



## Board Report

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### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE APRIL 17, 2024

**SUBJECT: FIRST/LAST MILE (FLM) PLAN FOR SOUTHEAST GATEWAY LINE TRANSIT CORRIDOR**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

ADOPT the First/Last Mile (FLM) Plan for the Southeast Gateway Line (Attachment A).

#### **ISSUE**

The Southeast Gateway Line FLM Plan (“Plan”) was prepared in accordance with established Metro Board policies, including the FLM Guidelines and includes a prioritized project list of FLM improvements for the nine Southeast Gateway Line Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) stations: Slauson/A Line, Pacific/Randolph, Florence/Salt Lake, Firestone, Gardendale, 105/C Line, Paramount/Rosecrans, Bellflower, and Pioneer, in the Cities of Artesia, Cerritos, Bellflower, Paramount, Downey, South Gate, Cudahy, Bell, Huntington Park, Vernon, unincorporated Los Angeles County, and the City of Los Angeles. Adoption of the Plan by the Metro Board better positions FLM improvements for funding and implementation.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Plan includes a list of projects that improve safety, comfort, and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people using wheeled devices (including bicycles, scooters, and other modes of non-motorized wheeled transportation) to each of the nine Southeast Gateway Line stations. Pedestrian projects are identified within the half-mile radius around each station, and bicycle projects are identified within the three-mile radius around each station.

The Metro FLM methodology, described in the 2021 First/Last Mile Guidelines, was used as the basis for the development of this Plan. A summary of the planning steps are as follows:

- Existing Conditions Analysis
- Technical Walk Audits and Pathway Network Development
- Community Engagement
- Project Prioritization

- Draft and Final FLM Plan

The Plan includes the following core products, in addition to supporting documents that detail the planning process.

- Pathway Maps with Priority FLM Projects on Primary Pathways
- Prioritized Project Lists
- Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) Cost Estimates for FLM Priority Projects
- Conceptual Illustrations
- Memos on Public Agency Coordination and Community Engagement

The full Plan is available in Attachment A. Supporting documents are available in Attachment B.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Plan Summary and Key Findings**

The Plan includes detailed findings for each of the nine stations that address a range of access, safety, and user experience issues, including high traffic speeds and volume, incomplete bike networks, lack of shade, and poor crossing and sidewalk conditions. The Plan presents a prioritized list of projects to address these issues and improve safety, connectivity, and station accessibility for pedestrians and people using wheeled devices. Broadly, improvements include, but are not limited to, new or improved sidewalks and crosswalks, bus stop improvements, pedestrian lighting, landscaping and shade, traffic calming, and various types of bicycle facilities to prioritize safety for all ages and abilities.

### **Process**

Informed by input from community engagement (described in the Community Engagement section of this report), the project team developed a list of projects on primary and secondary pathways for each station. The Plan identifies specific streets as primary or secondary. Primary pathways are typically the streets that directly access the station site, while secondary pathways provide further connectivity to destinations or neighborhoods. The team then applied prioritization to the project list, based on Metro's adopted FLM Prioritization Methodology, resulting in a set of priority projects on primary pathways.

In total, 346 walk projects were identified, with 227 walk projects prioritized, averaging 25 priority walk projects per station. For wheel projects, a total of 479 project miles were identified, with 98 project miles prioritized, averaging 11 priority wheel project miles per station. The number of projects proposed for each station area differs due to distinct land uses and street grids.

These priority projects are eligible for local jurisdictions to advance toward design and construction as part of their 3% local match requirements, subject to process requirements established in the Measure M Guidelines and First/Last Mile Guidelines. Under Method 3 - Local Flexibility in the adopted FLM Prioritization Methodology, local jurisdictions can propose priority projects for Metro's review and approval. For this Plan, Metro received 136 project proposals for new projects from local jurisdictions. Through coordination with local jurisdictions, Metro approved all FLM projects within the

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half-mile walk radius and three-mile wheel radius. Metro staff recommended the inclusion of proposed projects based on Board-approved criteria such as a project's clear evidence of community support. Following Plan adoption, Metro will continue to work with local jurisdictions to ensure projects result in access and safety improvements for walk and wheel modes to create safe and continuous pathways to transit stations.

### Coordination with Local Agencies

FLM projects require close coordination with the local agencies that control the rights-of-way around Metro stations. Metro held a series of meetings with agency staff from the cities of Artesia, Cerritos, Bellflower, Paramount, Downey, South Gate, Cudahy, Bell, Bell Gardens, Huntington Park, Los Angeles, Maywood, Vernon, Hawaiian Gardens, Lynwood, and the County of Los Angeles. Staff held office hours with local agencies to review pathway networks, engagement outcomes, and preview next steps. Staff then held a series of working sessions to review the project list and discuss agency project proposals. Staff also provided a review and comment period for the prioritized project list and ROM cost estimates.

Staff provided regular updates to the Southeast Gateway Line City Manager Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and participated in regular monthly briefings for Metro Board Office staff.

Pursuant to Motion #23 by Directors Hahn, Solis, and Dutra the Plan includes a set of improvements to enhance access to the future Southeast LA Cultural Center from the Gardendale station to improve safety and connectivity to this destination. Staff anticipates discussion and direction on post-Plan coordination with local jurisdictions and other local and state agencies. The full Motion is included in Attachment C.

### Community Engagement

The project team included strategic partnerships with three community-based organizations (CBOs): Bike LA, Mujeres Unidas Sirviendo Activamente (MUSA), and Self-Help Graphics and Art. The CBOs were an invaluable asset in shaping engagement strategies and recruiting community members to participate in engagement activities.

With strategic guidance from CBO partners, staff developed a comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy (CES). The CES included specific strategies to engage community members and elevate the needs of transit riders. Staff conducted 16 in-person activities, including five community walk audits, eight pop-up events, and two community workshops, including a women/women-identifying workshop focused on the experiences of women transit riders, and an online map-based survey. The CBO partners supported engagement with communities that are generally underrepresented in public participation processes, including women, youth, Spanish speakers, bicyclists, and transit riders. The community feedback resulted in a rich body of data that informed the development of the prioritized project list. Community participation was integral to the decision-making process and crafting a project list that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of each community.

## **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

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This Plan presents project ideas that promote improved safety for people walking or using wheeled modes of transportation around future Southeast Gateway Line stations.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

### **Impact to Budget**

Adoption of this Plan has no impact on the budget. A total of \$598,610 for the preparation of the Plan is included in the adopted budget for FY24 at project number 460201/01.01.

Project implementation is led by local jurisdictions; Metro support in implementation may come in the form of grant writing assistance and priority consideration in future Metro Active Transportation (MAT) cycles.

## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

The Plan proposes projects that will improve safety, comfort, and accessibility for the most vulnerable users of our streets - pedestrians and bicyclists. Much of the transit corridor, excluding where it bypasses Artesia and Cerritos, is included in the top 25 percent of communities most affected by pollution as indicated by CalEnviroScreen, and most cities in the corridor are also classified by Metro as Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). In 2017 (the first year of environmental analysis for the transit corridor), residents of color comprised 65 percent of the total corridor population, with Hispanic/Latinx groups alone accounting for 51 percent of the total population. In addition, 44 percent of residents live below the poverty level, which is higher than the county average of 33 percent. There is also a higher concentration of youth (29%) when compared to the Los Angeles County average of 23%.

High traffic speeds and volumes on major arterial streets contribute to unsafe streets along much of the transit corridor. Collisions are highly concentrated in the area west of the A Line in Los Angeles City and County where the arterial street grid is compressed. Fatal pedestrian/auto collisions have occurred on major arterial streets and near the future Pacific/Randolph, Florence/Salt Lake, and Paramount/Rosecrans stations. The Plan proposes projects that would improve safety along many of the streets where these collisions happen. Additionally, extreme heat and the lack of shade were consistent themes across the nine stations, which contributes to inequitable health outcomes. FLM improvements such as landscaping, shade, and bus stop improvements can combat the impacts of extreme heat within EFCs.

The Plan was developed with significant community involvement, summarized in the Community Engagement section of this report. Partnerships with CBOs were integral to broadening engagement efforts and increasing participation in communities that are generally underrepresented in public participation processes. Materials and activities for community engagement were made available in English and Spanish.

In the development of the Plan, the project team coordinated closely with jurisdictions along the corridor. Should jurisdictions choose to advance this concept-level Plan, additional community engagement is encouraged to understand and mitigate potential impacts and ensure project benefits are equitably distributed.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The recommended actions support two Strategic Plan goals:

- Deliver outstanding trip experiences (Goal #2): the FLM plan recognizes that trip experience includes time getting to and from transit stations. The Plan prepares projects that make trip

experiences safer, more comfortable, and more accessible.

- Transform LA County through collaboration and leadership (Goal #4): Metro is uniquely situated to prepare FLM plans that span jurisdictional boundaries. In adopting this Plan, Metro is leading this area by preparing FLM projects at future Slauson/A Line, Pacific/Randolph, Florence/Salt Lake, Firestone, Gardendale, 105/C-Line, Paramount/Rosecrans, Bellflower, and Pioneer stations.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could decide not to approve the FLM Plan. This is not recommended for the following reasons:

- 1) Previous Board action (Motion 14.1, 2016) directs FLM projects to be incorporated into transit corridor project delivery; and
- 2) An adopted plan better positions the FLM projects for future grant funding opportunities.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Following the FLM Plan adoption, staff anticipates commencing post-plan activities with jurisdictions that choose to advance FLM priority projects toward design and construction. This includes entering into Cooperative Agreements, as prompted by the FLM Guidelines, with jurisdictions to advance projects including priority projects eligible for 3% contribution and supporting multi-jurisdictional coordination as needed.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - First/Last Mile Plan for Southeast Gateway Line

Attachment B - Supporting Documents - First/Last Mile Plan for Southeast Gateway Line

Attachment C - Motion-Southeast LA Cultural Center Connectivity and Access

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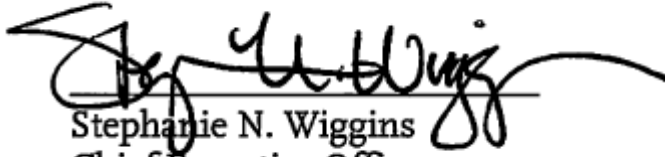
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