



Board Report

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**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
APRIL 20, 2017**

Motion by:

Ridley-Thomas, Fasana, Garcetti, Barger, Garcia and Dupont-Walker

Item 43: Supporting Access to Careers in Los Angeles County's Transportation Sector for At-Risk Youth

Following the passage of Measure M, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is poised to dramatically transform the transportation infrastructure of the region, and in doing so, propel the development of a sizable workforce to support the planning, construction, operations and maintenance of our expanding system. Specifically, the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) estimates that 778,000 jobs and \$133.6 billion in economic output will result from infrastructure projects funded by Metro's Traffic Improvement Plan over the next half century. LAEDC further projects that the construction, architecture and engineering fields would experience the highest percentage of growth.

Over the next three years, 39% of the Metro workforce will be fully eligible for retirement. Metro has numerous programs in place to support inclusive contracting opportunities and a diverse workforce. Specially, the Department of Economic Opportunity and Diversity systemically identifies opportunities to expand participation of small, local and veteran-owned businesses through all of Metro's contracts. In addition, Metro has instituted numerous workforce development initiatives including the Workforce Initiative Now - Los Angeles (WIN-LA) Program, as well as an agency-wide Project Labor Agreement which requires the significant participation of targeted and disadvantaged worker populations on major construction projects.

However, in order to further foster a pipeline of qualified, local individuals for careers in the transportation sector, Metro should also consider engaging youth early on, potentially as part of their

middle or high school experience. Moreover, there is an opportunity to collaborate with at-risk populations including youth involved with the County of Los Angeles' (County) Probation and Children and Family Services (DCFS) Departments to expose and connect them to transit-related educational and career opportunities if their interests align.

DCFS serves nearly 35,000 children and their families across the County. High school graduation rates for this population are abysmal, with only 45 percent of foster youth in California completing high school, compared with 79 percent of the general student population. Nationally, only six percent of former foster youth have earned a two or four-year degree by age 24, and only one in two foster youth is employed by age 24. Even more alarming, one in five foster youth becomes homeless after aging out of the system.

Additionally, the County's Probation Department supervises approximately 6,000 youth in the community and detains or incarcerates approximately another 1,100 on a daily basis. National statistics indicate that most youth in the juvenile justice system have had unstable educational histories with a high number of school transitions and disciplinary actions (i.e., suspensions). Researchers have found that over 40% may be enrolled in special education classes, approximately 50% perform below grade level, and as low as only 20 to 40% of justice-involved youth ultimately earn a diploma or General Equivalency Degree.

Given these statistics, exposure from an early age to transit-related careers combined with vocational preparation and specific job training could significantly transform the self-sufficiency and well-being of young people in the County's care as they transition to adulthood. This type of collaboration could not only help meet Metro's long-term workforce development goals, but also create a career pathway for many young disenfranchised populations who are, or have been, under the care and supervision of the County of Los Angeles.

APPROVE Motion by Ridley-Thomas, Fasana, Garcetti, Barger, Garcia and Dupont-Walker to direct the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with appropriate Departments of the County of Los Angeles including the Probation Department, Children and Family Services Department, Office of Education, the Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services, Department of Public Social Services, and other appropriate entities, to report back to the Executive Management Committee during the June board cycle with a proposed framework for a pilot educational and vocational training program, specifically though not exclusively targeting youth involved in the

County's Probation or Child Welfare System, with the objective of facilitating career pathways for local youth into Los Angeles County's transportation sector.