



## Board Report

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**REVISED**  
**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE**  
**OCTOBER 14, 2020**

**SUBJECT: TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

1. APPROVING the Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Implementation Plan (Attachment A) and the TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance Program Guidelines (Attachment B); and
2. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer or designee to enter into multiple agreements with Los Angeles County cities, the County of Los Angeles, and other eligible entities to fund TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance recommended in the TOC Implementation Plan in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$5,000,000, subject to annual budget programming.

**ISSUE**

In 2018, the Metro Board adopted the Transit Oriented Communities Policy (TOC Policy) which affirmed Metro's commitment to incorporate equity, community development, and land use in how Metro plans and delivers the Los Angeles County public transportation system. The TOC Policy committed Metro to the development of an Implementation Plan as an immediate next step to establish how Metro will work with partners across Los Angeles County to realize equitable TOCs.

The COVID-19 economic and public health pandemic has further exacerbated the pressing need for community stabilization, equity, and access to opportunity in Los Angeles County, especially in communities of color. The implications of this crisis directly affect the Metro riders of today and tomorrow.

The TOC Implementation Plan (TOC Plan) (Attachment A) charts an actionable course for Metro to lead and to partner with communities across the county to leverage the positive benefits that come with the public transportation system, as well as chart a course to guard against potential unintended consequences especially within vulnerable communities.

**BACKGROUND**

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The Vision 2028 Strategic Plan calls for Metro to ***enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity*** and to ***transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership***. The TOC Plan seeks to leverage the investment in the public transportation system to spur access to opportunity and improve equitable outcomes in Los Angeles County. Metro recognizes that collaboration and partnerships are essential to realizing equitable TOCs. The TOC Plan is an example of Metro stepping into a regional leadership role through actions that maximize equitable, positive outcomes for Los Angeles County residents and create places that support transit riders and increase transit ridership.

The public transportation system expansion is a once-in-a-generation opportunity that extends to almost every corner of Los Angeles County and will touch almost every county resident. Metro is in a unique position to convene, lead, influence and support jurisdictions and communities to identify community-specific strategies for transit-supportive community development plans and policies that are essential for a successful transportation system.

The TOC Plan will support transit-adjacent communities to leverage the transit infrastructure and promote multi-modal connectivity to and from transit. It will also help foster land use and development patterns that leverage the transit investment and make it easy and convenient for people to live, work, and shop in communities connected by transit.

The TOC Plan builds upon the goals of the TOC Policy adopted by the Board in 2018 which include:

1. Increase transit ridership and choice.
2. Stabilize and enhance communities surrounding transit.
3. Engage organizations, jurisdictions, and the public.
4. Distribute transit benefits to all.
5. Capture the value created by transit.

In addition, the TOC Plan will advance other aspects of the TOC Policy which include identification of opportunities where Metro leads and partners, as well as defining eligible TOC activities for which jurisdictions can use Measure M local return.

The TOC Plan was developed in close coordination with the TOC Policy Working Group which includes representatives of the Metro Policy Advisory Council (PAC), Los Angeles County jurisdictions, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Councils of Government (COGs), and advocacy organizations. A total of six meetings were held with the Working Group over the course of the preparation of the TOC Plan.

## **DISCUSSION**

The TOC Plan includes a series of initiatives, strategies, and actions for Metro to undertake directly or as a partner to maximize the public transit investments that support equitable community development and thus increase transit ridership. The TOC Plan is organized into the following four initiatives:

1. **Creating TOC Corridor Baseline Assessments for all Metro Transit Corridors:** Highlight community characteristics, opportunities, and needs to support communities in leveraging the positive benefits of the transit investment and guarding against potential unintended consequences.

2. **Continually Improving Metro TOC Programmatic Areas:** A series of actions that Metro will undertake to ensure that Metro TOC Programs align with and advance the TOC Policy goals and outcomes.
3. **Enhancing Metro's Internal Coordination:** Activities that Metro will undertake to align internal coordination in support of creating TOCs in Los Angeles County.
4. **Strengthening Coordination and Collaboration with Metro's Partners:** Many of the activities that are critical to TOCs are outside of Metro's jurisdiction. This initiative calls for ongoing coordination and collaboration with municipalities, local communities, and advocacy organizations which is essential for the region to realize equitable TOCs.

The TOC Plan incorporates many existing Metro TOC programs and highlights strategic new programs to build LA County jurisdictions' capacity in TOC areas. The TOC Initiative areas include *actions* (the activity that Metro will undertake), *measures* (a measurable activity that Metro will achieve, track, and report on semi-annually), *timeline* (the target period to launch an action), and identification of whether *Metro leads or supports*.

The following three new programs are the most notable and impactful for supporting TOCs in Los Angeles County. Staff recommends implementing these in the near-term.

#### TOC Corridor Baseline Assessments

The TOC Corridor Baselines (Baselines) are one of the most critical and potentially impactful recommendations in the TOC Plan. Baselines will be developed for every Metro Transit Corridor, starting with Measure M, in close partnership with jurisdictions and with deep stakeholder engagement throughout the process. Each Baseline will be informed by a three-part process that includes data assessment, policy inventory and assessment, and recommended strategies for realizing equitable TOCs.

The data assessment will explore community characteristics around the TOC Policy goals and sub-goals and will include socioeconomic, demographic, housing, mobility, and other TOC-related data sets, with a keen focus on identifying community-specific equity needs. Informed by this data, the policy assessments will inventory and analyze jurisdictions' existing TOC-related policies and programs around station areas to determine whether policies are in place and whether there is a need to update a policy/program or develop a new one based on findings from the Baselines. Each Baseline will include a series of recommended strategies for each jurisdiction to pursue to realize equitable TOCs.

Stakeholder engagement will be incorporated in every step of the process. For example, stakeholders will be engaged during the data assessment to ensure that the data is accurately reflective of community characteristics as well as during the policy/program assessment to confirm that the policy/program recommendations that come out of the Baseline process are reflective of community needs. As such, staff recommends partnering with academic institutions on data collection and community-based organizations (CBOs) to lead Baseline stakeholder engagement

efforts.

To start, Baselines will be prepared for every Measure M Transit Corridor and will be sequenced based on the following three considerations:

- Status of Board-approved Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
- Transit Corridor line open date
- Equity Focus Communities (EFCs)

Baselines will also be prepared for existing transit corridors upon completion of the Measure M Transit Corridor Baselines. Staff anticipates preparing a Baseline for the first Transit Corridor in FY21 and sequencing Baselines for other transit corridor on an annual basis, staffing and funding permitting. To track need and progress over time, corridor-wide Baselines will be updated in 5 to 7 10 years.

### TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance

TOC Grant Writing and TOC Technical Assistance will be made available to Los Angeles County jurisdictions. The TOC Grant Writing Assistance Program will make grant writers available to Los Angeles County jurisdictions seeking to apply for planning or capital grants to implement TOC activities, as defined by the TOC Policy, with a prioritization for EFCs and other high-need communities, based on socio-economic factors, as deemed relevant.

Authorization is being sought to allow Metro to enter into agreements with local jurisdictions in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$5,000,000, subject to annual budget programming. For the Metro Active Transport (MAT) component, eligible applicants also include state and federal agencies; transit agencies; and other transportation-related joint powers authorities (JPAs) that are sponsored by one of the aforementioned public agencies for the MAT component. For Transit to Parks Strategic Plan, eligible applicants for grant writing assistance also include nonprofit organizations that are eligible if they are an eligible applicant for the grant for which they are seeking grant writing assistance.

The TOC Technical Assistance Program (TOC TAP) is intended to provide jurisdictions with up to \$200,000 for technical assistance needed to build local jurisdiction capacity in TOC subject areas and/or explore the feasibility of implementing TOC planning programs through market studies, transportation and/or land use studies (including affordable housing and community stabilization), environmental remediation studies, and similar.

In addition, the TOC TAP will include convenings with Los Angeles County municipalities (staff, elected officials, and commissioners) and partners as a forum for Los Angeles County municipalities to facilitate an exchange of ideas and lessons learned, provide joint training opportunities in a time- and cost-effective manner, and structure and deliver targeted TOC technical assistance.

### Near-Term Implementation

Staff recommends proceeding with the Baselines in the near-term and focusing TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance planning activities on the following four categories:

1. Affordable Housing Production, Preservation, and Tenant Protections
2. Community Stabilization (including anti-displacement strategies-housing and small businesses assistance)
3. Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) compliance activities, aligned with TOC Policy Goals
4. First/Last Mile, Metro Active Transport (MAT) project implementation (for MAT, scope items that extend beyond MAT funding allocations), and Transit to Parks Strategic Plan project implementation.

Additionally, given Metro's current financial constraints, staff recommends focusing the TOC TAP program activities in the near-term on convenings (as opposed to feasibility studies) with a commitment to hold one convening in FY21 and at least two convenings a year thereafter on the above topics. Future fiscal years will fund technical assistance in the form of feasibility studies, subject to annual budget programming.

The TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance Guidelines (Attachment B) establish the following criteria that will be used to evaluate and prioritize jurisdiction funding requests:

- TOC Policy Goal alignment and seeking to address a TOC need
- Projects located in Equity Focus Communities or other high-need area as defined by equity methodology
- Projects that have Baselines or are prioritizing the four TOC areas identified in the near-term implementation section above
- Projects that demonstrate that equity will be an outcome
- Staffing commitment and demonstrated successful past grant performance
- Projects that demonstrate equity as a process through commitment to meaningful and inclusive stakeholder engagement
- Transit corridor timing (existing, planned, and/or environmentally-cleared transit corridor project)

### Semi-Annual Reports

TOC Plan Semi-Annual Reports will be prepared to report on progress made, lessons learned, and areas where there may be a need to course correct a program. The Semi-Annual Reports will include a status of the Baselines, a summary of grant writing assistance offered (including external resources secured/leveraged), as well as the number and type of convenings held and the number of attendees reached.

The TOC Plan is a living document that will evolve as lessons are learned over the course of implementing the various activities and reporting out through the Semi-Annual Reports. A more comprehensive TOC Plan update is anticipated after five years.

### Equity Platform

The TOC Plan is grounded in equity and aligns with the following Equity Platform Pillars:

- 1. Define and Measure** - The Baselines will be a critical resource to define community-level equity needs and measure progress in these areas over time. Additionally, the TOC Plan leverages the Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) designation as an importance tool for prioritizing TOC Plan resources.
- 2. Listen and Learn** - The TOC Plan was developed through an iterative process with the TOC Policy Working Group and the new programs included in the plan, call for ground-up stakeholder engagement and collaborations with municipalities. In particular, the Baselines will be grounded in deep stakeholder engagement to ensure that the data and policy assessments are ground-truthed in community experiences.
- 3. Focus and Deliver** - The Plan outlines targeted, near-term, actionable areas that Metro can tackle directly and in partnership with others, to realize equitable TOCs in Los Angeles County.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

These recommendations have no impacts on safety.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The proposed FY 2021 budget includes \$335,000 in Cost Center 4530, Project 401049 (Transit Oriented Communities), for a Baseline, Grant Writing Assistance, and a TOC Convening. Since this is a multi-year commitment, the Cost Center Manager and Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting in future years subject to funding availability and annual programming.

#### **Impact to Budget**

The funding for this program is from the General Fund. These funds are eligible for Metro bus and rail capital and operating expenditures.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The recommendation supports Vision 2028 Strategic Plan Goals # 3 and 4.

The TOC Plan is grounded in *enhancing communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity* (Strategic Goal 3) by working with communities to leverage the public transportation system to improve mobility and plan for equitable community development.

Additionally, the need for *transforming LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership* (Strategic Goal 4) is greater than ever and Metro is best positioned to lead and convene Los Angeles County jurisdictions to create equitable TOCs.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could choose to not approve the TOC Plan or the TOC Grant Writing and Technical

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Assistance Program Guidelines. Staff does not recommend this. The Board-adopted TOC Policy calls for the TOC Plan and for Metro to report on progress through Semi-Annual Reports. Staff recommends prioritizing resources based on EFCs and programs that will support community stabilization and building Los Angeles County jurisdiction capacity in TOC areas.

**NEXT STEPS**

Should the Board approve the recommendations, staff will: 1) initiate the Baseline solicitation; 2) take the necessary steps to launch the TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance Programs and engage Los Angeles County jurisdictions on program availability; and 3) hold a TOC Convening in late spring/early summer 2021.

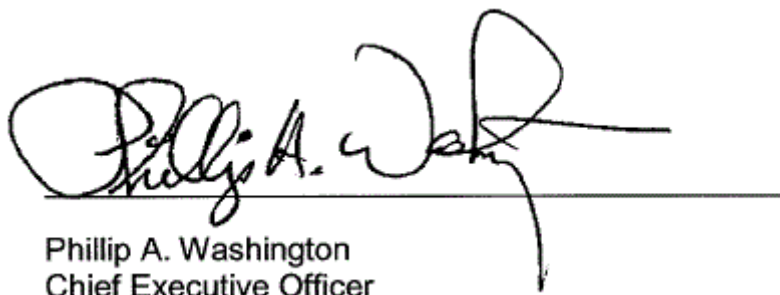
**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - TOC Implementation Plan(REVISED)

Attachment B - TOC Grant Writing and Technical Assistance Program Guidelines

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