



Board Report

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PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE JUNE 19, 2019

SUBJECT: TRANSIT TO PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN

ACTION: ADOPT PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

ADOPT the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan.

ISSUE

In response to a Board Motion in June 2016 (Attachment A), Metro has completed the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan ("Plan", Attachment B) summarized in the Executive Summary (Attachment C). Adoption of the Plan by the Metro Board will: 1) affirm the Plan's analytical needs-based framework as a key tool for guiding equitable decision-making around transit to parks; and 2) provide tools and guidance for implementation of transit connections to parks.

BACKGROUND

In recent years, the completion of the Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment and the Angeles National Forest Transit Corridor Analysis, coupled with the passage of Measure A, have served to highlight the growing need for increasing access to parks and open space in Los Angeles County. Amidst growing community support and interest for improved and equitable park access, in June 2016, the Metro Board directed staff to prepare an action plan to better connect disadvantaged, park-poor communities with open spaces. With the support of an advisory committee, Metro prepared the Plan which includes a parks needs analysis, a needs-based framework for guiding decision-making, and potential activities for increasing access to parks and open spaces countywide, especially for communities of need. Consistent with Metro's Equity Platform, the Plan furthers Metro's commitment to working with historically underserved communities to establish meaningful equity goals that guide planning and investment.

DISCUSSION

As a blueprint to guide decision-making on transit access to parks in Los Angeles County, the Plan identifies pilot projects and supporting implementation activities that can be undertaken by entities in Los Angeles County to improve transit access to parks for communities that have high need for park access. The sections below describe the process for developing the Plan as well as key components

in the Plan.

Process

The project team undertook several steps to develop the Plan including researching case studies to identify national best practices for improving access to parks and open space and performing user surveys in partnership with First 5 LA. In addition, an advisory committee was formed consisting of representatives from community organizations along with local and regional entities with expertise in parks and communities that lack access to quality parks. The advisory committee has been instrumental in helping shape and guide the Plan to completion.

To identify strategies that close access gaps to high quality parks and open space, the team developed a needs-based framework and identified potential priority connections between 80 “communities of interest” and 200 “parks of interest”. Consistent with the directing motion, the project team utilized a data-driven approach including analyzing Los Angeles County’s Parks Needs Assessment database and existing transit connections, complemented by input from the advisory committee. The resulting maps provide a framework that can be used by an implementing agency to identify potential transit connections and inform necessary community outreach.

Plan Overview

The Plan includes results of the case study research, maps depicting connections between communities and parks, potential access solution types, potential pilot projects, and overall program and policy guidance to support transit to parks investments. Examples of potential implementation activities in the Plan include: transit to parks branding; marketing campaigns; wayfinding signage; inclusion of key parks in service planning and first/last mile planning analysis; parks educational components; and grant-writing support. In addition, the Plan identifies four potential pilot projects focused on expanding bus/shuttle connections between communities of interest and parks of interest including: 1) Metro Line 212 Extension; 2) Hansen Dam Circulator; 3) Beach Circulator (BCT 109 Frequency Improvements); and 4) Chantry Flat Connector.

The implementation activities described in the Plan include suggestions on potential entities, including Metro, best positioned to implement transit to parks strategies, either individually or through partnerships. A matrix summarizing potential implementation activities is attached to this report (Attachment D) and identifies Metro’s potential role either as a lead or in a support capacity as part of a partnership. The matrix categorizes each potential activity based on the anticipated level of Metro resources needed to complete the work as follows:

Category 1: Existing - Low: can be integrated into existing/ongoing work such as the NextGen Study.

Category 2: New - Medium: requires a medium level of additional resources such as providing grant-writing support services to partner organizations.

Category 3: New - High: requires a high level of additional resources such as expanded Metro service.

Metro is committed to implementing *Category 1* activities as part of carrying out its existing work program and projects. For activities designated as *Category 2* or *3*, Metro will examine funding opportunities on a case-by-case basis, including working with partner organizations to help identify

new resources for implementation.

Equity Platform

The Plan creates a needs-based framework that will feature equity in future transit to parks decision-making. Additionally, through both user surveys and the guidance of subject matter experts on the advisory committee, Metro was able to ensure that on-the-ground experiences, particularly in disadvantaged communities, informed the Plan development. With the Plan, Metro has laid out a blueprint to address inequities in park access decision-making and investment and identified specific opportunities for Metro and its partners to implement solutions for addressing inequity in park access.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The adoption of the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan will not have any adverse safety impacts on Metro employees and patrons.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Adoption of this Plan has no direct financial impact to the budget. However, ongoing coordination would include Metro staff time and resources. Furthermore, any implementation of the Plan's *Category 2* (New - Medium) and *Category 3* (New - High) resource needs as described in Attachment C would require a range of additional funding and staff resources, to be determined on a case-by-case basis by department and business unit impacted by additional workload.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Plan aims to further Strategic Plan Goal #1: Providing high quality mobility options including Strategic Plan Initiative 1.1: Target infrastructure and service investments toward those with the greatest mobility needs. It accomplishes this by establishing a data-driven and needs-based framework for guiding future investment.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could decide to not adopt the Plan. This alternative is not recommended because this Plan fulfills the June 2016 Board Motion and was developed through extensive data analysis and expertise from the advisory committee.

NEXT STEPS

The Plan includes a series of potential pilot projects, programs, and initiatives which are summarized in Attachment D, including categorization of anticipated level of Metro effort in leading or supporting the activity. Metro intends to implement *Category 1* (Existing-Low) activities as part of carrying out its existing work program. Metro will continue working with our partners to identify new resources for implementing additional activities in the Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Board Motion #2016-0511

Attachment B - Transit to Parks Strategic Plan

Attachment C - Transit to Parks Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Attachment D - Implementation Matrix

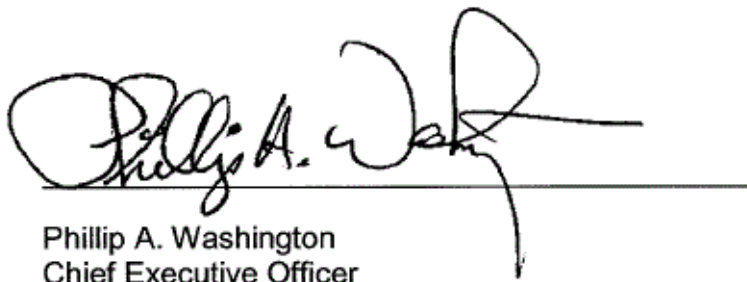
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