plan

Implementation Structure

Program Management has already begun substantial work to identify factors that contribute to rising capital project costs, and to develop and implement strategies for examining and addressing capital project cost concerns. An effort led by Program Management with the participation of other department (Planning, Operations, V/CM, OEI) is recommended.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	FY21 Q1-2	FY21 Q3-4	FY22 Q1	FY22 Q2	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET OR FTE(S) REQUIRED
Establish Capital Project Cost Reduction Strategy Study group.	●				Led by Program Management w/ Planning, Operations, V/CM, OEI, other departments as necessary	
Analyze Metro projects for lessons and engage with peer agencies.	●	●	●		Study group	
Develop position paper with recommendations.		●	●	●	Study group	
Present position paper and recommendations to CEO, SLT and Board.				●	Program Management w/study group	

34. Build Staff Capacity

Summary

Pursue savings from using Metro staff for more in-house work, while maintaining the use of consultants for specialized tasks, to handle surges in work or when there is a specific benefit or need.

Justification

In the context of the current economic downturn and Metro's fiscal outlook, better utilization of in-house resources will preserve jobs and save money. Throughout the pandemic crisis, staff have been challenged to do more with less, leading to the rethinking of tasks that can be done or brought in house for less, rather than soliciting expensive third-party labor.

Benefits

Greater internal staff capacity can improve services and programs. Benefits include overall cost savings, more internal capacity and knowledge, more reliable and consistent work, more resources directed toward developing the skillsets of in-house staff, lower per-hour costs, and less administrative work managing contracts, consultants and consultant benches. By strengthening and leveraging internal expertise, Metro will fulfill its vision of creating a first-class workforce.

Costs or cost savings

There are several considerations to hiring more staff including: market conditions (and associated salaries) for professional staff, availability of staff with appropriate qualifications and experience, staffing procurement lead-in times and long-term human resources costs related to Metro employee benefits, such as pension obligations, etc. In February 2015, Metro Program Management examined the cost of outsourcing construction management and consulting services as part of a preliminary cost benefit analysis. This analysis identified a cost savings of 25% if Metro were to hire more staff and fewer consultants for the positions studied.

Equity Analysis

This recommendation can benefit Metro's diverse workforce by providing all employees the opportunity to build skills on projects that otherwise would have been outsourced to consultants. Helping to upskill Metro team members will further Metro's Career Pathways program to develop the "farm team" for the transportation industry. While building capacity internally, Metro should maintain its commitment to SBEs, DBEs and DVBES, minimize the impacts to these businesses and continue to create opportunities for small and minority-owned enterprises within the region.

Vision 2028 goals

- 5.1 Leverage funding and staff resources to accelerate the achievement of goals and initiatives prioritized in Vision 2028.
- 5.4 Apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more effective agency.

Best practices

- > Metro staff examined the cost of outsourcing construction management and consulting services, finding cost savings of up to 25% from bringing certain positions in house rather than utilizing consulting services.¹⁰⁷
- > Metro's Environmental Compliance and Sustainability Department has a business plan that helps advance staff capacity:
 - Focus on internal succession planning through promotion from within (builds staff capacity, knowledge transfer continuity)
 - Recognize short term cost savings by streamlining consultant use with more of a focus on specific needs and as needed.
 - Reassess departmental staffing needs to align with recent (within last 12 months) Board-approved plans/initiatives/policies/projects so that staffing levels are consistent with work load required to support execution of plans/ initiatives/policies/projects.

Current practices

In response to the pandemic and budget constraints, Metro departments have had to rethink the way their work is done. This has forced departments to find ways to conduct business in a more efficient manner.

Recommendation

- > Use staff for core agency functions and hire consultants for occasional, specialized tasks and/or for tasks that require unusual surges in effort or that benefit from consultant instead of staff effort.
- > During the annual and mid-year budget process, adopt a practice of planning for annual departmental needs and determining how best to utilize in-house talent for upcoming projects and tasks.
- > Utilize a project employee job class for some tasks that are currently outsourced to consultants. Project employees occupy a budgeted position to fill personnel needs for projects that have a specific time frame of at least one year and up to five years. Project employees work a minimum of 40 hours per week and are eligible to enroll/receive benefits.
- > Determine whether to advance agency-wide policy or department-by-department policy.
- > Co-source more projects and have staff shadow consultants to learn and grow internal capacity.
- > Honor Metro's commitments to DBE, SBE and DVBE contractors and propose that DBE/SBE/DVBE contractors that provide professional services remain as consultants.

¹⁰⁷See http://boardarchives.metro.net/BoardBox/BB2015/2015_02_Feb/150218_Metro_Construction_Management_and_Consulting_Services.pdf

Implementation Plan

KEY TASKS, DELIVERABLES, AND/OR MILESTONES	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET
Perform assessment of current and expected workload: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Current projects/workload > Projects on horizon – department and Metro plans and goals > Cost-saving opportunities 	●			All depts supported by HC&D (skill development and hiring), OMB (funding) and V/CM (contracting)	N/A
Develop staffing and consultant needs for annual budget process.	●	●	●		N/A

35. Use Measure M and R Ordinances

Summary:

Analyze the use of amendments within the Measure M + R ordinances to deliver mobility improvements that can help LA County during and after the pandemic.

Amendments could address:

- > Subfund definitions to allow more flexibility
- > Local return guidelines
- > Scope and mode of projects to allow more rapid expansion of transit system

Justification

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have added further challenges to the rising cost of projects funded by Measures M + R. Fortunately, the measures themselves specifically allow for amendments by the Board that can better calibrate spending on projects and operations.

Benefits

Building capital projects and funding operations under Measures M and R can enhance mobility and contribute to economic recovery. Amendments to the measures could allow some of these benefits to be achieved more effectively and rapidly.

Costs or cost savings

Without taking funds from any project, subfund or subregion, amendments could lead to savings if the goals of Measure M can be achieved through specific changes.

Equity analysis

By allowing Metro to deliver benefits more rapidly, especially to Equity Focus Communities, amendments can help improve access to high-quality transportation and to opportunity.

Vision 2028 goals

- 1 Provide high quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling.
 - 1.1 To expand the transportation network and increase mobility for all users.
- 3 Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.
 - 3.2 Metro will leverage its transit investments to catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize neighborhoods where these investments are made.
- 5 Provide responsive, accountable and trustworthy governance within the Metro organization.
 - 5.2 Metro will exercise good public policy judgment and sound fiscal stewardship.

Best practices

In May 2020, the Metro Board of Directors initiated a Highway Reform working group to examine expanding the types of projects that can be funded under highway subfunds.

Current practices

The Board has used the procedure within Measure R for decennial transfers between subfunds in the same subregion.

Recommendation

Metro staff, Board offices and regions should discuss potential amendments to Measures M + R. This could include examining:*

- > The use of subfunds, building on the work of the Highway Reform working group.
- > Local return guidelines to enable jurisdictions to respond more rapidly to the pandemic with mobility improvements.
- > Scope and mode of projects to allow more rapid expansion of transit system.

* Note that some amendments are prohibited by the Measures:

- > No transfer of funds between subregions
- > No transfer of funds between subfunds
- > No project acceleration that would negatively impact other projects

Implementation Plan:

KEY TASKS, DELIVERABLES, AND/OR MILESTONES	TIMELINE 2021	2022	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET
Convene Metro working group.	●		OCEO convening Planning, Operations, OEI, OMB and Program Management	N/A
Assess potential amendments.	●		Working group	
Seek input from subregions and Board staff.	●		Working group	
Bring promising amendments to Board.	●	●	Working group	

36. Expand Revenue Opportunities

Summary

This recommendation seeks to expand potential commercial revenue opportunities, mainly by utilizing existing Metro assets and resources.

Justification

Metro has a fiscal responsibility to maximize available resources by utilizing them effectively and efficiently. Metro is heavily reliant on sales taxes and grants. Considering the budget shortage Metro is facing due to COVID-19, revenue opportunities are especially critical and required to recover from the pandemic. The agency needs to consider expanding and exploring revenue sources and should invest to improve customer experience, while also advancing equity.

Benefits

Diversify and increase long-term commercial revenue sources, provide business opportunities through partnerships, help offset any inconvenience from a greater commercial presence on system and create more opportunities to promote small, local and minority-owned businesses through commercial programs on Metro premises. A well-integrated and sustainably expanded commercial presence should be pursued through a holistic and phased approach that enhances the customer experience/environment and promotes community stewardship.

Costs or cost savings

This recommendation is intended to generate additional revenue, however, it may require initial capital investment and continuous investment of Metro staff time to study, implement, maintain, monitor and optimize revenue sources and to undertake periodic adjustments and additional exploration. Further RFIs or valuation reports may argue for capital program(s) to invest in new equipment to maximize the return from long-term advertising opportunities.

Equity analysis

This recommendation aims to advance equity in the LA County by generating additional long-term revenue Metro could use to fund its operations and improve customer experience.

Vision 2028 goals

- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use and trip information on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.2 Exercise good public policy judgment and sound fiscal stewardship.
- 5.4 Apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more effective agency.

Best practices

Transportation agencies have adopted various revenue generating programs. Examples include:

- > In France, 1,000 Amazon Lockers will be installed at train stations to serve travelers and commuters, as well as local communities, across the country.¹⁰⁸
- > Japan utilizes a significant amount of available space for commercial advertisements in and outside transportation vehicles (trains/buses) and on walls and pillars at train stations.¹⁰⁹
- > NY MTA offers commercial advertising on Metro Cards¹¹⁰
- > SF BART offers advertising opportunities throughout its system, including more than 2,500 posters in stations and 5,300 posters on trains.¹¹¹
- > In the St. Louis region, the Bi-State Development Agency (BSDA) found a private company to purchase/install/maintain fiber-optic cable and generate right-of-way lease payments over cable.¹¹²
- > Transport for London executes an aggressive commercial real estate and business leasing program as a means to generate revenue and support affordable housing.¹¹³
- > Google and Transport for London have signed a card-reader sponsorship deal (two million pounds for one year of sponsorship).¹¹⁴
- > Transport for London utilizes digital ad infrastructure to add security features.¹¹⁵
- > Many of Tokyo's terminal stations host small-scale shopping areas where passengers can shop between catching trains. These complexes have succeeded by taking advantage of prime locations to offer an array of goods and services.¹¹⁶

Current practices

Communications (Marketing)

- > Metro's Transit Advertising program is projected to generate about \$300 million over a 10-year contract that runs from 2018 to 2028. The program includes bus and rail. The analysis was conducted before the pandemic. Metro's share of the advertising revenue is 55% for years 1-5 and 70% for years 6-10.
- > Currently, Metro is exploring digital ads at a limited number of stops, as well as the possibility of adding to advertising on amenities to enhance customer convenience, such as by providing real-time information. Metro is also exploring other initiatives including a commercial revenue strategy and corporate sponsorships that would include short-term naming rights and brand licensing, while minimizing negative impacts to system wayfinding, legibility and customer experience.
- > Future projects include expanding revenue strategies to add advertising on Metro rights-of-way, exploring the potential to expand digital billboards and digital bus stops. Projects being considered would potentially generate an additional \$32 million in annual revenue.

Countywide Planning & Development (Real Estate)

- > Metro's current short- and long-term lease agreements generate approximately \$12 million in annual revenue, including:
 - Digital/non-digital billboards
 - Underground and overhead facilities for utilities, fiber optic communications and petroleum pipelines
 - Kiosks and retail stores at Union Station, heavy traffic areas and larger hub stations
 - Temporary leases for food trucks
 - Expanded program for filming permits (after COVID-19)
 - Other temporary leases for parking, retail, etc.

¹⁰⁸ See <https://www.aboutamazon.eu/press-release/amazon-and-sncf-gares-connexions-partner-to-install-amazon-lockers-at-french-train-stations>; <https://www.geekwire.com/2018/spotted-rare-blue-amazon-locker-inside-chase-bank-signals-tech-giants-latest-physical-expansion/>

¹⁰⁹ See <https://www.koutsu-navi.com/train/index.html>

¹¹⁰ See <https://new.mta.info/doing-business-with-us/advertise-on-metrocard>

¹¹¹ See <https://www.bart.gov/about/business/advertising>

¹¹² See http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_31-2-e.pdf

¹¹³ See <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/business-plan>

¹¹⁴ See <https://www.railwaygazette.com/google-and-tfl-sign-card-reader-sponsorship-deal/55917.article>

¹¹⁵ See <https://www.railwaygazette.com/google-and-tfl-sign-card-reader-sponsorship-deal/55917.article>

¹¹⁶ See <https://www.nippon.com/en/features/jg00055/>

- > Working with the City of LA and the legislative office to commercialize additional digital billboards for projected revenues of \$40 million per year.
- > Considering a policy review pertaining to contract awards for long-haul bus operations to generate more revenue.

Recommendation

Metro should identify potential opportunities to expand revenue sources by optimizing Metro’s existing assets and properties. Metro should partner with interested businesses and consider sharing or transferring costs and investments for building, installing and maintaining facilities and tools as much as possible and practical.

It will be critical to pilot new commercial elements and to reinvest funds generated by increased commercial presence in the customer environment.

A study of these opportunities should be led by the departments currently tasked with revenue generation: Communications and Countywide Planning & Development. These, departments should coordinate with other key stakeholder departments throughout the agency.

Revenue opportunities that should be studied include:

- > Transit advertising with increased capacity
- > Digital billboards; developing internal capacity to implement and maintain billboards should be considered
- > Sponsorships
- > Lease/license rights of way (ROW) for utilities and communications
- > Lease buses and stops for real-time geospatial and roadway data collection
- > Lease property for 5G towers
- > Lease idle/available properties
 - Commercial carrier lockers (e.g., Amazon, UPS, etc.)
 - Vending machines, retail stores and station kiosks
 - Parking
 - Temporary retail stores
- > Expand retail Metro logo items online
- > Integrate retail programming at stations
- > Lease Gateway building office space (depending on Telecommute Policy)
- > Expand filming permission
- > More joint development
- > Green infrastructure partnerships

Implementation Plan:

As noted above, we recommend that implementation be organized and led by departments currently tasked with revenue generation, i.e., Communications and Countywide Planning & Development, in collaboration with key departments throughout the agency.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET OR FTE(S) REQUIRED
Identify Metro assets/resources and potential revenues that can be generated from them.	●				Marketing > Real Estate	
Use RFIs to test the market for commercial partnerships/sponsorships and identify impactful/significant revenue opportunities.		●			Marketing > Real Estate > Other Key Dept(s) as applicable	
Advance promising revenue generating programs with plans (targets, responsible department, timelines) and RFPs.		●	●		Key Dept(s) as applicable	
Monitor customer reactions to commercial presence on system.	●	●	●	●	Marketing	

37. Identify Funding for Incentives to Reduce Car Ownership

Summary:

Explore potential progressive revenue sources, such as federal or state funding, a vehicle license fee, a tax on commercial parking or a portion of future congestion pricing revenues, that could fund needed transit operation improvements, as well as incentives for households to go car-free or car-light.

Justification

Final recommendation #24 discusses the need for incentives to reduce unsustainable levels of car ownership in LA County. Quickly funding such incentives should be done through revenue mechanisms that are progressive and/or exempt low-income individuals. This requires looking for new sources of funding, since most existing sources are dedicated by law to specific projects.

Benefits

Shifting Angelenos away from driving as their default mode would support a more equitable and sustainable transportation system for LA County. Benefits would include reductions in traffic congestion, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle deaths and injuries. Bus service could operate more frequently and efficiently, offering a more viable alternative for people who, by choice or necessity, forgo car ownership.

Costs or cost savings

Costs depend on the revenue source selected. As an example, even a small vehicle license fee, based on vehicle value, could raise substantial revenues in a very progressive manner. According to the California Department of Motor Vehicles, more than eight million vehicles are registered in LA County, so an average fee of \$10 could raise over \$80 million annually.

Equity analysis

This recommendation focuses on progressive revenue sources that do not disadvantage low-income populations. A vehicle license fee tied to vehicle value is an example because lower-income people tend to own fewer and less expensive cars. Proceeds from any new fee would primarily go to low-income individuals since they will fund incentives that target alternatives to driving and encourage car-free or car-light households, which tend to be low income. If desired, households below a certain income threshold could be exempted from any new fee.

Vision 2028 goals

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 5.2 Exercise good public judgement and sound fiscal stewardship.
- 5.4 Apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more effective agency.

Best practices

Transportation in the United States tends to be funded through taxes on sales of fuel or other products. Unfortunately, fuel and sales taxes are inherently regressive, meaning they are applied uniformly, regardless of income, and therefore create a greater burden on low-income families. Moreover, these taxes are strongly linked to the economy: when times are good people drive more and buy more stuff. When times are bad, as they are now: revenues from these taxes fall reducing operating budgets for government programs, slowing projects and creating deficits. A vehicle license fee is not only more progressive, it is also more recession proof, since vehicle ownership is relatively inelastic and people tend to hang on to their cars even during a downturn.

Current practices

Metro tends to rely on sales taxes for most of its revenues. Prior to Measure R in 2008 there was some discussion and analysis of other potential revenue generators, but ultimately the sales tax was selected. Other funding mechanisms, such as vehicle license fees or other car ownership related fees, have been considered in Metro’s history, but these strategies have never been seriously pursued.

Recommendation

Metro should conduct an internal analysis of multiple potential revenue sources for funding an incentive program in LA County, with a specific emphasis on progressive mechanisms that do not impose additional burdens on disadvantaged populations. Considerations should include political viability, revenue raising potential, equity impacts, economic impacts and incentive properties. The idea is to recommend a suggested funding mechanism to the Metro Board and ask the Board to include such a proposal in Metro’s legislative program or as a potential ballot measure, as appropriate. If successful, this effort could raise substantial revenues for critical operations needs and create incentives for people to switch away from driving alone.

Implementation Plan

Implementation Structure

Implementation will be led by OEI in partnership with Government Relations, with assistance from Planning and Operations.

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE 2021	2022	2023	2024–2028	LEAD DEPT(S)	BUDGET OR FTE(S) REQUIRED
Internal analysis. Research potential revenue raising mechanisms for LA County that would allow for improved operations and incentive programs. Analyze mechanisms based on revenue potential, progressivity, feasibility and other relevant criteria to identify best option(s).	●				OEI with Government Relations, Planning, Operations	
Polling and outreach. Discuss potential options with the public and conduct polling to determine the options, if any, that are best positioned to move forward.	●	●			OEI, Government Relations, Community Relations	\$200,000
Recommendation. If an option has been selected, develop a recommendation and bring to Metro decision-makers.		●			OEI, Government Relations	
Advocacy. If Metro moves forward, seek political and public support.		●	●	●	Government Relations	



Next Steps

With the task force having released its final report, Metro will now focus on implementing recovery recommendations. This includes steps outlined in the implementation plans for each final recommendation, plus continued work on early actions that have not been completed. Staff will also aim to develop, track and share metrics to assess the impacts of implementation. When implementation of individual recommendation reaches a point that requires action by the Board of Directors, they will be brought to the board, with opportunity for public comment.



metro.net/recovery

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Appendix

Recovery Task Force
Timeline and Progress

- > The Recovery Task Force was launched by Metro CEO Phil Washington in April 2020.
- > SLT members nominated staff to the task force, and ratified the list of members. Once it was constituted, task force staff and members drafted and signed a charter identifying goals, structure, roles and timelines.
- > Task force participants quickly identified more than 100 potential recommendations to help Metro achieve its recovery goals. These ideas were drawn from programs and policies being implemented by Metro in response to COVID-19, from conversations with Metro staff on additional recovery options, and from research on recovery best practices underway around the world.
- > The task force established an equity subcommittee led by task force member KeAndra Cylear Dodds, the agency's Executive Officer for Equity & Race.

The equity subcommittee used a new equity tool to perform a rapid equity assessment of potential recommendations. The purpose of this equity analysis was to help identify which actions can help vulnerable customers and communities, reduce disparities, and mitigate any unintended harms.
- > The task force chose an initial list of 12 early action recommendations in May 2020, based on their alignment with Vision 2028 and equity impacts, as well as expected recovery benefits, timeliness and financial impacts. The chair presented these 12 ideas to the SLT and to the Policy and Planning Committee of the Board of Directors. The task force published its first report with these 12 early actions on June 1, 2020.

In June, the task force recommended an additional six early actions. The task force published its second report with these additional six recommendations on July 8, 2020.
- > Task force members divided into small working groups to begin developing more detailed implementation plans for the early action items in discussion with responsible departments. These working groups also developed cost recommendations for the second set of early action items.
- > To inform its deliberations, the task force heard presentations on internal resources and programs that could contribute to recovery. These included presentations on equity assessments; results from a survey of 1,900 Metro customers conducted in June 2020; a summary of interviews (conducted by Aaron Weinstein and KeAndra Cylear Dodd) with Metro bus operators to get their perception of Metro customer experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic; a research memo summarizing the pandemic's impacts on Metro and LA County and lessons from other disasters; the agency's unsolicited proposal process; and the Measure M Visionary Seed Fund. The task force chair met regularly with the head of Metro's Incident Management Team to exchange updates.
- > The task force developed an external and internal outreach plan to share its work with – and gather recovery ideas from – the public, stakeholders and Metro employees. Committees and organizations that have been briefed by the task force include all Metro Service Councils, Metro's Policy Advisory Committee, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, general managers and the Streets and Freeways Sub-Committee of the various municipal operators within LA County, business organizations and transportation advocacy groups.
- > The task force held its first virtual public town hall on July 9, 2020. More than 300 participants logged on to two simultaneous streams conducted in English and Spanish. The task force shared its goals and outlined the initial 18 early action items. Members of the public were invited to comment on these items and to suggest additional problems or solutions for the task force to consider. The task force received approximately 50 comments covering a range of issues. A sample of these comments follows:

- How is Metro ensuring social distancing and setting maximum vehicle loads?
 - Metro should permanently include equity in decision making.
 - Can Metro provide more public restrooms on the system?
 - How can Metro make it easier for seniors to refill TAP cards without touching machines?
 - How are fares being collected during the pandemic?
 - Can Metro reduce parking prices at Metro stations during the pandemic?
 - Is there a process to receive unsolicited proposals related to recovery?
 - What first and last mile options are available for customers who are unable to ride bikes?
 - Metro should consider increasing the number of people in a car needed to use HOV lanes.
 - How is Metro planning to enhance bus stops?
- > The task force held its first virtual internal town hall for Metro staff on July 23, 2020. Staff signed on to hear about the task force and to ask questions about its work and to recommend ideas for the task force to consider. During the event, 1,177 employees watched by livestream and 216 tuned in via webcam. Comments and questions touched on a variety of topics, some of which include child-care and education, active transportation, ridership, congestion pricing, contactless and mobile payments, safety and cleaning, among others. Examples of comments from staff include:
- Does authorizing more telecommuting after the pandemic require Metro Board action?
 - Metro should release a TAP app with different languages commonly spoken in LA County.
 - Doesn't encouraging more bike riding and telecommuting reduce transit use?
 - Can Metro's planning process have a less top-down approach?
 - Metro should partner with LA Unified School District to build out WiFi access points to allow all students to take part in distance learning.
 - Can the Traffic Reduction Study be accelerated?
 - Can Metro let riders determine when their 7- or 30-day passes start and end?
 - Is Metro helping cities repurpose street space for walking, bicycling and outdoor dining?
 - Is the task force learning from the ways other transit systems are responding?
 - Can Metro offer incentives to help encourage riders to come back?
 - Will Metro commit to continuing enhanced clean-up of trash and elevators even after pandemic?
 - Will Metro allow greater flex scheduling for staff?
- > The task force published its [third progress report](#) on August 12, 2020.
- > The task force identified two additional early action recommendations in August 2020 and brought these to Metro's SLT.
- > During late summer and fall of 2020, the task force began identifying final recommendations. These are recovery recommendations that are less time-sensitive than early action items, but have potential major upsides in advancing economic recovery, mobility and equity. The task force presented an initial list of these final, longer-term recommendations to SLT.
- > The task force held its second set of public and staff online town halls on October 1, 2020, to get feedback on the list of potential final recommendations. Public comments and questions included:
- What are the biggest barriers to integrating local transit agencies?
 - The biggest frustration with transit is waiting 30 or 40 minutes for a ride. As a solution, Metro could incentivize riders with a free TNC ride to get them where they need to go once they've waited 30 minutes or longer.

- Will you take away safety measures currently in place?
- When Metro considers bus capacity, are its calculations based on pre- COVID-19 capacity or current capacity, which removes a significant portion of capacity at the front of the bus?
- Great to see recommendations on Complete Streets and incentives to reduce car usage and disincentives to car ownership. How do you think the fareless system idea might impact that?
- The Metro Board recently passed the budget and included an amendment that asked staff for an Operations Recovery Plan. Will this task force be working on that? How can we get back to pre-COVID service and then even beyond to restore service?
- Because this is LA, can we Hollywoodify Metro and make it “cool” to ride transit? Can we get celebrities with masks randomly riding the buses for selfie opportunities and other interactions?
- What kinds of barriers are there to adding retail businesses to rail stations like they have in Japan and Hong Kong?
- What is being done to improve personal experience in transit and to give riders the same experience they would get in a car, such as charging station, WiFi, etc.?
- To make the rider experience better, will there be a renewed emphasis on problematic passenger conduct (hygiene, food/drink, fighting, loud music, etc.)?
- The huge increase in construction costs for transit projects is not entirely unique to LA. Will Metro be partnering with other agencies across the country or even internationally to investigate the drivers of these cost increases?

> The task force refined its final, longer-term recommendations and created implementation plans, including identifying which departments would take the lead on advancing these recommendations, what the associated tasks and deliverables would be, and what a timeline for implementation would look like. A modified set of final recommendations was shared with SLT and Board staff in October and November 2020 and with the Executive Management Committee of the Board in November 2020.

> The task force released a draft final report in December 2020 and solicited feedback from the public and stakeholders. More than 200 individuals and stakeholders submitted feedback. The task force considered the input, incorporated some comments through edits to the report and identified other comments that can help shape implementation of the recommendations.

> **The task force released the final report in February 2021.**

Staff comments and questions included:

- In addition to incentives to reduce vehicle ownership, can Metro take on new measures to encourage telecommuting, such as offering free countywide high-speed broadband access to registered telecommuters, transit users and low-income communities?
- With the Board’s interest in the idea of commercial sponsorships, how can the agency assure that we maintain and even improve legibility and brand recognition for our customers, while also taking advantage of the revenue raising potential?
- Can you guys talk about Metro’s efforts on air filtration/UV-C disinfecting technology?
- Can you talk more about how Metro might support more affordable housing near our stations? Even with Board- adopted targets, this has proved challenging, and we see more interest in using our property for short-term housing for those who are homeless.