



Board Report

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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MAY 20, 2021

SUBJECT: 2021 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE METRO VISION 2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the 2021 Progress Report on the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan.

ISSUE

In 2018, Metro adopted a 10-year strategic plan - Metro Vision 2028 - to transform mobility in Los Angeles County. This Progress Report (Attachment A) takes stock of the progress to date in advancing the commitments of Vision 2028 and reaching the outcomes it was intended to achieve: a world class transportation system that enhances quality of life for all who live, work, and play within Los Angeles County. The report shares status updates on the actions called for in the strategic plan. The report is also a critical look into implementation challenges where renewed effort is needed, and opportunities that can help inform a future strategic plan update.

BACKGROUND

The structure of Vision 2028 provides a guide for assessing progress on a more granular level. Vision 2028 includes 5 major goals. Goals 1 and 2 cover the core of Metro's services. To transform how people travel in the county, Metro needs to improve and expand mobility options (Goal 1). Prioritizing the customer experience (Goal 2) is the best way to ensure that residents and workers understand how to use Metro's services as part of their journeys and have positive experiences. Goal 3 acknowledges that transportation is interwoven with many aspects of peoples' lives, and that Metro can and should improve social and economic opportunity. Goals 4 sets out commitments to lead and collaborate regionally and nationally. Finally, Goal 5 is about improving internal governance for maximum effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

Vision 2028 is serving as an effective guide to agency strategies and priorities. Metro has launched the majority of the actions contained in the strategic plan, which is a testament to all of the departments and business units involved in these steps, and the efforts of community-based organizations, advocates, and partners. Because many of these actions were initiated recently and

will take time to complete or operationalize, the full benefits have yet to be realized countywide. Three years is not enough time to stop and reverse one hundred years of policy, planning, and investment that have elevated and reinforced single-occupancy driving above all other forms of mobility. As the actions in the strategic plan advance and as synergies emerge between multiple initiatives, the needle will move incrementally towards a multi-modal Los Angeles County, a place where more people live close to high quality mobility options and where buses have priority and travel faster than today. Vision 2028 will continue to map Metro towards world class transportation, while providing the flexibility for the agency to adjust tactics as needed.

Vision 2028 includes 75 actions that flesh out these five overarching goals. The majority of the 75 actions are underway. Metro has also launched a number of new efforts since adopting Vision 2028 that are supportive of the overall mission and responsive to the evolving context in the County. These include pathbreaking efforts like the Fareless System Initiative, COVID-19 Recovery Task Force, and the transit Public Safety Advisory Committee.

The multitude of initiatives that Metro has launched or completed are merely milestones along the way to achieving the Vision 2028 outcomes - the ultimate measures of success. Success is about doubling the share of non-solo driving trips, increasing bus speeds by 30%, ensuring everyone is within a 10-minute walk or roll to mobility services and need not have to wait more than 15 minutes any time of the day, and having ways to bypass congestion. These are ambitious targets.

Three years in, Metro has yet to adequately bend the curve on these outcomes. This is to be expected in the context of a 10-year strategy. Shifting longstanding countywide transportation patterns will take time. For context, between 2010 and 2019, the share of single-occupant vehicle commute trips increased by 2 percentage points to 74 percent, while transit trips declined from 7 percent to 6 percent. The magnitude of the challenge has only increased with the effects of the covid-19 pandemic, which has altered near-term travel behavior and demand for the different modes. The aggressive schedule makes it even more crucial for Metro to maintain its focus on advancing the strategic plan's commitments. Metro also needs to gather and acquire better data to develop a comprehensive baseline and track movement of the visionary outcomes. The status of each goal is summarized as follows:

Goal 1: Provide high quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling

To improve mobility for all, Metro has increasingly centered equity by creating an Office of Equity and Race and developing equity tools to help guide budgeting and decision-making. Metro has elevated bus service via the NextGen Bus Plan and Better Bus Program. Metro launched the Traffic Reduction Study to explore the feasibility of a pilot program that would use congestion pricing to manage traffic in combination with additional high-quality mobility options. Metro piloted on-demand transit and incorporated lessons in a new Metro Micro on-demand service. These steps are in addition to the ongoing planning and construction of multiple rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), active transportation, and highway projects.

Vision 2028 acknowledged that completing more capital projects is necessary but not sufficient to achieve better mobility. Mobility needs to be planned and delivered as a system of interlocking parts, mutually supportive of one another. The Long Range Transportation Plan provides a balanced and

comprehensive approach to addressing the county's mobility needs with expected resources. The agency's NextGen Bus Plan has demonstrated the benefits of a holistic network-based approach. A similar mindset should be considered for planning the rail network, accommodating bicycles, walking, and other personal mobility devices on the transportation network, the arterial and highway network, and regional land use patterns - these efforts should be layered into a mobility system of interlocking parts.

Goal 2: Deliver outstanding trip experience for all users of the transportation system

A world class transportation system must meet the needs of each customer who travels to work, home, school, and other destinations. Metro is putting the customer first by placing a high priority on making its mobility services attractive, affordable, efficient, safe, convenient, comfortable, and easy to use. Metro established the Customer Experience team in the Office of the CEO and adopted the agency's first Customer Experience Plan. The purpose of the Customer Experience Plan is to take an honest look at pain points that customers tell us about, and to make improvements that are responsive to their concerns. Metro will update the Customer Experience Plan annually to track progress and drive investment in improvements for customers.

Safety and security of the transit experience is of paramount concern for Metro and the broader community. Metro convened the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) to help re-imagine Metro's approach to public safety on the transit system. PSAC will help guide new initiatives, including the deployment of unarmed transit ambassadors and flexible dispatch of social workers instead of relying solely on law enforcement.

The Integrated Station Design Standards Working Group has undertaken highly coordinated, cross-departmental, and comprehensive efforts to update station design standards and test new customer amenities for station public areas. The goal of these efforts are to create state-of-art customer environments that are safe, accessible, well-maintained and sustainable, and that reflect global transit station design best practices.

The care and commitment to the diverse needs of customers and their experiences form the new baseline standard at Metro. Fully implementing the Customer Experience Plan, enhancing bus frequencies, making transit fareless, implementing the future recommendations of the PSAC, and narrowing the state of good repair backlog will require Metro to make difficult choices to identify new sources of sustainable funding for operations and potentially reallocating existing fund sources towards these priority needs.

Goal 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity

Transportation is much more than buses, trains, and roads; it is a means to strengthening communities and connecting them to each other. Physical mobility unlocks social mobility and economic opportunities. From developing pathways for local careers in transportation to fostering equitable development on transit corridors, Metro can help uplift communities and confront the crises of housing affordability and regional homelessness. Pathbreaking initiatives like WIN-LA, SEED School, Transit-Oriented Communities Implementation Plan, Joint Development policy, and homelessness outreach teams are making a difference at the community level.

Zooming out to look at the region as a whole, greater attention must be paid to where people and jobs are strategically located in relation to the region's transportation system. Aligning regional land use patterns and transportation planning sets the foundation for robust transit ridership growth and decreased dependence on solo driving. World class transportation requires well-planned land use, with a focus on the transportation demands it generates, and Metro should play a role in both.

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

Leadership is in large part about bringing diverse interests to the table, creating the conditions for consensus and for leaders to step forward, and holding each other to account. The NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group is an example of Metro working in partnership with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation to accelerate the implementation of bus lanes and realize the full benefits of the bus network restructuring under the NextGen Bus Plan. The Freight Working Group is another leading example of Metro convening diverse public, private, and community-based interests to shape a vision for regional goods movement that will take into greater account environmental and equity objectives.

Another component of leadership is to inspire and push for change to policy agendas at the agency, state, regional, and national levels. Metro has taken a first step towards modernizing its highway funding programs to support complete streets. Metro has supported state policy change to allow more flexible planning of many transit and active transportation projects. When called upon, Metro has stepped up to serve in national efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the federal administration.

Regional leadership is even more important as the County emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn, and turns its attention to other crises, including climate change. Ambitious action is required at all levels of government, of the private sector, and by individuals. Metro can play a leading role by prioritizing investments and policies based on reducing county-wide vehicle miles travelled. As for other challenges-from managing traffic congestion to integrating regional land use and transportation - a medium-term legislative strategy can help improve the policy environment to make it easier for Metro to reach its goals.

Goal 5: Provide responsive, accountable, and trustworthy governance within the Metro organization

Metro embraces its responsibilities as transit operator relied upon by many essential workers, and as a steward of funding generated by local taxpayers and from grants awarded by the state and federal governments. This is why Metro is constantly looking at ways to deliver better value for the travelling public. Metro's Office of Extraordinary Innovation has provided an open door to harness the knowhow and expertise of the private and non-profit sectors for the public good.

The visionary outcomes in Vision 2028 will, however, be harder to achieve until there is closer internal alignment of the agency with the strategic plan. This can include a centralized hub to coordinate basic data collection and planning analytics so that decision-makers have ready access to crucial information to aid deliberations. It also includes ways to accelerate the retention of institutional knowledge and creating leadership pathways to counteract a rapidly aging workforce and shrinking labor pool.

On the fiscal front, a true alignment of the organization to Vision 2028 means delivering to the Board a unified medium-term financial strategy in a Short Range Transportation Plan that shows the match between funding levels and investment needs. It will aid Metro in managing and prioritizing the resources that Metro is charged with stewarding. Attention must be paid to exploring best practices to assess the full life-cycle costs of major capital projects and to maximize their benefits from planning to construction to operations, and to address the increasing backlog of state of good repair needs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Receiving and filing the 2021 Progress Report on the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan has no financial impact.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Receiving and filing the 2021 Progress Report on Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan supports all five goals of Vision 2028.

NEXT STEPS

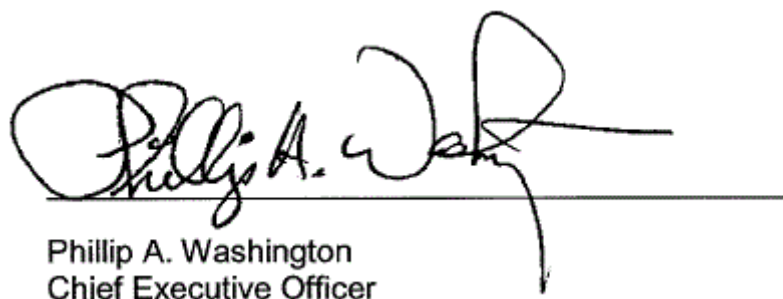
A final copy of the 2021 Progress Report will be published and distributed across Metro's various communication channels in Summer 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - 2021 Progress Report on the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan

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