

Equity for Goods Movement

Over the past few years Metro has acknowledged and embraced the need to understand equity issues and incorporate recommendations into its various planning processes. Through the formation of the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and in working with various stakeholders to advise Metro in creating the Board-approved Equity Platform¹, Metro begun investing considerable effort and resources to understand equity concerns and risk factors to address impacts to vulnerable communities in its major planning initiatives and programs.

Metro initiated the LA County Goods Movement Strategic Plan in the wake of this heightened commitment and sought from the onset to understand better the relationship between goods movement and disparities and how best to acknowledge past impacts, mitigate existing issues, and identify future opportunities to improve the lives of county residents most affected by the movement of goods through the region. While prior goods movement planning efforts in the region have touched on these important issues, the Plan provides an opportunity to spotlight equity issues related to goods movement and create new approaches to working with affected communities.

To accomplish this goal, Metro should set equity as the foundation for its Goods Movement Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Freight Competitiveness strategy that has emerged through dialogue with the myriad goods movement stakeholders in LA County. Metro should also broaden and cement its communication channels to seek input from community-based organizations, equity-focused non-profit groups, residents and local businesses to better understand LA County's diverse social and economic ecosystem and existing disparities. By doing so, Metro will ensure that input from communities impacted by goods movement will lead the alignment between equity and economy, where "Just Growth" that is grounded in equity will facilitate healthier and longer-term economic prosperity.

More than just a symbolic gesture of support for equity issues, Metro's designation of equity as the core of the LA County Goods Movement Strategic Plan's Sustainable Freight Competitiveness Framework will serve as an ever present reminder that implementation of strategies developed through the Framework must be achieved in a way that lifts up those communities most marginalized and impacted by the movement of goods through the nation's most vital seaports and trade corridors. Metro must see through the lens of equity and sustainability as it develops programs, projects and policies that create safer and more efficient multimodal freight systems, maintain a resilient supply chain, generate a strong labor force and foster a culture of investment and innovation all in support of maintaining LA County's economic competitiveness in the national and global economy.

Actively and frequently engaging affected communities in the development, refinement and implementation of the Plan's programs and strategies will be crucial for Metro to achieve its goal of creating a relevant, effective and forward-thinking LA County Goods Movement Strategic Plan that serves the needs of the entire county.

¹ Metro Equity Platform Framework, https://media.metro.net/about_us/committees/images/report_tac_epf_2018-03.pdf

Key Strategies & Actions

1. Engage in meaningful, ongoing dialogue with equity-focused stakeholders and experts to develop a deeper understanding of equity issues, risk factors and disparities so that equity considerations are mainstreamed in Metro's Goods Movement planning efforts.
 - a. Establish a formal, recurring Goods Movement Equity Initiative Working Group comprising representatives from community-based environmental and health organizations, non-profits, universities, health agencies, and foundations to elevate understanding of equity issues within Metro's planning practice.
 - a. Develop communication channels with residents and local businesses to fully understand how they are impacted. Establish on-going coordination mechanisms with other equity focused committees and activities within Metro and with other regional efforts to ensure effective, consistent and collaborative planning, development and deployment of goods movement equity goals throughout Metro and within LA County.
 - b. Include Representation from the Goods Movement Equity Initiative Working Group at the Policy Advisory Council.
2. Develop a list of equity risk factors that are most affected by goods movement activities, create performance measures to track progress, and link Metro's equity promises and accountability.
 - a. Continue research and partnership with CBOs, public health, environmental, and academic partners to better understand equity risk factors and disparities that are most affected or exacerbated by goods movement activities in LA County to create goods movement performance measures that are aimed to close equity gaps.
 - b. Create a linkage between Metro's budget and funding priorities and equity risk factors to ensure that Metro investments support closing the equity gaps.
 - c. Collaborate with other Metro departments to develop a mechanism to provide just compensation for CBOs to meaningfully engage in Metro's planning processes, and make it part of Metro's agency policy.
3. Develop an information clearinghouse on goods movement equity strategies and programs in partnership with other departments within Metro in support of an agency-wide Equity Program
 - a. Work with Metro's Equity Officer and other departments to develop a collaborative system to disseminate information on Metro's initiatives on equity through updates provided to the public and within Metro.
 - b. Collect, maintain, and distribute information on LA county equity goods movement programs (e.g., scope, eligibility, available funding) to impacted parties.