



Board Report

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AD HOC 2028 OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC GAMES COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 23, 2024

**SUBJECT: RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS GRANT UPDATE**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. RECEIVING AND FILING the Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods (RCN) grant update, and;
- B. AUTHORIZE the CEO or their designee to:
  - 1. program \$161.8 million for the projects listed in Attachment A which includes \$139.2 million awarded through the RCN grant and \$22.6 million of local funds; and
  - 2. negotiate and execute all necessary agreements and/or amendments with the agencies for projects contained in the RCN grant.

**ISSUE**

This is a progress report regarding the implementation of the RCN program, a bundle of projects from Metro’s 2028 Mobility Concept Plan (MCP) being delivered by Metro and other regional partners in support of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games (the 2028 Games). Staff is requesting the authorizations necessary to execute the grant agreement.

**BACKGROUND**

In March 2024, USDOT awarded Metro a \$139 million grant from the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program for the Removing Barriers and Creating Legacy-A Multimodal Approach for Los Angeles County (the Program). The Program will support Metro’s Vision 2028 Plan of transforming LA County through regional collaboration. The grant did not require a local match; however, Metro is contributing 14% or \$22.6 million in local match in order to increase the competitiveness of the application. The Program will restore community connectivity by investing in highquality multimodal transportation options to enable affordable, reliable mobility and access to opportunity. Most of the Program’s projects are located in Equity Focus Communities and will

enhance and expand affordable, equitable, and safe multimodal connections through investment in 35 miles of bus priority enhancements, 60 Metro Bike Share stations, five first/last mile corridors that fill gaps in the active transportation network, five mobility hubs, and various supportive initiatives and operational strategies. It will increase mode choice, service reliability, and travel time savings, expanding the reach of highquality transit to historically underserved communities. A total of 12 jurisdictions (11 cities and 4 unincorporated communities of LA County) are involved in the grant program: the cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Carson, Downey, El Monte, Huntington Park, Industry, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Norwalk, and Santa Fe Springs; and unincorporated communities of Avocado Heights, Florence-Firestone, Rancho Dominguez, and Walnut Park.

Attachment A includes the project description for all 20 projects (including bus priority projects, FLM corridors, Mobility Hubs, Open Streets, Go-Pass, and Metro Bike Share), all of which were identified in Metro's 2028 MCP.

## **DISCUSSION**

Since the award announcement, Metro has made significant progress in organizing internally and externally to begin delivering this program. Metro staff are actively coordinating the relevant RCN projects with existing and adjacent Metro projects. To ensure on-time delivery of the Program, Metro is leading the environmental clearance for all projects included in the RCN Program. Once the environmental clearance is completed (late 2024/early 2025), staff will turn over those projects that are not under Metro's jurisdiction to their respective sponsors for delivery of the remaining design phases and implementation of the projects. Metro anticipates that the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) will implement the Valley Blvd Bus Priority Lanes project, which covers several jurisdictions. To support the environmental clearance, Metro is preparing conceptual engineering plans for the RCN projects.

The Project team has been actively coordinating with local cities, agencies, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The environmental approach for bus priority projects and first/last mile projects is a Categorical Exclusion (NEPA) and Statutory Exemption under SB-922 (CEQA). Individual Categorical Exclusion (NEPA) and Categorical Exemptions (CEQA) are being prepared for each of the five mobility hubs and the Bike Share/GoPass programs. These will be packaged as eight environmental bundles. Consultation on the environmental packages with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has also been initiated. In addition, staff has initiated tribal/I-106 consultation in coordination with FTA

In July, Metro and FTA staff conducted a tour of several RCN projects and 2028 venues, such as bus improvements along Broadway, Pico Blvd first/last mile improvements near LA Live, the North Hollywood mobility hub, and the USC/Expo Park venues.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The award of \$139 million from the Fiscal Year 2023 RCN program was Metro's first successful Federal award in support of the 2028 Games. As the lead applicant, Metro committed to providing \$22.5 million in local funds and state and regional grant awards already secured to implement the

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Project. Staff estimates that approximately 10% of the grant funds will be spent in FY25, with an estimated need for a local match of \$2.5 million already included in the FY25 budget. As this is a multi-year project, the Project Manager will be responsible for allocating grant funds and local match funds in future years.

#### Impact to Budget

Funding for the RCN Program, in the amount of \$16.4 million, is included in the FY25 budget under Project 402028 (2028 Games Planning and Development). This new project number was set up in FY25 and will serve as a dedicated, central repository for related efforts.

### **EQUITY PLATFORM**

Staff continues to work with the Office of Equity and Race (OER) to ensure that programs and projects identified within the Mobility Concept Plan (MCP) follow Metro's Equity guidelines. Staff emphasized equity in the prioritization of the project list with a weighted score of 40%. This translated into projects with higher equity scores ranking higher overall and getting included in the 2022 MCP Prioritized Project List.

Working from the 2022 MCP Prioritized Project List, staff proposed and included 20 multimodal projects in the RCN grant application. Of these, 12 are located within Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) in neighborhoods such as South Los Angeles, El Monte, North Hollywood, Koreatown, and several Gateway Cities. Funding from RCN includes stakeholder engagement for each project, including the development of fact sheets for each project, key stakeholder briefings, and community meetings. As part of the RCN grant, staff is committed to coordinating with the lead agency, when not Metro, to ensure robust community engagement is conducted. Coordination will include the development of RCN materials (fact sheets, presentations, QR codes as necessary), assistance with community engagement and technical assistance as necessary. The grant also provides funding for data collection to help measure key performance metrics to support equitable outcomes from the planned legacy benefits of the RCN projects. While RCN funding will provide benefit during the 2028 Games, these projects will also provide benefits to these communities long after the Games end. Staff will ensure that the projects provide benefits to the community that are needed now.

Staff will pilot the Equity Planning & Evaluation Tool (EPET) where possible, across the 20 multimodal projects included in the RCN application. This will support staff in identifying existing disparities that might impact how the MCP programs/projects are experienced by different users and designing the programs/projects to better address their unmet needs, reduce negative and unintended impacts, and improve access to opportunity.

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

The development of the MCP supports:

Strategic goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling.

Strategic Goal 2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system.

Strategic Goal 4: Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership"

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by providing a roadmap and strategy to deliver permanent transit and transit-supportive projects and programs that can help serve the 2028 Games.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The next steps include community engagement meetings and activities with the RCN communities over the next several weeks and months. The environmental exemptions/ exclusions and conceptual engineering are planned to be completed by Winter 2024/2025. Staff will continue to update the Board on RCN progress quarterly.

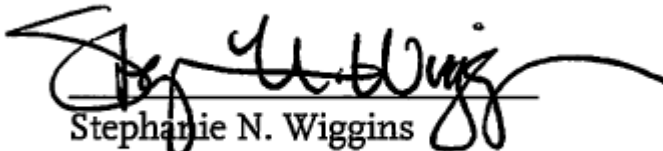
### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - RCN Project Descriptions

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