



## Board Report

---

File #: 2022-0265, File Type: Plan

Agenda Number: 5.

---

### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE OCTOBER 19, 2022

**SUBJECT: FIRST/LAST MILE PROJECT PRIORITIZATION**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. RECEIVING AND FILING First/Last Mile (FLM) Project Prioritization Methodology (Attachment B); and
- B. ADOPTING Prioritized Project Lists (Attachment A) for previously adopted FLM plans for the following plans:
  - 1. Aviation/96th Street Station, adopted June 27, 2019 (File #2019-0170)
  - 2. East San Fernando Valley, adopted December 3, 2020 (File #2019-0431)
  - 3. Gold Line Foothill Extension 2B, adopted June 27, 2019 (File #2019-0170)
  - 4. Purple Line Extension Sections 2 & 3, adopted May 28, 2020 (File #2020-0111)

**ISSUE**

In 2019 and 2020, the Metro Board of Directors adopted multiple FLM plans for future rail lines and stations. Each plan directed staff to report back to the Board with recommended next steps that are consistent with procedures and commitments in the FLM Guidelines (Guidelines). The Board subsequently adopted the Guidelines (May 2021, File #2020-0365), which committed and described a project prioritization process focusing on safety. The Project Prioritization Methodology (Attachment B) has been completed and applied to the above-referenced FLM plans, resulting in Prioritized Projects Lists for each plan.

Board approval of the Prioritized Project Lists in this report would amend previously Board-approved FLM plans - which was called for in the Guidelines - and facilitate local jurisdiction implementation of certain priority projects identified in those plans. Local jurisdictions may choose to implement the priority projects to receive credit toward the 3% local contribution, pending negotiation of necessary agreements, and based on terms established in the FLM Guidelines.

**BACKGROUND**

The adopted Guidelines note that a prioritization methodology has been piloted on past FLM plans. The Guidelines further prompted the development and application of a consistent methodology for prioritizing projects included in all FLM plans.

Each FLM plan identifies FLM projects within a ½-mile walkshed and 3-mile bike-shed radius of a station. The Project Prioritization Methodology was developed to emphasize the safety, access, and comfort of transit customers walking and wheeling to a station.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Project Prioritization Methodology**

Consistent with the FLM Guidelines, the methodology prioritizes safety-focused projects on primary pathways (streets). Primary pathways are identified in the FLM plans and are generally those directly intersecting the stations. This focus ensures alignment with Metro's goals to expand the reach of transit by addressing riders' journeys to the station and providing safe, accessible, and continuous pathways. The prioritization methodology further allows for flexibility by providing an option for local agencies to seek additional priority projects based on specified criteria such as demonstrated and significant community support.

The prioritization methodology is consistent with FLM policies adopted by the Metro Board and developed with input from local jurisdictions with FLM plans.

The Project Prioritization Methodology consists of the following methods:

- 1. Method 1: Walk/Wheel projects within one-half mile of a station**
  - a. On Primary Pathway as defined in an adopted FLM Plan; and
  - b. Improve safety for walk and wheel users through Safety-Focused Project types
- 2. Method 2: Wheel projects between one-half mile and three miles of a Station**
  - a. On Primary Pathway to the extent delineated in an adopted FLM Plan; and
  - b. Improve safety for wheel users through Safety-Focused Project types; and
  - c. Connect directly to a key destination and/or other wheel network facilities located between one-half and up to three miles from a new rail transit station.
- 3. Method 3: Local Flexibility**
  - a. Projects considered under this method must be included in the adopted FLM Plan and be justified with respect to one or more criteria such as community support or alignment with local plans.

The complete Project Prioritization Methodology is provided in Attachment B.

Method 3 allows local flexibility for unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis and is subject to discrete and well-defined criteria. This category intends to provide a way for jurisdictions, as implementing partners, to integrate their own active transportation activities and needs while maintaining a focus on Metro's core objectives around station access and elevating community

desires, as captured in the FLM Plans. Metro solicited and evaluated proposed projects under this method from local jurisdictions. Projects meeting the criteria are included in the priority projects lists as Attachment A. Note that some projects have been included as conditional priorities, and staff will work with respective jurisdictions to verify that criteria have been met. One support letter was received in relation to Method 3 proposals, and is included as Attachment C. All projects considered for prioritization must be included in the adopted FLM Plan, except where a substitution is proposed consistent with Method 3, and where the proposed project provides comparable intent and benefit to a project in the adopted plan.

Final priority project lists for each plan are included as Attachment A. Adoption of these lists by the Board allows local jurisdictions to identify and commit individual projects for implementation and completes a committed next step as part of the adoption of the FLM Guidelines. All jurisdictions affected by this prioritization step were briefed and provided input opportunities at multiple stages. This prioritization step follows prior work on developing FLM plans which features and integrates substantial community input (see “Equity Platform” discussion below for more detail).

#### Methodology Development

Following the Board adoption of the Guidelines, staff developed a draft Prioritization Methodology and circulated it to relevant jurisdictions, including a review and comment opportunity. The input was subsequently incorporated into a final methodology. The first two methods were then applied to the FLM plans, with the opportunity for local jurisdictions to apply the third method for local flexibility.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

Adopting the Prioritized Projects Lists will have no direct safety impact; however, the methodology to determine Prioritized Projects Lists and the specific projects on each list focus on projects to improve safety conditions for transit riders. Local jurisdictions are solely responsible for the design and implementation of the priority projects, at their option.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The Guidelines limit 3% local contribution availability to priority projects identified in FLM plans. Implementing FLM projects for 3% credit carries a financial risk to Metro as it directs resources away from delivery of the core transit project. The completed FLM Plans covered in this report identified projects costing approximately \$19 million per station. As recommended here, the availability of 3% credit to Priority Projects reduces the risk to Metro by approximately half.

#### Impact to Budget

FLM planning work including an effort to develop this project prioritization, is included in the adopted Metro budget at Project Number 405306.

### **EQUITY PLATFORM**

FLM Plans consider and elevate equity considerations at all stages. Of note, this includes a partnership with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) during the plan development and conducting grassroots and participatory outreach that centers and elevates transit riders’ needs. CBO

partnership is standard practice in developing all Metro FLM plans, as they provide invaluable expertise and knowledge of local contexts, especially in under-served communities. Partnership with CBOs in developing FLM plans has included a standard chartering process and fair compensation. As such, the resultant project list within each FLM plan captures key needs and desires for high need and under-served communities. Of note for this report, Metro partnered with Pacoima Beautiful and Safe Moves to develop the East San Fernando Valley FLM Plan and with ActiveSGV for the Gold Line Foothill Extension 2B FLM Plan. The specific prioritization step described in this Board Report elevates the most critical needs by focusing on the safety, accessibility, and comfort of people navigating to and from transit stations. If implemented, the resulting priority projects provide a dignified environment that serves the needs of Metro's patrons.

All future Metro rail station areas have different existing conditions and needs. Needs are typically greatest in locations with historic disinvestment in community scale infrastructure, which correlate closely with Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). Of the 24 planned Metro Rail stations in question for FLM project prioritization, 18 stations are in or within a half-mile of EFCs. The FLM planning process identifies and addresses these needs such that higher-need station locations will typically yield a more extensive project list. This prioritization methodology does not specifically redirect resources to higher need locations because it is primarily conceived as an opportunity for all jurisdictions with a 3% obligation to have an option and incentive to implement FLM projects. However, the methodology, as applied at the end of the FLM planning process does yield results whereby there are typically more projects identified and more investment opportunities where needs are greatest.

Once constructed, projects identified in the Prioritized Projects Lists, such as enhanced sidewalk elements and improved lighting, can reduce disproportionate harm to vulnerable demographic groups from unsafe and inaccessible streets around Metro rail stations. These groups are also expected to see air and noise pollution reduction.

If local jurisdictions choose to implement projects, residents within station areas may face construction impacts, including added congestion and delay for drivers. During the planning process, local jurisdictions will employ community engagement with the public, including partnerships with community-based organizations, to inform project design, implementation, and mitigation of adverse impacts.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The recommended action furthers Strategic Plan Goal #2: Outstanding trip experiences for all. FLM projects facilitated by the project prioritization will improve customers' experiences accessing existing and future rail stations and high-ridership bus stops by walking, biking, or other rolling modes.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board may choose not to adopt the FLM Prioritized Projects Lists. This option is not recommended as it would perpetuate an unclear process and expectations for Measure M transit projects concerning FLM implementation. Further, the Prioritized Project Lists, provide clarity for jurisdictions on the projects eligible for satisfying the 3% local contribution requirement. Reconsidering this and other key concepts would further result in a delay in implementing the FLM

program and could necessitate ad hoc decisions on individual projects.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff intends to provide Prioritized Project Lists to local jurisdictions who may pursue 3% local contribution negotiations for FLM priority projects at their option, subject to the Measure M Guidelines and FLM Guidelines requirements. In subsequent phases, the scope and definition of priority projects will be detailed and may be adjusted by agreement between Metro staff and the respective jurisdictions. Staff will verify conditional priority projects in coordination with local jurisdictions. Priority project lists may be updated or revised by the Board in the future in light of varying transit project timelines and associated 3% contribution discussions.

Local jurisdictions will lead future phases of identified priority projects and will be responsible for implementation, inclusive of further community engagement, design, construction, and maintenance.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Prioritized Projects Lists

Attachment B - Project Prioritization Methodology

Attachment C - Support Letter


Prepared by: Khristian Decastro, Sr. Transportation Planner, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 547-4298

Jacob Lieb, Senior Director, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-4132

Nick Saponara, EO, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-4313

Holly Rockwell, SEO - Real Estate, Transit Oriented Communities and Transportation Demand Management, (213) 922-5585

Reviewed by: James de la Loza, Chief Planning Officer, (213) 922-2920



Stephanie N. Wiggins  
Chief Executive Officer