



File #: 2020-0365, File Type: Program

Agenda Number: 17.

### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE MAY 19, 2021

**SUBJECT: FIRST/LAST MILE GUIDELINES**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

ADOPT the First/Last Mile Guidelines (Attachment B).

#### **ISSUE**

The Metro Board of Directors enacted First/Last Mile (FLM) policies (Motions 14.1, May 2016 and 14.2, June 2016) that established broad direction and requirements related to integrating FLM planning, funding, and delivery with Metro transit projects. Subsequent staff responses to the original motions committed program guidelines to operationalize these policies. Staff has developed First/Last Mile Guidelines (Guidelines) informed by FLM program experience to-date and extensive feedback notably from local jurisdictions whose partnership is necessary to fulfill the Board's vision. The Guidelines create a predictable template for FLM activities for new transit projects, formalize roles and responsibilities between Metro and local agencies, and facilitate the use of FLM toward the 3% local contribution for major rail transit projects.

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### About FLM

Motions 14.1 and 14.2, cited above, establish policy and direct FLM activities (see Attachment A - Motions). These policies built from the 2014 First/Last Mile Strategic Plan and Planning Guidelines which made the case for access and safety improvements focused on active transportation and provided a planning methodology. Collectively, the 2016 Motions direct both an extensive planning and technical assistance role related to existing transit stations and stops, as well as require integration of FLM with new transit projects. The Guidelines proposed here operationalize direction specific to new transit projects, as explained further in this report (see Attachment B - First/Last Mile Guidelines).

Metro FLM policies envision a network of routes, termed "pathway networks," extending out from transit stations that are designed to meet the needs of transit riders and improve the customer experience. Pathway networks consist of primary routes, which connect directly to stations and serve the greatest number of riders, and secondary routes which serve as feeders connecting

---

neighborhoods and destinations to the primary routes. As most transit riders walk, bike, or roll to and from stations, the focus of FLM access is on optimizing connectivity and safety for active modes of travel. FLM projects consist of infrastructure, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes, located on identified pathway network routes. FLM improvements are, in almost all cases, located within public right-of-way, making partnership with local jurisdictions necessary for a successful program.

Policy elements related to new transit projects include integration of FLM pathways in the planning, design, and construction of new Metro transit projects; a provision that FLM elements may not be eliminated through value engineering; and an option for local agencies to direct the 3% local contribution for major rail transit projects toward their activities implementing FLM. Guidelines are necessary to define and facilitate this policy direction due to the:

- already complex nature of transit project delivery;
- need to align and coordinate core transit elements with a larger footprint of streetscape improvements;
- need to ensure a clear nexus and value between street improvements planned and delivered for FLM and the transit stations they serve; and
- need to clarify resource commitments and balance effective incentives to implement FLM with cost and risk to project delivery.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Guidelines: Key Points and Organization**

The Guidelines are structured to provide predictable standard processes to be applied for all future transit projects. To that end, the document is structured by project delivery phase, and focuses on roles and responsibilities for departments and teams within Metro, and for external partners and stakeholders.

The Board's policy vision is operationalized through key concepts, as follows:

- **General roles**

Metro's primary role in FLM delivery is to initiate the overall process and to lead activities through the development of an FLM plan for each project/station. The FLM plan is intended to facilitate a handoff to local jurisdictions who can, at their option, continue the process through design, funding, implementation and maintenance. Metro may, at the request of the local agency, further prepare any necessary environmental clearance.

Beyond the planning phase, local jurisdictions take on the lead role for the remainder of the FLM process including design, construction, and maintenance. The Guidelines propose an optional role for Metro to prepare any needed environmental documentation that will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Through these later phases, Metro plays various support functions intended to assist in funding processes, facilitate 3% arrangements as described further below, and review and coordinate design processes.

- **Additional Metro Responsibilities**

The Guidelines clarify Metro's responsibilities related to station access. Of note, this includes assurance that Metro is responsible for addressing any instances where a transit project degrades existing active transportation facilities (e.g., when a rail line interrupts a bike lane), and further describes responsibility to address any discontinuity (e.g., non-aligned sidewalks) between stations and their surrounding streetscapes. Following the adoption of the Guidelines, Metro staff will review the Metro Rail Design Criteria to make any necessary updates to reflect these items.

- **3% Local Contribution Availability**

The ability for local jurisdictions to direct FLM activities toward meeting the 3% local contribution for major transit projects, as established by Motion 14.2, is the key tool to incentivize and fund FLM delivery. Therefore, the Guidelines are substantially focused on describing the process and requirements to arrive at 3% agreements that exercise this option. The Guidelines also strike a balance between an effective FLM incentive with financial risk for transit project delivery. Any FLM 3% local contribution directed to FLM reduces the funding that would otherwise be available for the core transit project. If fully utilized, FLM 3% credit could reduce the available funding for transit projects by approximately \$861 million. To address this, the Guidelines propose that 3% credit would be available only for implementation of high priority projects as defined and delineated in the FLM plans. There is no cap on the 3% credit so long as it is applied to high priority projects as defined in FLM plans. These consist of core access and safety improvements on primary pathway routes. In practice, staff believes it is unlikely that 3% credits would total the full \$861 million.

FLM plans completed to date contain a project prioritization that would need to be revisited to be consistent with the Guidelines and to be comparable across the plans. The intent of the prioritization approach, as described in the Guidelines, is that, if implemented, priority projects would result in safe and continuous paths for travel along primary access routes up to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the station, inclusive of adequate sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and bicycle connections. The intended approach allows for flexibility to consider other investments with strong community support among the priorities.

- **Project Definition and Boundaries**

The Guidelines describe a clear definition and boundaries that allow for transit projects and FLM networks to proceed as parallel, coordinated efforts. Briefly summarized, the transit project exists within project boundaries developed through longstanding practice. While FLM-type elements (e.g., bike parking) are part of transit projects and within the boundaries, FLM projects, by definition, exist on pathway networks outside the boundaries. The Guidelines continue to describe a coordination process intended to arrive at a seamless interface between stations and their surrounds.

### Policy Impact

The Guidelines intend to establish a practical and detailed approach to achieve a broad policy vision established by the Board in Motions 14.1 and 14.2. Approval of the Guidelines refines policy

---

direction contained within the motions as follows:

- establishes FLM as separate, parallel, and coordinated with transit project delivery;
- defines applicability of Guidelines, and resource commitments for all projects, including Bus Rapid Transit projects that are not subject to a 3% local contribution;
- clarifies Metro's responsibility for effective interface between transit projects and surrounding streets, and for addressing any disruption to existing active transportation facilities; defines these specific Metro responsibilities as applicable for the prohibition on value engineering; and
- establishes that 3% credit availability is subject to terms and process as described in the Guidelines, including that availability is limited to high priority projects identified in the FLM plans.

### Process and Input Received

The Guidelines as drafted are informed by FLM planning work to-date including collaboration with jurisdictions and community groups. Guidelines concepts were vetted through early stages of development by a working group comprised of internal Metro staff along with cities and Los Angeles County. The draft of the Guidelines was presented to affected cities at a workshop on March 29, 2021, with the draft circulated for input on April 5, 2021. Feedback received focused on specific provisions to facilitate an effective handoff from Metro to local agencies, the environmental review role, and other aspects of Metro/local collaboration. The draft Guidelines were further presented to non-municipal stakeholders, with informal briefings held for feedback. To the extent possible within the overall approach and framework, comments received were incorporated in the draft.

### Equity Platform

The Equity Platform was addressed as follows:

- I. *Define and Measure*: FLM plan development emphasizes analysis of existing conditions for access and safety;
- II. *Listen and Learn*: FLM plan development and further phases of project development emphasize extensive community engagement including partnerships with Community Based Organizations. This existing practice of the FLM program is reinforced within the Guidelines;
- III. *Focus and Deliver*: the FLM Guidelines provide a clear and practical template to implement access and safety improvements; and
- IV. *Train and Grow*: as an identified next step, a training module on the Guidelines will be developed for Metro staff and partner agencies.

### DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The adoption of the Guidelines will have no direct safety impact; FLM projects facilitated by the Guidelines are intended to improve safety conditions for transit riders navigating to and from stations and stops.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

As described in this report, the ability of local jurisdictions to credit 3% local contributions by implementing FLM projects directs funding away from core transit delivery. If fully utilized, the

---

maximum impact of this policy is estimated at \$861 million, noting that full utilization of this option is unlikely. The Guidelines propose limiting 3% local contribution availability to priority projects identified in FLM plans which will reduce financial exposure by an undetermined amount. Specific financial impacts will become known on a project-by-project basis and will be reported to the Board as 3% agreements are put in place.

### Impact to Budget

The Guidelines describe and commit various staff activities to support FLM planning, environmental review, and coordination with local jurisdictions. These activities proceed in any given fiscal year according to the project phases for the various transit projects. For FY21, staff activity for applicable projects is included in the adopted budget. For future years, cost center managers are responsible for budgeting.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The recommended action furthers Strategic Plan Goal #2: Outstanding trip experiences for all. FLM projects facilitated by the Guidelines will improve customers' experiences accessing the future stations by walking, biking or other rolling modes.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board may choose to not adopt FLM Guidelines. This option is not recommended as it perpetuates an unclear process and expectations for all transit projects.

The Board may consider different concepts for key aspects of the Guidelines as proposed, notably by reducing the availability of credit for 3% local contributions in light of financial risk to transit projects. This option is not recommended as the Guidelines as proposed represent a careful attempt to balance risk with established Board policy and related expectations. Reconsideration of this and other key concepts would further result in delay in standardizing the FLM program and could necessitate ad hoc decisions on individual projects.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Guidelines describe a slate of activities applicable to all transit projects which will be executed and reported to the Board on an on-going, project-specific basis. Prior to the adoption of the Guidelines, the Board adopted FLM plans for four projects, at which time the Board directed staff to report back to determine next steps. For these projects (D Line Sections 2 and 3, East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Transit, L Line Foothill Phase 2B extension, and G Line Sepulveda Station), staff will recommend direction on specific next steps in summer 2021. Among the recommendations for these plans will be steps to develop and apply a consistent, detailed prioritization approach consistent with the Guidelines, and as described in this report under "3% Local Contribution Availability." As noted above, staff will review the Metro Rail Design Criteria and prepare updates as needed. Finally, upon adoption of the Guidelines, a training module intended to orient Metro staff and partner agencies will be developed and provided.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Motions 14.1 and 14.2

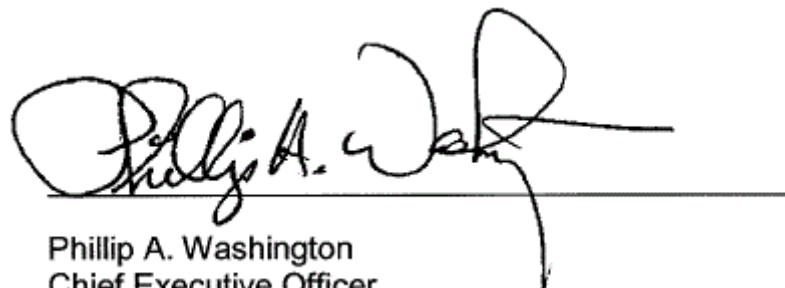
Attachment B - First/Last Mile Guidelines

Prepared by: 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



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip A. Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the right side of the name.

Phillip A. Washington  
Chief Executive Officer