

ATTACHMENT B – VENDOR AND PARTNER OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Since February 2021, Metro has been working with the Walter J Company to develop a mixed-use project at WLMP Station through its Joint Development program. Project outreach is focused on creating an open line of communication with community stakeholders. Since the project's inception, the communities' sentiment regarding micro-entrepreneurism has remained consistent and is being addressed by the provision of space dedicated to vendors as part of the proposed development.

To reimagine the plaza vending program with a care first approach and the community economic development opportunities that the WLMP station plaza can provide, Metro initiated outreach efforts with site visits and community interviews with organizations that specialized in economic development activities and gang prevention, including the California Reinvestment Coalition, Central City Neighborhood Partners, Community Power Collective, Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Program, Healing Urban Barrios, Homies Unidos, Inclusive Action for the City, Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE), Public Counsel, and Union Popular de Vendedores Ambulantes (Union or UPVA).

This spring, in order to better understand the experiences of microentrepreneurs currently operating informally on the station plaza, Metro conducted in-person surveys. There were 13 onsite vendors offering a variety of goods who were interviewed. Below is a highlight of some of the findings from the survey:

- 62% have operated on the plaza 5 or more years
- 77% work on the plaza 7 days a week
- 69% work 7-9 hours per day
- 69% set up between 9 and 11 AM
- 76% breakdown operations at 6 PM or later
- 45% indicated that they serve more than 10 customers per day Monday–Friday
- 62% indicated that they serve more than 10 customers per day Saturday–Sunday
- 84% work alone
- 100% indicated that they feel safer with the station improvements that have occurred

During these in-person interviews, many vendors commented that the additional surveillance helps vendors and consumers feel safe. Additionally, staff observed the following:

- Days of operation, set-up, and tear down times varied
- Most vendors are paying storage fees.
- Vendors with visible physical challenges and those who are seniors are paying fees for set-up, tear down, delivery, and hauling away of equipment.
- A grassroots effort to create a “merchant BID” is informally taking place.

The input from community organizations and vendors has been vital to the conceptualization of a Restructured Plaza Vending Program that will complement the

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physical plaza enhancements taking place at the station and provide community and peer surveillance that improves safety and activates the plaza. In alignment with Metro's CBO Partnering Strategy, Metro intends to contract with a community-based organization (CBO) to further develop and administer the proposed vending program with small business technical assistance and the opportunity to accommodate community activities and events on the plaza. Staff continues to coordinate with the First Supervisorial District and First Council District on opportunities to partner with the City and County to deliver a successful vendor program that activates the plaza.