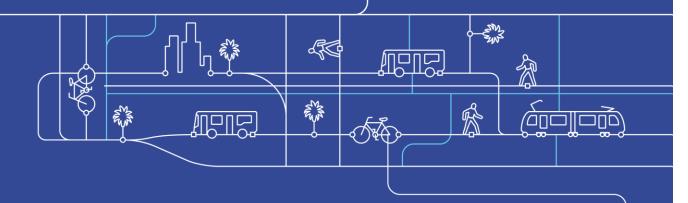
Attachment C

NEXTGEN Bus Study



SUMMARY
Working Group Meeting #6:
Metro's Equity Platform in Action
Through the NextGen Bus Study
May 29, 2019





NextGen Working Group Meeting #6

The NextGen Bus Study is continuing its effort to improve Metro's bus network by working in collaboration with the NextGen Working Group to help design a better bus system and make it more relevant for the changing travel patterns and needs of Los Angeles County's diverse population. Metro has and will continue to engage with the NextGen Working Group to ensure that a wide range of communities are represented in the process.

During the sixth meeting, Metro staff and Working Group members, held a facilitated discussion, and addressed *Metro's Equity Platform in Action Through the NextGen Bus Study*, including how the Four Pillars of Metro's Equity Platform (I. Define and Measure, II. Listen and Learn, III. Focus and Deliver and IV. Train and Grow) have been implemented at each step of the study for both the technical and communications efforts.

Based on the Metro Board's request to understand how public input is shaping the NextGen Bus Study recommendations, the Working Group focused on the question "How Does the Equity Platform manifest and get reflected in how the bus network and service lines are redefined?" This was discussed within the context of how a redesigned bus system would function by first maximizing the efficiency of the current service hours to determine if additional service hours are needed. Some of the principal ideas shared by Working Group members in discussions include the following:

- Success will be achieved when taking the bus is a point of pride and when choosing to ride the bus is seen as a positive, viable option for everyone.
- Change in the mindset of the leadership and decision makers to develop a kinship with the current bus riders and the communities they represent.
- Metro needs to give bus improvements the same or higher priority, than capital improvement projects there is a need to reflect pride in the bus system.
- Customers of all ages, races and backgrounds should feel safe and empowered to ride the bus.
- Accessibility is key to ensuring that the Equity Platform in Action continues.
- Feedback needs to be in real-time, fast and customer focused.
- Avoid reduction of bus service levels that could negatively impact diverse communities.
- Look for opportunities to increase the number of total service hours to help improve and advance bus service.





Breakout Sessions

Working Group members were assigned to one of three groups to deliberate questions related to the driving question. The following summary highlights each group's focus and dialogue:

Group One: NextGen Plan and Equity Platform Measurements

Group One focused on the NextGen bus plan and equity measurements, and addressed the question, "In thinking about Metro's Equity Platform in Action, how will we know we are successful?" The key themes from this group were:

- Frequency, availability and speed for all groups is equally important
- Improved customer service is imperative for long-term success
- Connectivity and integration with other modes and agencies/operators
- Wayfinding and ease of use
- Inclusivity and access to competitive transit service for all people across the county (i.e. existing riders, non-riders, low income, middle income, etc.)
- Safety and cleanliness
- Additional bus operator training to diffuse tense situations

Group Two: NextGen Equity Platform Guiding Principles Development

Group Two covered NextGen equity guiding principles development and set out to answer the question, "When we think about Metro's Equity Platform in Action, what values inform and shape our decision-making in service line planning?" This group's key themes were:

- Accessibility and reliability
- Fairness and inclusivity give a voice to people and make sure they feel heard
- Needs-based system, including both geographic and individual needs
- Multi-faceted and layered approach to intersectionality empowerment through access to opportunities for the multi-faceted needs of individuals representing diverse groups
- Safety and Security

Group Three: NextGen Application of Equity Platform and Future Feedback Mechanisms

Group Three addressed the application of equity and future feedback mechanisms needed by focusing on the key question, "How will Metro's Equity Platform in Action guide and shape our approach to soliciting community input for service line planning?" The value statements from this group were:

- Public transit is for all of Los Angeles and we should prioritize buses over cars
- Elevate NextGen to be as important as a capital project (rail)





- Improve the experience of current riders
- Stay true to the vision
- Metro must celebrate bus riders as part of environmental "hero" impacts
- Lifeline over lifestyle address needs over providing options
- Working routes should empower economic success
- Purposeful data collection <u>that consistently includes</u> marginalized and non-traditional community members, Limited-English-Population residents, students and bus operators
- First/last mile should be (system-wide) safe and dignified for all
- Better understand and assess effectiveness of community usage of incentive programs and improve promoting discounted fares
- Tech integration for ridership and for evaluation assessment

Group Consensus on Measurements, Guiding Principles, and Feedback Mechanisms

After the breakout sessions, the members reconvened as a group with a facilitated discussion where they reviewed and came to a consensus on measurements, guiding principles, and feedback mechanisms as it pertains to the Equity Platform in Action as identified below.

<u>Success Measurements and Guiding Principles</u> – The groups stated success in this area will be achieved when taking the bus is seen as a positive, viable option for everyone, which will also be evident in the results – who is riding? Cultural humility is a value that needs to be added. Furthermore, reduction of bus service levels that will limit the potential impact and benefit of the NextGen Bus Study should be avoided, and opportunities to increase the number of total service hours should be explored to help improve and advance bus service.

<u>Customer Service, Public Education and Customer Feedback Mechanism</u> – The groups felt the rider's experience was just as important as their journey. Greater utilization and integration of technology was suggested, such as a way for customers to use an App that allows for high quality real-time bus arrival information and provides an opportunity for Metro to receive feedback relating to the route, bus operators, and rider experience. Metro also needs to educate the public on how routes are planned, how stations are set up, and how stops are set up to increase transparency. Customers need to feel they have been heard.

<u>Safety and Emergencies</u> – Metro must employ a wide range of strategies such as bus station design, lighting, real time information, and the appropriate balance of visible, uniformed security/police, in order to ensure customers of all ages, races, and backgrounds feel safe and empowered to the ride the bus. Major emergencies need to be prevented and a quick response is required when they do happen. Metro must have better accountability on



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making sure elevators are working and having a way to easily report maintenance issues and getting them fixed.

<u>Train and Grow Pillar (Future)</u> – Bus operator training needs to be enhanced and they should know how to deescalate a tense situation on the bus. However, there was a concern about over burdening them with responsibility. Metro also needs to continue to seek ways to coordinate with other agencies and municipal bus operators.

<u>Metro Board Involvement</u> – The Metro Board should take pride in their bus system and place equal attention to it as they do for Metro's rail service. It is important for the senior leadership to be present to hear what stakeholders, communities, and customers are saying and not just reading it in a report.

The NextGen Bus Study is striving to create a world-class bus system that is accessible, reliable and an essential part of the comprehensive transportation system for Los Angeles County. To accomplish this, Metro will continue the Equity Platform in Action throughout this Study process as it develops the NextGen bus service concept and service line planning.

Metro will continue to rely on the NextGen Working Group as the community leaders whom Metro can rely on to ensure the redesigned bus system is accessible and equitable for the diverse stakeholders and communities in our county. The NextGen Working Group's continued involvement and guidance are essential to the success of the NextGen Bus Study.

