



**Metro's 2019
Draft Public Participation
Plan**

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Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro's) 2019 Draft Public Participation Plan

1. Introduction to Metro's Los Angeles County Stakeholders

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) considers all who reside, work and travel within Los Angeles County to be stakeholders of the agency. Residents, institutions, locally situated businesses and the elected officials who represent them are particularly important in relation to public participation planning and outreach. Communications with the public is a continuum of involvement concerning service, fare changes, studies and initiatives, short and long range planning documents, environmental studies, project planning and construction and transit safety education.

This Public Participation Plan (Plan) has been assembled to capture the methods, innovations and measurements of the agency's commitment to meet and exceed the prescribed requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), including Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circulars C 4702.1B citing recipients' responsibilities to limited English Proficient Persons, FTA Circular C 4703.1, guiding recipients on integrating principles of Environmental Justice into the transportation decision-making process, and Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Title VI program. The Plan is also consistent with Title VI, (non-discrimination regulations) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 162(a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 and The Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

Service Area and Agency Functions

On a daily basis, Metro rolls out more than 2,228 buses to 15,967 stops for 183 bus routes covering 1,433 miles of bus service area with over 1 million average daily boardings. On the 100 miles of light and heavy rail, another 330,000 daily boardings are logged. Total system wide monthly boardings often exceed 34 million.

Metro plans, funds, constructs and operates public transportation for 4,751 square miles of land area for the benefit of nearly 10 million residents, making it the most populous of California's 58 counties. The remainder of Southern California's surrounding counties adds more than 11 million residents to comprise a greater regional population totaling over 21 million. Agency accountability for conveying information to the people of the 88 cities and the unincorporated areas that lie within Los Angeles County's borders requires a commitment to appreciate the diverse

composition of stakeholders who have been identified in American Community Survey data as 48.1% Hispanic, 27.2% white, 13.8% Asian, 8.0% African American and a broad spectrum of ethnicities that make-up the remaining 2.9%. 14.6% of the population has earnings below the poverty level, 50% of the population is male, 50% of the population is female and 43.5% of the population is age 40 or older. Additionally 32 languages with multiple dialects have been identified with 1,000 or more language practitioners. Los Angeles County is a multi-culturally enriched environment and a transportation hub for the region, the state and the world.

2. Goals and Guiding Principles

This Plan guides all of Metro’s outreach to gather important public input on possible changes to bus and rail service, new projects in planning and construction, fare changes and other programs. As the system expands, Metro is uniquely positioned with an unprecedented opportunity to invest in Los Angeles County’s transportation system for all types of travel – highways, buses, trains, bikes, active transportation and more. This transformation through transportation will impact stakeholders throughout the region. As such, it is essential that Metro continues to bridge connections with communities and individuals who have deep relationships and insights into community specific needs and opportunities through a comprehensive, equitable, and sustained public participation program regarded as the nation’s gold-standard.

This Plan meets and exceeds the requirements set forth by the FTA, FHWA, and Title VI, and it aligns with Metro’s mission and commitment to excellence in service and support. It is accountable, first and foremost, to the public, and it reflects the agency’s dedication to provide a robust and inclusive public engagement program that sustains, strengthens and deepens our relationships with stakeholders countywide.

Given that many non-English speaking and low-income communities use public transit as a primary method of transport, and over half of Los Angeles County will be Hispanic by 2040, Metro must continue to emphasize access to multi-lingual resources, holding meetings that are flexible around working hours, enhancing new outreach methods, measuring the effectiveness of community outreach and encouraging meaningful participation especially for those who rely on walking, bicycling, buses and trains for their daily trips.¹

¹ This key principle is from Investing in Place’s comment letter during 2016 Draft Public Participation Review (see Attachment 6).

It is also critical that Metro continue to look at community decision-making processes through several lenses, taking into consideration neighborhood and community values, Los Angeles County community structures, urban and rural areas, ethnic and cultural groups, underserved and under-represented communities, and people with special disabilities. Metro must also continue exploring unconventional but effective approaches like popular education methods² to explain harder to decipher technical details and utilizing participatory planning tools to increase awareness and understanding while doing it through an equitable lens.

Equity Platform Framework

Access to opportunity is a core objective of public decision making, public investment, and public service - and transportation is an essential lever to enabling that access. Unfortunately, there exists vast disparity among neighborhoods and individuals in Los Angeles County in their ability to see and seize opportunity - be it jobs, housing, education, health, safety or other essential facets of thriving in vibrant, diverse communities. A multi-point equity platform provides a basis for Metro to actively lead and partner in addressing and overcoming those disparities.

Metro staff does not approach the subject of equity lightly or uninformed. The adoption of Measure M included performance metrics that were tied to disadvantaged communities. The major revision to the Long-Range Transportation Plan has committed to incorporating equity as a crosscutting issue since its introduction to the Board in February 2017. The Policy Advisory Council has flagged this as a major topic of interest. Most importantly, recent and engaged experience with community members with several projects (i.e., First/Last Mile planning, the Transformative Climate Communities grant for Rail to Rail, and a body of innovative workforce development initiatives) all underscore both the timeliness and urgency that equity considerations bring to Metro's portfolio. In addition, staff informally reached out to representatives from academia, foundations, advocacy organizations and local government in developing a platform. Their demonstrated experience in research and

² Popular education methods are an educational approach that encourages people to teach and learn from each other about issues that matter most in their lives; it sees all participants as learners and teachers. These methods include brainstorming, cooperative learning, group exercises and interactive games. Like participatory planning, popular education involves and empowers the entire community in the planning process. "What is Popular Education?", The Popular Education News, <http://www.popednews.org/newsletters/definitions.html>)

collective action, and their candid feedback on challenges and opportunities in the equity space were invaluable.³

Minimum Baseline Thresholds for Public Outreach

Metro has established eight Minimum Baseline Thresholds for Public Outreach (see table below) and grounded this Plan with these principal strategies to ensure that surrounding neighborhoods, individuals and civic engagement organizations are involved in all stages of the life cycle of each project, program or initiative, from planning to implementation: Metro encourages public participation at every decision opportunity, including:

- New policy and policy changes, such as possible changes to bus and rail service, fares, and other programs⁴
- Development, planning and construction of new projects and programs, including bus, rail, highway, and transit-oriented communities

Outreach Method	Description
Community Meeting and Public Hearing Noticing	Stakeholders will be given a minimum of 10 days' notice for all Metro-hosted community meetings and public hearings. Notices will be provided in English and Spanish at a minimum and translated into multiple other languages as demographics indicate. Ads and take-one notices will be placed on adjacent buses and trains for specific area meetings whenever possible. Meeting and hearing materials will also be posted online for those who are unable to attend in person. Additionally, when possible, meetings will also be shared digitally using webcasts, webinars and other online platforms.
Community Meeting and Public Hearing Locations and Times	Metro-hosted community meetings and public hearings will be held at transit-convenient, ADA compliant venues, at times that are flexible around working hours, and when most convenient for stakeholders such as at night-time and on the weekends. Venues will be near the communities of interest.

³ Metro Equity Platform Framework Board Report, February 15, 2018. File #2017-0912, Executive Management Committee, Agenda Number 33.

https://media.metro.net/about_us/committees/images/report_tac_epf_2018-03.pdf

⁴ The Minimum Baseline Thresholds for Public Outreach outlined here are in addition to the guidelines for public hearings on fares and service changes that are described in Metro's *Title VI Program Update* which will be available at www.metro.net/civilrights.

Outreach Method	Description
Community Meeting Language Translation	Community meeting materials and live translation will be provided in English and other languages spoken by significant populations in the project area, as resources allow, and as outlined in Metro’s LEP Plan Four Factor Analysis ⁵ ; additional languages and ADA accommodations, such as large print and Braille, will be provided upon request with at least three working days’ (72 hours) notice. Language translation will be performed by fluent speakers.
Public Hearing Language Translation and Documentation	Public hearing materials and live translation will be provided in English and Spanish at a minimum; other languages and ADA accommodations, such as large print and Braille, will be provided upon request with at least three working days’ (72 hours) notice. Language translation will be performed by fluent speakers. Court reporters will also document the hearing proceedings and public comments.
Neighborhood/Community Lenses	Metro will look at community decision-making processes through several lenses, including neighborhood and community values, LA County community structures, urban and rural areas, and ethnic and cultural groups, paying attention to users with the most need and under-represented.
Innovation	Metro will strive to use videos, pictures, examples, participatory planning tools (such as interactive maps and activities), the use of real-life examples, art, and other digital tools that may be available whenever possible to explain harder to decipher technical details and increase public awareness and understanding.
Online Language Translation	The website www.metro.net , which was updated within the last few years, provides web visitors with transportation information assistance in nine languages in addition to English. Additionally, Metro will offer Google Translate on every web page for language accessibility above Title VI requirements. Metro’s website content will also be ADA accessible; it will be compatible with screen reading devices for individuals with visual impairments.

⁵ Metro’s 2016 LEP Plan Four Factor Analysis can be found in the *Title VI Program Update* which will be available at www.metro.net/civilrights.

Outreach Method	Description
Telephone Interpretation	<p>Metro’s Customer Care Department will provide patrons with LEP with transportation information assistance in over 200 languages by utilizing a third party language interpretation service. Telephone interpretation will also be ADA accessible; Metro’s Customer Service line will be accessible with California Relay Line http://ddtp.cpuc.ca.gov/default1.aspx?id=1482. In addition to Customer Care, Metro Rail Operations will utilize the third party languages interpretation service to provide information and emergency response to LEP patrons who contact the Rail Operations Center (ROC) using the communication devices (G-Tel, P-Tel, and E-Tel) located on rail platforms.</p>

Public Participation Plans for Individual Studies and Initiatives

Beyond the Minimum Baseline Thresholds, this Plan outlines additional Strategies, Methods, and Procedures (Section 3) that Metro uses to conduct comprehensive community outreach and encourage robust community engagement at every decision opportunity. It also describes how each Metro study or initiative develops an individual Public Participation Plan that targets the individual needs of its stakeholders. This tailored approach results in meaningful dialogue and broad public access throughout the decision-making process.

To achieve both State and Federal sustainability goals for the region, and in accordance with fulfilling the Short and Long Range Transportation Plans to consider a range of multi-modal solutions, Metro is typically conducting 30 or more studies at any given time throughout Los Angeles County to determine preferred alternatives for consideration to fund, build and operate. These studies evaluate both transit and highway as well as local arterial impacts and analyze the factors that improve air quality, mobility, pedestrian and cycling accessibility as well as all of the required California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) disciplines necessary for completion of an environmental document. For all studies and initiatives, Metro applies the concepts articulated in the Four Factor Analysis⁶ as paramount to the structure and implementation of public participation.

⁶ Metro’s 2016 LEP Plan Four Factor Analysis can be found in the *Title VI Program Update* which will be available at www.metro.net/civilrights.

This tenet ensures that public investment includes those who require encouragement through targeted outreach to be at the table as options are considered and decisions are made.

Each Metro study has an individual public participation plan that targets the specific needs of the stakeholders of a project that frequently goes above and beyond Metro's baseline thresholds for public participation. Metro includes evidence in this document of successful public participation efforts that have influenced decisions regarding both mode and design by communities who, by definition, are considered within the environmental justice framework⁷.

Strategies for public participation vary depending on the scope and breadth of the study or initiative and what is known to be familiar and accessible locations, forms, and forums for communication. In addition to tailored strategies, many studies and projects at Metro have their own website, and abilities to communicate with stakeholder digitally through social media. Others utilize existing Metro social media resources. Advances in electronic communication and social media platforms have cleared new pathways for widespread distribution of information that are especially helpful when there are outlying communities in geographically expansive study areas.

Implementation of the Guiding Principles: An Integrated Team for Stakeholder Engagement and Continuity

Given the range of agency responsibilities and the breadth of the county it serves, Metro has developed expertise in outreach and public participation that is carefully tailored according to the specific needs of each project or program while maintaining a sustained relationship to stakeholders countywide. The commitment to engage stakeholders in the decision-making process has resulted in the development of specialty teams that function under the banner of Community Relations. Those teams are Local Government and External Affairs (LGEA), Special Projects, Project Management (Community Relations) and Community Education. Public participation is also fostered and maintained by five sub-regional Metro Service Councils, an Accessibility Advisory Committee, a Citizens Advisory Council, a Technical Advisory Committee, as well as several other non-elected planning and advisory committees that provide guidance and leadership on numerous Metro programs and initiatives. The objective of Community Relations is to ensure Metro's connectivity to stakeholders whether it relates to daily issues, operations, studies, initiatives, construction activity impacts and preparation for safe use of a system once built and ready for service. All of these agency activities require a measure of public

⁷ See Attachments 1 and 2 for a list of projects.

participation. In close coordination is Metro's Customer Care Department whose staff receive, track and respond to all travel inquiries, comments, and complaints from the general public.

Local Government and External Affairs

At the core of **Local Government and External Affairs** is the understanding that members of a "community" live, work and travel in local jurisdictions within Los Angeles County. In this baseline acknowledgment, there are qualities and characteristics of a community that are known, such as the cultural or ethnic composition and what values may be expressed and reflected through local elected representation. When a study or initiative is taken up by Metro, this information is integral to the design and implementation of a public participation program that will incorporate these factors. In addition, a number of other considerations, such as convenient meeting locations, announcements in local publications and identification of organizations, serve, in combination, to establish both qualitative and quantitative standards for engagement.

When consultant support is part of the plan, great effort is made to contract with outreach specialists who have a depth of knowledge about a study area, including bilingual skills for the diverse needs of communities. Consultants must provide detailed written records of public feedback to Metro for every meeting they attend and every touchpoint they have with the community. Metro must consider all comments - positive and negative - and employ them to affect meaningful decisions. When multiple jurisdictions are involved in the joint study or initiative (for example, when SCAG, Caltrans and/or other agencies partner with Metro), Metro will ensure that at least the Minimum Baseline Thresholds outlined in this Plan are upheld.

As the Metro system ages and expands, the need to address and resolve day-to-day operational issues is increasingly important. LGEA managers coordinate internally with Operations, Planning, Customer Care, and other business units to build strategic relationships with the 88 cities of Los Angeles County, Councils of Government, business and civic organizations and other key stakeholders around the County on behalf of Metro. A lead Community Relations Manager is assigned to each geographic area of the county, including the outlying areas. He or she will identify opportunities to develop new and enhance existing partnerships with cities and stakeholders and regularly attend city council meetings; bring issues/concerns to resolution proactively; and lead outreach efforts for all agency initiatives, bus and rail operations, planning studies, projects and programs. These Managers lead all communications on operational issues and respond quickly to complaints, comments and suggestions from these stakeholders. They are also assigned to support Metro's Service Councils,

Citizens Advisory Council, Technical Advisory Committee, and other established advisory committees.

Advisory Committees

To continuously address Metro's bus and rail service issues, five sub-regional Service Councils have been established. The **Metro Service Councils** are staffed by Operations personnel with participation from Local Government and External Affairs. Council member appointments are made by local jurisdictions and COGs for approval by the Metro Board of Directors. As a condition of membership, Council members must live, work, or represent the communities within the boundaries of the designated region they represent. These Councils meet monthly, receive public input on Metro service, review and recommend service changes, receive presentations on all agency initiatives and meet quarterly with the Chief Executive Officer of the agency. All Service Council Meetings are publicly noticed in accordance with the Brown Act and, as such, are open to the public. The Councils, which have been active for over a decade, have proven to be a valuable, sustained source of community input and meaningful public participation.

Metro's **Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)** meets monthly and is facilitated by the Office of Civil Rights. The purpose of the AAC is to provide feedback on accessibility-related issues regarding Metro's services (including over 200 bus and rail routes) and facilities, which must be fully accessible to all customers, including those with disabilities. AAC agendas are available in alternative formats upon request and live captioning is provided at every AAC meeting.

The Metro **Citizens Advisory Council (CAC)** was authorized by State Charter as an advisory body of community representatives from throughout the region to consult, obtain and collect public input on those matters of interest and concern to the community and communicate key feedback and CAC recommendations to staff and the Metro Board. Issues may also be assigned to the CAC by Metro for its review, consideration, and recommendation. The CAC meets twice monthly, once at the beginning of the month for their Executive Committee Meeting, and once towards the end of the month for the General Assembly Committee Meeting. Every Metro Board member may appoint up to four members to the CAC.

Metro's **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** was established by state law in 1977 and is staffed by Metro's Planning department. It has undergone periodic reviews of its membership, functions and responsibilities based upon the changing needs of Metro; however, its function remains relatively unchanged. The TAC reviews, evaluates, and provides comment on various transportation proposals and alternatives within Los Angeles County. Transportation issues transmitted to the committee include the funding, operation, construction and maintenance of streets and freeways, bus and rail

transit, demand and system management, accessibility for the disabled and air quality improvements. The TAC meets monthly and is currently composed of 35 voting and non-voting members representing countywide agencies. In addition, the TAC includes four subcommittees: Bus Operations, Streets and Freeways, Local Transit Systems, and Transportation Demand Management/Air Quality.

Metro's **Transportation Business Advisory Council (TBAC)** was established by state law in 1992 and is staffed by Metro's Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department (DEOD). It is comprised of professional business associations representing an array of industries and trades to advise Metro on matters regarding the disadvantaged business enterprise program to enable the authority to meet or exceed women and minority business enterprise participation goals. TBAC plays an important role in advocating for small business owners to have increased access to Metro contracting opportunities.

In addition, several other non-elected planning and advisory committees provide important guidance and leadership on a variety of Metro projects, programs and subject-area initiatives. They are

Crenshaw/LAX Community Leadership Council (CLC) is another example of a corridor-based transportation advisory body which was formed in 2010 for the purpose of sustained involvement by representatives who serve in a liaison role to the greater community as this light rail transit project is brought to fruition into operations⁸.

The Regional Connector Community Leadership Council (RCCLC) was formed in 2012 to provide a continuum of station-area working groups to advise Metro through construction.

The **Boyle Heights Design Review Advisory Committee** which was established in 2013 to advise Metro on the design of Metro joint development (JD) projects within Boyle Heights; to serve as the formal means through which the community members are involved in the evaluation of the JD design process; and to act as representatives of residents, businesses, and institutions in the project area.

Metro Policy Advisory Council, established in early 2017 to review, comment and provide input on the draft measure M Master Guidelines, the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and other work plans and policy areas that the Metro board may request.

⁸ See Section 4. "Range of Public Participation Methods Employed by Metro" for more information.

Union Station Area Roundtable, was formed in 2017 to support projects within close proximity to Union Station. It provides a regular forum for leaders and organizations in the Arts District, Downtown area, Little Tokyo, Chinatown and Boyle Heights areas to engage with Metro staff on West Santa Branch, Link US, LA River Path, Division 20 Portal Widening and Turnback Facility, Emergency Security Operational Center, Eastside Access, Forecourt and Esplanade and Union Station Master Plan projects. Stakeholder engagement at these roundtables help projects provide another layer of outreach during crucial phases in project planning.

Next Gen Bus Study Working Group was formed in 2018 and provides policy guidance on vision for Metro's bus network, service priorities and tradeoffs, and measures of success. Broad cross-section of LA County representatives interests including environmental, low income and social equity groups, educational institutions, municipal operators, COGs.

Community Relations Program Management

When a project proceeds into construction, the Community Relations **Program Management** team steps in to manage the community impacts called out in the environmental planning documents. This team is the beneficiary of the expertise developed in the study and planning stage where very specific issues have been memorialized and now require in-the-field strategies for palliative measures that sustain communities through the rigors of system construction. Metro's Project Management team is co-located in field offices with the Project Team including Construction Management and the Contractor.

In July 2013, Metro's Board of Directors approved a Metro Construction Relations Model to support construction mitigation for all transit and highway projects. This model established a baseline of outreach and communications efforts that communities affected by construction can expect. It includes pre-construction surveys of residents and businesses, methods and strategies for keeping the public informed, processing and response to complaints, palliative measures for construction impacts, maintaining safety, access and business visibility and informing the public of claims procedures. Public participation during construction includes regularly scheduled public meetings conveniently located within the community. Significantly, most contact with the community is via one-on-one interaction with the Community Relations Program Management staff that is available daily and, if required, around the clock to address community concerns. Almost every Metro project is staffed with bi-lingual expertise reflective of the ethnicity and Limited English Proficient Population of the project area. Informational materials are distributed in as many languages as

necessary to successfully communicate project information to the community including all time-sensitive notifications. For continued public participation through the end of the project, Metro holds regularly scheduled community meetings where input on construction schedules and activities are shared and feedback is sought regarding traffic controls, hours of work, and possible impacts to scheduled community events or activities.

Community Education

Metro's Community Education (MCE) Team is responsible for increasing transit safety awareness and providing education to residents of Los Angeles County who interact with Metro's public transportation system through various safety programs. This includes safety on Metro's rail lines, bus system, and bicycles.

The programs serves diverse communities across the county with a strong emphasis in the neighborhoods within a 1.5-mile radius from all Metro at-grade light rail lines. The MCE Team employs a comprehensive community outreach plan that engages schools, community centers, libraries, health institutions and places of worship year-round. In addition, outreach is extended to communities with access to Metro's transit system.

MCE's programs enhance transit safety through informative and site-specific presentations, Rail Safety Orientation Tours, participation at community events, deployment of Rail Safety Ambassadors and outreach to the older adult community. Metro's Community Education team understands the diversity of Los Angeles County and tailors its outreach efforts to achieve effective community engagement.

Special Projects

Special Projects team serves as the area manager for the City of Los Angeles, the County's Central Los Angeles region and Metro's countywide multifaith outreach initiative. The team focuses on the following:

- Building relationships with a wide range of stakeholders,
- Organizing and leading Metro's countywide multifaith outreach effort
- Facilitating coordination with City officials and staff for Metro's projects, programs, and initiatives in the City of Los Angeles and Central Los Angeles
- Coordinating outreach programs for Metro's active transportation and First Last Mile projects countywide (e.g. Complete Streets, Mobility on Demand, Metro Bike Share)

Customer Care

Finally, **Metro's Customer Care** department is the communication link to ensuring that customers receive timely and accurate responses to their travel inquiries, resolution to their complaints/concerns, assistance with Transit Access Pass (TAP) services and other customer service needs.

There are four different functional units within the department and they are:

- Metro Information Contact Center
- TAP Information Contact Center
- Customer Complaints
- Customer Programs & Services.

The last two contact centers respond to and support regional programs/services. Customer Complaints receives, tracks and addresses customer comments/complaints from the general public and Customer Programs & Service provides information to customers relevant to fare media sales, reduced fare programs and the lost & found operation.

Metro's Information Contact Center provides route, schedule, fare and other transit information to an average of two and a half million customers annually who call 323.GOMETRO for trip planning and travel assistance, seven days a week. It also maintains schedule, route, fare and stop data for 70 transit properties including Metro, in and around Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties that is uploaded on Metro Trip Planner. The TAP Information Contact Center responds to regional customers, who call 866.TAPTOGO (866.827.8646) or send emails to TAPTOGO.NET requesting assistance with TAP services weekdays including the twenty-six local transit agencies on TAP, plus Metro.

The Customer Complaints team receives, tracks, investigates and responds to all complaints, inquiries and suggestions received via phone, email, internet, written correspondence and walk-in customers regarding Metro services, programs and projects. It is also responsible for responding to the customerrelations@metro.net email box and the agency's switchboard weekdays. “

Customer Programs & Services has different operations that provides face-to-face assistance at four Customer Centers regarding TAP Fare sales, a Reduced Fare application processing unit for seniors/disabled/students, a Mobil Customer Center that travels to special events of fare media sales, and Lost & Found facilities for lost articles, including bikes, for in person customer retrieval.

The Community Outreach graphic below depicts traditional points of community interaction based on proactive and required outreach.



3. Strategies, Methods, and Procedures

The strategies, methods, and procedures outlined here are integral components to the effectiveness of Metro's Plan in meeting and exceeding Federal guidelines. They are consistent with the letter of law and legislative intent of: Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 12898 (Executive Order for Federal Agencies to address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) and FHWA's Title VI program obligations. The Plan is also responsive to the direction of FTA Circular 4703.1 that provides guidance "in order to incorporate environmental justice principles into plans, projects and activities that receive funding from FTA." Guidelines from FTA Circular 4702.1B, directing recipients on the responsibilities to integrate their programs and activities to include Limited English Proficient ("LEP") Persons (70 FR 74087, December 14, 2005) also are acknowledged by specific outreach activities defined in this section.

The strategies, overarching methods description and procedures summarized present comprehensive and targeted ventures customized to serve the public and meet Federal law and guidelines. They also broaden the value of transit service through stakeholder access and deliberations.

Metro's charge is to develop strategic plans and implementing methods to be consistent with Circular 4702.1B as follows:

- a. ensure level and quality of public transportation service is provided in non-discriminatory manner
- b. promote full, fair and equitable participation in public transportation decision-making without regard to race, color or national origin
- c. ensure meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

In addition, and consistent with FTA Circular 4703.1, Metro conducts an Environmental Justice Analysis, as required, that:

"avoids, minimizes and mitigates disproportionately high and adverse effects, ensures the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities and prevents the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low income populations."

Race/Ethnicity/Income/Persons with Physical Disabilities – LA County in 2015

Category	Percentage
Race/Ethnicity	
African American/Black (not Hispanic)	8%
American Indian/Alaskan	.2%
Asian/Asian American	13.8%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pac. Islander	.2%
Hispanic	48.1%
White (not Hispanic)	27.2%
Other	.3%
Multiracial	2.2%
Income	
Median Household Income (2010-2014)	\$55,870
Per Capita Income (2010-2014)	\$27,987
Persons Below Federal Poverty Level (2010-2014)	14.6%
Persons With Physical Disabilities	
Persons with Vision Difficulty	1.9%
Persons with Hearing Difficulty	2.4%
Persons with Ambulatory Difficulty	5.3%

Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS) 5- Year estimates

Languages Spoken in Los Angeles County (With More Than 1,000 LEP Persons)

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Populations: The 2010-2014 ACS 5- Year estimates show a total population of 9,974,203 for Los Angeles County. Data on languages spoken in Metro’s service area is gathered from multiple sources for the Four Factor Analysis⁹. Of the 9,329,565 people who are at least 5 years old, an estimated 2,407,270 people, or 25.80%, speak English less than “well”. The table below shows the breakdown of those languages for Los Angeles. Maps included in the 2013 Factor One LEP Analysis¹⁰ show concentrations of LEP groups by language within the County of

⁹ Metro’s 2016 LEP Plan Four Factor Analysis can be found in the *Title VI Program Update* which will be available at www.metro.net/civilrights.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Los Angeles, especially within the City of Los Angeles, and will be utilized for targeted customer outreach in those languages.

		TOTAL	LEP Population (Speaks English Less than Well)	Percent of Total Population over 5 yrs. old
1	Spanish or Spanish Creole	3,678,805	1,656,302	16.61%
2	Chinese	354,501	212,843	2.13%
3	Korean	183,483	112,411	1.13%
4	Armenian	171,484	86,432	0.87%
5	Tagalog	227,733	73,492	0.74%
6	Vietnamese	82,707	49,598	0.50%
7	Persian	73,447	30,391	0.30%
8	Russian	51,529	26,589	0.27%
9	Japanese	51,723	25,095	0.25%
10	Mon-Khmer; Cambodian	30,804	17,561	0.18%
11	Arabic	43,105	16,916	0.17%
12	Thai	22,847	14,109	0.14%
13	French (incl. Patois; Cajun)	39,033	6,081	0.06%
14	Hindi	23,769	5,567	0.06%
15	Hebrew	23,990	4,762	0.05%
16	Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	12,701	3,400	0.03%
17	Italian	15,372	3,021	0.03%
18	Urdu	9,081	2,830	0.03%
19	Gujarathi	9,193	2,818	0.03%
20	German	23,089	2,817	0.03%
21	Hungarian	4,736	1,607	0.02%
22	Greek	6,745	1,522	0.02%
23	Polish	5,187	1,497	0.02%
24	Serbo-Croatian	5,845	1,465	0.01%
25	Laotian	3,232	1,362	0.01%

Metro is charged with developing strategy and implementing a public access practice that informs and engages distinct socio-economic communities within large geographic swaths of Los Angeles County. However diverse, these communities are connected by an opportunity for improved transit services and the desire to reduce or improve their daily commutes to jobs, health providers, schools and businesses. The Plan formally outlines the way in which Metro provides meaningful, pragmatic and cost-effective outreach that is responsive to information gathered in LEP community surveys and other public comment on the types of information and interactions deemed most useful.

This information is critical to informing Metro’s Plan. A comprehensive community outreach, public information and engagement strategy is designed to serve all stakeholders regardless of their gender or age and including LEP, minority, low-income, and people with disabilities, within the project service or study area. The strategies, methods, and overview of implementation elements present traditional outreach practices with overlays of evolving technological tools. Metro has harnessed the power of the internet to broaden communication, public information and involvement recognizing that there are many communities without equal, daily access to the range of social media sites in use. Therefore, the development of each specific public participation plan includes the assessment of how best to effectively communicate with technology within low-income, LEP, and minority communities coupled with outreach methods to engage people with disabilities, hard to reach communities and general population stakeholders. This combined approach provides meaningful and broad public access to the public process.

The agency is informed quickly through technology that allows immediate feedback and perspective on the value of these applications in engagement. It also presents user performance measures through comments. Qualitative and quantitative results are used to adjust project/plan outreach and to contribute over time to strategic outreach planning.

Metro’s Plan provides multiple platforms for communication providing comfortable, accessible, far-reaching, broadly serving and individually engaging settings. The examples below are associated with public participation plans of the last 3 years on both regional and local plans. These strategies, methods and tools have been overlaid to foster ongoing public involvement in decision-making.

Strategies

Metro’s strategic elements include:

- Convene an advance planning team that includes technical project planners, demographic and data resource researchers and community outreach specialists to identify anticipated issues from various stakeholder positions.
- Utilize additional data resources beyond Metro’s LEP Four Factor¹¹ sources, as appropriate, to advance the effectiveness of team outreach planning in diverse socioeconomic communities.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

- Advance and integrate the principles of environmental justice through the Plan by selecting Metro team members with special cultural and linguistic abilities, as well as historical, economic and local knowledge, who can contribute to the development of a best practice palette addressing barriers and broadening input.
- Identify community leaders, government and community-based organizations to provide input on known barriers to communication.
- Analyze existing community-based informational connections, via appropriate organizations' networks and through consultation with civic, community or grassroots leadership to advance transmission of information at a grassroots level.
- Identify and create ongoing communication practices that respond to communication barriers, including multilingual platforms (including sign language translation) that will provide a means of involvement and information exchange.
- Identify a range of outreach activities that can inform members of diverse communities of new or ongoing projects and programs, or to plan in advance for a formal public hearing process.
- Develop a multi-language communication platform, based on demographic and community input that equalizes opportunities among identified stakeholders for access to information from the inception of a project through its completion and operation phase.
- Identify outreach options that provide opportunities for initial comments, and create the means by which those comments are incorporated into the ongoing outreach process and, as feasible, into the plans and projects themselves.
- Ensure that if Metro is requesting public feedback, stakeholders are given sufficient lead time to provide comments: 30-days at a minimum.
- Identify the potential uses of electronic communication, including websites, web video and social media, while ensuring the Plan takes into consideration individuals and households in low-income, minority and limited English proficiency communities who may have limited access to computers and other communications electronics.

- Measure public engagement and adjust public participation plans by monitoring website metrics and transit stakeholders' comments on websites and social media.
- Measure public engagement and adjust long-range planning services based on query and monitoring of public comment from varied customer service interactions and stakeholder groups.

Methodology and Menu of Public Participation Tools & Purpose

For every program, plan, project or other activity, Metro's technical, environmental and community outreach planners evaluate and determine the most effective methods for involving the public during the decision-making process. This advance team also identifies, designs and implements ongoing communication methods that engage Metro customers and open up opportunities for expanded participation.

As part of our public involvement process, Metro uses varied tools to encourage, facilitate, and engage the public in dialogue and activities. This is sometimes accomplished through the creation of advisory groups that include varied civic, community, and government entities affected by proposed or planned projects or service changes and the dissemination of notice and project information through various formats, in person, by written notice, and those advanced through networks of technology with community partners.

Methods of outreach are tailored to engage our diverse population. We are mindful in identifying and including in this process minority and low-income participants, people with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities and in providing meaningful access to our outreach activities by making available the service of interpreters and providing materials in appropriate languages, adapting a wide range of media communications to advertise and increase public participation.

The menu of public participation tools follows with an explanation of its value to this process. Marketing materials and translation practices are consistent with Metro's LEP Plan¹² and Federal guidelines. Additional interpretive language assistance, whether officially required or not, is provided as needed.

¹² *Ibid.*

Menu of Public Participation Tools & Purpose

Meeting Planning - Location & Structure

First and foremost, meeting venues should be transit accessible and ADA compliant. Meeting planning takes into consideration minority, low income, and LEP community members and individuals with disabilities on varied work and family schedules. Meeting times and venues are selected to allow for greater participation of diverse groups including under represented participant groups (college age, seniors, disadvantaged). Metro publicizes meetings through multiple distribution channels, is sensitive to multiple language needs, and selects transit accessible venues in compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)*.

Meeting venues are selected on a number of criteria: (1) room size (selected to accommodate anticipated attendance and ADA requirements), (2) room layouts that help facilitate dialog/input, (3) technology infrastructure for presentations or multilingual communication, (4) hours of operation of facility tied to area transit options to ensure transit dependent community attendance, and (5) geographic location within impacted or hard-to-reach stakeholder communities for convenience and comfort of dialogue.

Selection of language services takes into consideration meeting format as well as these factors: (1) Simultaneous english and spanish translation – Spanish is the non-English language that is most frequently encountered in the Metro service area and is therefore offered at virtually every public meeting. In addition, fact sheets and other handouts are translated consistent with demographic analysis. Multilingual communications are called for in many communities, and documents and translations are offered if useful and as required. ADA accommodations, such as sign language interpreters, are provided on an as-request basis provided that requests are made with at least three working days' (72 hours) advance notice. In addition, information is also made available in large print and Braille as necessary.

Meeting Types

Metro values direct interaction with community members. The following are the types of meetings designed to achieve that goal:

- Milestone Meetings (required meetings) introduce the public to the proposed projects and plans, present anticipated ongoing activities, provide ways to engage and follow the project and register comments and concerns. Meetings

are translated as required given demographic and LEP factors. Collateral materials are also developed and distributed when required and to facilitate dialog and an understanding of key stakeholder issues.

- Workshops and briefings are held to update stakeholders and resolve new or ongoing issues.
- Advisory Committees/ Roundtables among constituents at the grassroots level offer input and resolution to issues/mitigations.
- Community Meetings are provided during the environmental review process. Participants include local civic, business and community organizations, elected officials and the general public. Meetings are noticed in multiple languages through mailers and e-blasts, and via new media sources (Twitter, Facebook, and blogs).
- Pop Ups are utilized for Metro staff to provide project information and gather input from stakeholders at local community events, such as festivals, conferences and holiday gatherings.
- Community Tours are designed and hosted by Metro staff to provide stakeholders an experiential learning opportunity to better understand a proposed project, construction activities, Metro's extensive art program, transit safety, or other programs and initiatives at Metro.
- One-on-one and group briefings are conducted with community leaders, elected officials and staff, and individual stakeholders.
- Scoping meetings are held to present the public with initial discussion and results or changes.
- Specific design meetings engage the public by introducing the technical considerations and offer solutions to potential impacts or present design opportunities
- Community relationships are enhanced through the established Metro Service Councils, a sustained source of community input for the last 18 years.

Public Meeting Notice - Delivery System

A wide variety of media are available to notice public meetings:

- US Postal Service – Traditional mail service can be employed for initial project noticing, as well as to publicize community workshop opportunities, project

updates and activities during the environmental process and for construction updates and service impacts.

- Email – Email can be used in addition to traditional mailing to stakeholders and community members. Recipients have previously opted in to email communications by providing their email addresses. “E-blasts” are sent by Metro and through community partners in advance of initial milestone meetings and for updates.
- Location Placement– Meeting notices in multiple languages are often posted in high-traffic gathering places that can include colleges, parks, libraries, community and senior centers, farmers’ markets, cultural events, local elected officials’ offices, civic and other community-based organizations.
- Transit – Meeting leaflets or “Take-ones” and related collateral may also be available on buses and rail, notifying riders of upcoming meetings and providing basic Metro contact information.
- Community Networking – Metro frequently partners with civic and business organizations, non-profits and individuals to distribute notices through their proprietary channels and social media networks. Metro’s team attends and distributes notices at cultural and neighborhood events when feasible. Metro provides content to varied community groups for posting on community calendars including transit coalitions, neighborhood and economic development councils.
- Posters – Multilingual posters at terminal points can also be used as an effective means of noticing meetings and directing individuals to general information about Metro.

Online communications – meetings, updates and ongoing communications

- The Metro Rider’s guide, available on www.metro.net, provides web visitors with transportation information assistance in nine languages in addition to English. Additionally, Metro offers Google Translate on every web page for language accessibility above Title VI requirements.
- Metro’s “The Source” is a transit blog presented in English; its Spanish-language counterpart is “El Pasajero.” The Source announces meetings, project updates, proposed project plans, video presentations, Board actions and other transportation news. Readers can also comment on stories or share them on their own personal social media sites.

- Metro has created landing pages for many of its projects, with up-to-date information available in bi- or multilingual formats, as appropriate. Visitors are invited to provide comments, stream recorded meetings, view PowerPoint presentations, and sign up to receive email updates about the specific project.
- Metro strategically utilizes online advertising in English, Spanish and other commonly-used languages, targeted to demographic groups and project parameters in such platforms as Facebook, Twitter, and others.
- Metro is actively engaged in popular social media sites Facebook and Twitter to conduct outreach campaigns, provide project updates, and direct users to information, meeting announcements and special events.
- Metro monitors its social media outlets to ensure content is appropriate and useful, gauge areas of concern and interest as well as measure customer satisfaction.
- The public is invited to contact project staff through project helplines. The system allows callers to leave messages and staff with appropriate language skills return calls. The public is advised of the project specific helpline through Metro's website, printed materials, ads and in-person outreach.
- E-mail updates - As projects develop and reach milestones, e-mail updates are sent to community stakeholders. Metro also shares these email updates with its key stakeholders, including partners and community-based organizations, to distribute the email updates through their own networks.

Other language access sites or tools

A Metro advisory card has been prepared listing how to get language assistance services. As identified in Metro's LEP Plan¹³, the information is listed in nine languages other than English. Pocket transit guides are also offered in nine languages, distributed at meetings and through customer service sites. These can assist stakeholders with long-term interest in the plan, project or service change action, to more easily access community meetings and get additional information in-language.

Broadcast and print media

- Media alerts and releases are distributed to multi-lingual news sources, media briefings for minority-owned and distributed newspapers

¹³ *Ibid.*

- Purchase of display ads in Spanish-language media and other outlets as appropriate
 - Press releases are distributed to websites, blogs, Facebook/Twitter
- (For a complete list of media outlets, see Attachment 4 - Database of Media.)

Additional approaches to communications

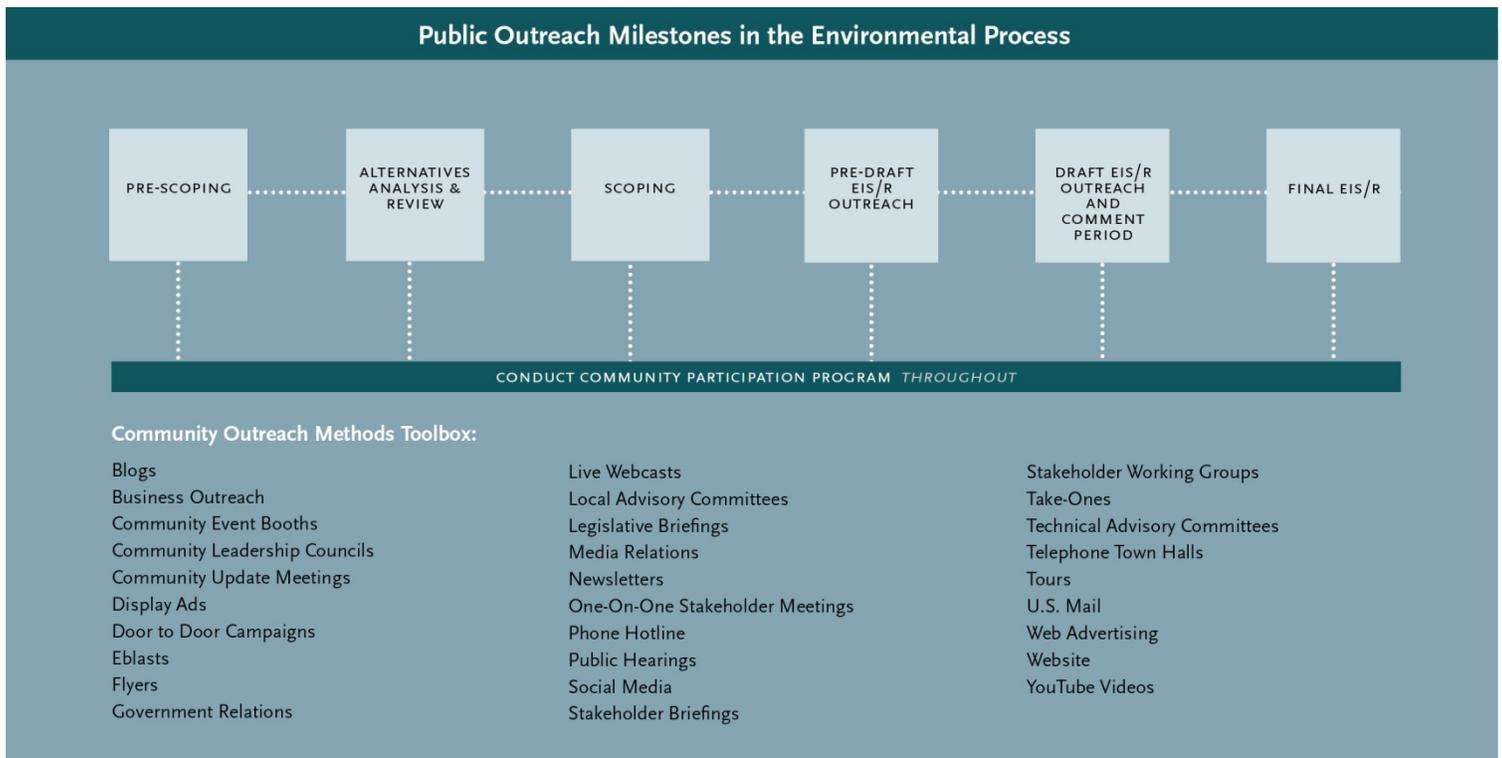
- Business Webinars are announced on the project website, notice is emailed to stakeholders, promoted via a project's social media sites, on regional blogs, and local organizations' websites.
- Virtual meetings and simultaneous broadcast of meetings are often used via Facebook Live, Webcasts, Skype and Metro's website.
- YouTube videos are produced and posted to provide broad accessibility and include: news programs, transit project information, bus routes, rail services, safety and security as well as public meetings. Information posted is often relayed in multiple languages and includes video dubbing and subtitles for some public service messages.
- Door-to-door campaigns in various languages in both residential and business communities are employed to increase participation and access of potentially affected stakeholders.

Evolving Practices - All Stakeholders Including LEP, Minority, Low Income, and Individuals with Disabilities

- **Management: "Advance Team" Assignment** - Staff with multilingual, cultural, historical, economic or special community knowledge provide early input to outreach strategies partnering with technical staff on planning matters and statistical experts to design outreach approach.
- **Technology: Public Engagement Platform Development** - The launch of an internet-based Interactive GeoSocial Map presents a model for enhanced public participation, allowing close examination of proposed transit projects by stakeholders living anywhere within the Los Angeles County 4,751 square miles. Users may examine various perspectives and details of routes, post comments on maps and images to be viewed by all interested parties and further shared on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. This innovative informational tool, also compatible with varied phone applications, brings greater involvement and a new level of engagement typically found through community meetings. In addition to its value as a public participation element, it also contributes as a project monitoring and tracking mechanism.

- **Online/Digital Communication for Input and Telephone Town Halls:** Metro will continue to develop these fun, user-friendly and effective digital communication tools to maximize public input and community engagement.

4. Range of Public Participation Methods Employed by Metro



A range of public participation strategies, methods and tools are developed and used to engage diverse communities and create on-going public access, participation and input throughout the environmental process. While Metro’s outreach planning begins early and continues past the environmental approval, the purpose of this section is to present specific examples of how barriers to communication are identified and addressed, engagement is strengthened, input is garnered, issues are resolved and projects are adapted to reflect the public’s values.

A comprehensive public participation plan is one that provides early and on-going access for all stakeholders while demonstrating the principles of environmental justice and meeting the statutory obligations placed on Federal recipients under Title VI non-discriminatory regulations. Through the principles and practices herein, each public outreach process engages varied stakeholders: residents, businesses, transit users, elected officials, local area industries, local organizations and others. The parameters for development of each public participation plan are based on required analytical methods, such as demographic analysis, language

assessments, customer and employee surveys articulated through the Four Factor Analysis¹⁴. Other considerations include the type of plan, program, or service and resources available. Additionally, Metro applies further community analysis beyond LEP's Four Factors to examine linguistic, cultural, historic, economic, and social barriers that may prevent stakeholders from participating in the public decision-making process.

Once the public process has been initiated, continual adjustments are made to improve outreach, deliver information and encourage participation. Targeted measures are customized to relay project design or respond to community issues, to facilitate discussion on determined disproportionate/disparate impacts or to expand and balance participation among stakeholders. Project updates are provided on a continuum via Metro's website, social media and multi-language print venues including localized community network bulletins and newspapers to promote further vetting at a grassroots level.

Public Participation Case Studies

The following five Public Participation Plan examples summarize customized outreach eliminating communication barriers, promoting participation and input, resolving issues and delivering meaningful participation.

- Crenshaw/LAX Community Leadership Council (CLC)
- Regional Connector Little Tokyo Working Group (LTWG) and Community Leadership Council (RCCLC)
- First Last Mile Blue Line, A Community Base Process and Plan
- Purple Line Extension, Section 2 Working Groups for City of Beverly Hills and Century City
- Next Gen Bus Study Working Group

Introduction: Given the large geographic reach of each of these projects, the Public Participation Plan provided a range of measures to promote inclusive and meaningful involvement. The full description of each mentioned project's Public Participation Plan can be provided upon request or referred to in Metro's Title VI Triennial Program Update¹⁵.

The five (5) cases below illustrate customized outreach elements designed to: respond to a community's specific concern or request, advance communication and participation within low-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Metro's 2016 Title VI Triennial Program Update can be found in the *Title VI Program Update* which will be available at www.metro.net/civilrights.

income, limited English proficiency and/or minority community, expand and balance participation among diverse stakeholders, provide a heightened and on-going communication system between interested parties, identify and address issues of greatest impact or concern, and expand benefits to project-adjacent communities through dialog.

Project: Crenshaw/LAX Light Rail Transit Project

Description: The Crenshaw/LAX Light Rail Transit Project is an 8.5-mile alignment from the Exposition/Crenshaw station on the north following Crenshaw Blvd south and west to the Metro Green Line connection. The project purpose is to improve public transit service and mobility in the Crenshaw Corridor between Wilshire and El Segundo Boulevards. The overall goal of the project is to improve mobility in the corridor by connecting with existing lines such as the Metro Green Line and the Expo Line. The alignment traverses both South Los Angeles and the City of Inglewood, comprised primarily of minority populations.

Customized Approach - Establishment of Crenshaw/LAX Community Leadership Council (CLC) for Sustained Involvement & Continuity through Project Buildout

In addition to Metro's traditional and targeted outreach measures engaged during early deliberations, in 2010 Metro pioneered the formation of the CLC. The CLC is a corridor-based transportation advisory body, formed for the purpose of sustained involvement by representatives who will serve in a liaison role to the greater community as the LRT is brought to fruition into an operating system. The mission of the CLC is to promote community-based dialogue around opportunities arising from the Crenshaw/LAX Line development and engage a wide base of community stakeholders with ongoing project activities throughout communities located along the Project alignment in a way that's equitable, beneficial, resourceful and meets the needs of the community. The CLC is racially diverse, and includes representatives from small business, faith-based organizations, labor, local media, academia, local empowerment congress, chambers, local economic development corporations and law enforcement. Participation in the CLC also allows for engagement on topics that have direct correlation to the assets of a new transit system linking the corridor to Metro's countywide rail and transit system. The CLC, led by Co-Chairs representing the City of Los Angeles and the City of Inglewood, meets on a quarterly basis and is assisted in their duties by a series of Working Groups.

Working Groups are topic-specific groups open to the public that convene quarterly or as-needed to set goals, strategize and implement working plans that support the project area communities and/or the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Project. These Working Groups serve as a platform to share information, address community concerns and

develop work plans related to community opportunities arising from the Project. The four working groups include:

1) Community Engagement

Solicit input and encourage dialogue in the community on topics surrounding the Project.

2) Economic Development

Establish opportunities for job creation, commercial development, capital investment, jobs and small business development within the project area.

3) Quality of Life

Identify opportunities to improve quality of life for the community within the areas of mobility, safety and environmental health.

4) Special Projects

Additional areas of community interest

Result: Metro, working with the CLC, has succeeded in fostering greater awareness of and involvement in the new transit line and the attendant mobility and economic development benefits that will accrue to the community. Additionally, the CLC was instrumental in identifying the need for an additional station at the historic Leimert Park, a center of community, family, artistic and business activities. On June 27, 2013, Metro's Board of Directors approved a contract to build the line including stations at Leimert Park and Westchester/Veterans.

Project: Regional Connector Transit Project

Description: The Metro Regional Connector Project connects the Metro Gold, Blue and Expo Lines through downtown Los Angeles from the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station to the 7th Street/Metro Center Station. The 1.9-mile alignment will serve Little Tokyo, the Arts District, Civic Center, The Historic Core, Broadway, Grand Avenue, Bunker Hill, Flower St. and the Financial District.

This new Metro Rail extension will also provide a one-seat ride for travel across Los Angeles County. From the Metro Gold Line, passengers will be able to travel from Azusa to Long Beach and from East Los Angeles to Santa Monica without transferring to and from the Red/Purple lines.

Customized Approach - Formation of Little Tokyo Working Group for Impact Issues Resolution and Collaboration with Diverse Area Stakeholders

In addition to required technical and demographic analysis leading to a multi-lingual platform for communication, outreach measures were developed to address cultural, historic and economic impact concerns among stakeholders. One of the communities in the project area, Little Tokyo, is one of only three remaining "Japantowns" in the United States. Over the years, Little Tokyo has experienced the

loss of some significant portions of its community to the construction of several city, state, and federal buildings via eminent domain. Many community members saw the Regional Connector as one more attempt to encroach into Little Tokyo, further reducing its size and negatively impacting the community's cultural identity and economic viability. Opposition peaked in 2009, when Little Tokyo leaders opposed the on-grade option based on economic impacts to area businesses, particularly concerned with those of cultural and historic standing.

In 2010, recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities of the proposed project, Metro developed a response to specific input raised during public discussions, regarding explanation of impacts as well as the demand to identify mitigation measures.

The Little Tokyo Working Group (LTWG) was formed, comprised of Metro staff and leaders of the Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC). The LTCC, an umbrella organization, works with approximately 100 business and community organizations. It represents a wide diversity of stakeholders and opinion leaders, chambers of commerce, business improvement districts (BIDs), neighborhood councils, community councils, arts organizations, the spiritual community and residential groups.

During the environmental review period, the LTWG worked collaboratively to develop an alternative and discussed possible mitigation measures that could address the construction and operational impacts of the Regional Connector. Metro also provided funding to hire a consultant to assist the community in acquiring an in-depth understanding of the environmental process and develop potential mitigation measures for documentation in the Draft EIS/EIR.

Result: The ongoing work with the LTWG led to the development of a new alternative that not only was acceptable to Little Tokyo stakeholders, but also generated widespread support for the Regional Connector. In February 2010, in response to the LTWG and LTCC, the Metro Board of Directors approved the addition of the new alternative to the Draft EIS/EIR for a full environmental evaluation. Significant numbers of Little Tokyo community members attended the Board meeting to register support for the new alternative which addressed their concerns. Following the conclusion of the Draft EIS/EIR public review period, the Metro Board of Directors designated the Fully Underground LRT Alternative as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) at the October 28, 2010 meeting.

Henceforth, the Metro Board approved the Project in 2012, now refined to reduce project impacts and improve design in response to input from the Little Tokyo community and other stakeholders in the project area. This interaction led the Metro Board to approve a fully underground light rail transit alternative, which in turn, generated considerable community support for the project. In addition, the Board, as part of the Statement of Overriding Consideration, articulated small business

mitigations to be implemented through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to serve as Little Tokyo Business Mitigations. In October 2014, two MOUs were approved contracting the Little Tokyo Community Council and the Little Tokyo Service Center to develop and implement business assistance programs. A Go Little Tokyo Marketing & Advertising Program was developed to promote the appeal of this transit destination, create interest in community cultural events, and leverage social and print media to attract visitors to area businesses. In addition, multi-lingual counselors are engaged to assist owners with traditional financial planning and/or internet-based marketing strategies.

The partnership of Metro, the Little Tokyo Community Council and Community Arts Resources was awarded the American Planning Association 2018 Award of Excellence in Economic and Community Development. In 2018, the partnership was also awarded the Statewide Award of Merit. The partnership with both the Little Tokyo Community Council and the Little Tokyo Service Center, to sustain and advance businesses, will continue through the end of the project, anticipated for early 2022.

Project: Blue Line First/Last Mile: A Community-Based process and Plan

Description:

The Blue Line First/Last Mile Plan was completed in March 2018 and includes planning-level, community-identified pedestrian and bicycle improvements within walking (1/2-mile) and biking (3-mile) distance of all 22 Blue Line stations. The Plan describes the collaborative approach and process for arriving at the improvements, which represent a range of walking and bicycling access improvements including new or improved crosswalks, curb ramps, and sidewalks; facilities to improve bicycle connections to stations; pedestrian-scale lighting; and wayfinding signage among others. By their very nature, first/last mile infrastructure can be the most neighborhood-oriented element of a transportation system that a person uses. Many of the neighborhoods served by the Blue Line have experienced historic disinvestment and neglect from the public and private sector on a range of issues. As a result, government in general, and planning processes in particular, can be viewed with skepticism. Community engagement led by community-based organizations (CBOs) was instrumental in developing the Plan and represents new approaches consistent with direction outlined in Metro's Equity Platform.

Customized Approach: Partnering with Community-Based Organizations to Shape the Process and the Product

This Plan embodies a community-based collaboration that builds upon past Metro efforts; an effort to both develop effective techniques for FLM planning and to engage authentically with communities to develop plans that reflect their concerns and values. The Community-Based Organization (CBO) partners were instrumental in representing the voices of residents along the Blue Line in ways that directly reflect their concerns historically and presently.

As part of the consultant team for this effort, Metro partnered with a coalition of CBOs to lead outreach efforts on the project, and to help shape the overall direction of this plan. The coalition included:

- Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition
- T.R.US.T. South LA
- Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement
- People for Mobility Justice
- Ride On! Bike Co-op
- East Side Riders Bike Club
- Healthy Active Streets

The project team reached out to all of the communities along the Blue Line through an extensive and unique community engagement process. The CBOs led 22 walk audits for all the station areas and spearheaded 11 community events to gather input from the wider community. The CBOs were also instrumental in the project in other ways; contributing the voice of history and community memory that was valuable in shaping conversations, project materials, community engagement events, and ultimately the final Plan. Chapters in the Plan were authored by the CBOs and present their perspectives not only for FLM improvements, but for ways that Metro and historically underserved communities can better partner going forward.

Result:

While it represents a first-of-its-kind effort to plan comprehensive access improvements for an entire transit line, its greater innovation is in piloting an inclusive, equity-focused community engagement process. Throughout the process of developing the Plan, the CBOs and other community members underscored the importance of addressing wide-ranging concerns; topics that are not traditionally under the purview of Metro or treated in Metro plans, but that should be acknowledged and addressed in a coordinated way when discussing first/last mile improvements. Considerations related to crosswalk safety or safe bicycle facilities, for example, cannot be disentangled from concerns community members have about feeling safe and secure. The CBOs also raised that discussing first/last mile improvements brought up fears about gentrification and displacement, which are summarized in the Plan. The lessons learned from this effort should provide a foundation for other planning opportunities, and support Metro's Equity Platform Framework, adopted by the Metro Board in February 2018.

Project: Purple Line Extension, Section 2

Description: The second section of the Purple Line Extension Transit Project includes 2.59 miles of additional tracks to Metro's Rail system and two new stations at Wilshire/Rodeo and Century City/Constellation. The project received full Federal funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation in January 2017 and is now under

construction. The extension is expected to begin operations by 2025 and will continue the Purple Line from the Miracle Mile through Beverly Hills and into Century City

Customized Approach: Formation of Century City and City of Beverly Hills Stakeholder Working Groups for Impact Issues Resolution and Collaboration with Diverse Stakeholders.

In addition to Metro's traditional and targeted outreach measures during the early stages of construction, in 2017 Metro formed two working groups in Century City and in the City of Beverly Hills. These two advisory groups are comprised of key stakeholders within the closest proximities to the future stations which will be located on Constellation/Avenue of the Stars and Wilshire/Reeves.

Maintaining participation in these groups allows for engagement in a more direct and personal level and creates dialogue between the stakeholders and the project. These meetings are scheduled regularly to all participants in the group and segmented as needed to address very specific issues.

Result:

Century City

- **Constellation Closure:** The design -build contractor requested a full closure of Constellation Blvd at Century Park East to create a more accessible area for construction of the launch box for the tunnel boring machines. The closure impacted a very active commercial driveway that served 4 high rise properties. That driveway stood out to be the most sensitive and least adjustable impact of the closure. Bi-monthly meetings were held with property managers from the area and specific meetings with tenants of the two most impacted properties adjacent to the closure . Based on the input from these meetings, many adjustments were made to the traffic control plans to accommodate individual properties for ingress and egress. Additional commitments were made by Metro and the contractor to further mitigate traffic control issues once the closure was in place and we could assess the needs in real time. The relationships that were developed and the openness of these meetings resulted in no objections to the nine-month closure from the community.

Beverly Hills

- **Canon Closure:** The City of Beverly Hills suggested that N. Canon Drive could derive additional mitigation benefits from the impacts of construction if it were fully closed with a temporary wall blocking off Canon at Wilshire Blvd. Vetting this concept as a viable idea to the business stakeholders in Beverly Hills required multiple meetings with numerous businesses, large and small, that would be impacted by this closure for approximately two years. A working

group of stakeholders who were closest to the proposed wall was formed and meetings took place regularly. The most pronounced issues were traffic detour impacts, parking and valet relocations, cross walk access, aesthetics of the proposed cul de sac and directional signage for customers. At every meeting the businesses had an opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions and interact with both City and Metro officials. This level of detailed interaction with the business stakeholders went on for over two years in conjunction with negotiating a Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) on how construction could take place in the city. After addressing their concerns, the Canon Wall concept was accepted by the majority of stakeholders and resulted in no objections by the community when presented to the Beverly Hills City Council. Meetings with that working group and a broader scope of surrounding stakeholders are continuing to take place monthly at the BH Chamber of Commerce as an effective means of keeping them informed of construction activities. Recently, the MOA was approved by Beverly Hills City Council with members of the working group in attendance fully supporting the project and acknowledging the hard work of Metro's team.

- **Delivering technical information to school parents and students:** The Purple Line Extension Project was environmentally approved in 2012 although construction did not begin until 2018. Over the years leading up to the start of construction there was a flurry of misinformation circulating among the parents and students in the school district. This information challenged the credibility of the environmental documents and caused concern and fear within the community. Regularly scheduled community construction update meetings were held where very specific and technical questions were being asked of the Construction Relations team, who could not answer with that level of expertise to satisfy the audience.

Bring in the Experts: Metro then worked for weeks with outside technical experts involved in the creation and execution of the environmental document to provide a detailed, yet easily understandable, breakdown of their main concerns: air quality, seismic studies, noise, oil wells and methane gas. The experts were run through mock-meetings and a presentation was created to be posted on the project website, after the panel of experts presented at the following community meeting. The audience was requested to write down and submit their questions to be organized categorically and answered by the appropriate expert on the panel. This meeting was video recorded and posted on the project website with the power point presentation so those who were not in attendance could hear the technical experts address the audience directly.

The meeting was a success and the project received calls and emails thanking us for finding an approach that answered questions directly with factual knowledge, provided by technical experts that helped to dispel the erroneous information that had been circulated.

Project: Next Gen Bus Study

Description: In 2018 Metro began the process to reimagine and redesign our bus system so that it is more relevant, reflective of, and attractive to the residents of LA County. The primary goal of the Study is to redesign the bus system to improve service to current customers, attract new customers and win back past customers.

Customized Approach: Formation of a Working Group made up of Diverse Stakeholders Countywide.

Metro recognized that the Next Gen Bus Study would require extensive outreach, to ensure we heard from as many stakeholders as possible countywide. Besides conventional outreach methods, our engagement efforts require a partnership with community-based organizations, faith-based communities, policy makers, neighborhood leaders, local municipalities, sub-regional agencies and other transit agencies to help with outreach and work with Metro to rethink, redesign and improve our current system. In Spring of 2018, Metro formed the Next Gen Working Group to provide policy guidance on a vision for Metro's bus system, service priorities and tradeoffs, and measures of success. The NextGen Working Group consists of 50 people who represent a broad cross-section of LA County stakeholders, including Metro Service Councils, environmental interests, low income and social equity groups, educational institutions, religious leaders, municipal bus operators, business associations, and Councils of Governments.

Result: The NextGen Working Group will continue to meet on a periodic basis to offer guidance to staff about what is important to their constituencies during and after completion of the study. Some members of the Working Group have hosted workshops and worked to ensure that their members and constituencies participate in the public engagement process, including the 18 Metro-hosted public workshops that are currently underway. The Working Group is our first public engagement activity prior to engaging more broadly with the general public. The working group provides us with advice and comments to consider to better prepare us for working with and listening to the general public. Their recommendations and comments led to us to formulate our approach through social media, community events, briefings to community groups, advertising, and promotional materials distribution. In addition,

their participation helped us develop the current public workshop framework that we are using to obtain specific input on our bus lines from the general public.

These workshops are serving as forums for the public share their ideas and opinions about how to improve our bus system. To date, we have had about 700 people participate in the workshops who have contributed nearly 1,100 comments on how to improve our bus system. Major themes we have heard include interest in more service in non-peak hours, more frequent service, better real time information, cleaner buses, and improved safety at bus stops.

5. Public Engagement Measures and Objectives

- **Monitoring and Tracking**

In Los Angeles County, an immense service area encompassing 10 million residents, the responsiveness of the public transit system to public opinion is essential to the sustainability of the system. In order to meet the needs and expectations of residents and stakeholders, Metro's Plan must be monitored, fine-tuned and adjusted.

The Plan has been developed utilizing a wide range of analytical tools, data sources – including the Four Factor Analysis¹⁶ – culturally- and community-informed human resources, social media, partnerships with community-based organizations and institutions including government, engagement of area businesses and informed and applied outreach practices.

Metro's metric for monitoring and tracking public engagement and participation in projects/programs/service changes, is based on and evaluated concurrently at four levels:

- Metro's Community Relations Team management, which convenes weekly to assess the methods employed and provide assessment and approval of reasoned adjustments in county-wide outreach based on updated community input, staff experiences, desires and concerns of transit stakeholders, participation levels, new project information and issues to be conveyed.
- The project team is comprised of staff who are vested in grassroots community engagement and who solicit, receive and record input as the public process is initiated. This recordkeeping and observation of community engagement provide insight to short-term adjustments and informs long-term strategic planning.

¹⁶ Metro's 2016 LEP Plan Four Factor Analysis can be found in the *Title VI Program Update* which will be available at www.metro.net/civilrights

- Comments from social media messaging can be assessed on a virtually daily basis through web analytics.
- In order to continually provide excellence in service and support for all Metro customers, including people with Limited English Proficiency, Metro surveys its customers twice a year in English and Spanish as well as maintains a website with survey results in the seven other languages identified in Metro's Limited English Proficiency Plan Four Factor Analysis. Metro assesses the languages spoken in the communities of interest at the outset of environmental planning studies for new projects. For public meetings, Metro often provides translation into Spanish or another language known to be prevalent in the community where the meeting is occurring. The agency also provides translation into other languages at meetings if the request is received at least three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting and meeting notices provide basic information for how to request this translation.

In addition, under Title VI reporting measures and LEP Plan updates, the public is surveyed through various methods on Metro's public engagement measures and objectives. These were considered in developing this Plan model.

The previously presented best practice project examples are perhaps the most compelling measure of meaningful access: projects that carry the impression of community comment through program design.

6. Conclusion

This Plan must, first and foremost, be accountable to the public. This plan ensures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or any other protected category described by state or federal law be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any Metro programs or activities. This Plan has been assembled to capture the methods, innovations and measurements representative of the agency's commitment to meet and exceed the prescribed requirements as a recipient of public investment, Title VI regulations, FTA Circular instructions in consideration of Environmental Justice, FHWA requirements, and on behalf of Limited English Proficient, low-income, and minority communities and individuals with disabilities.