



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sustained Funding Plan Accelerates Transit Projects

Metro's CEO Unveils Updated Los Angeles County Traffic Improvement Plan to Transform Transportation through a Possible November Ballot Measure

On the heels of an aggressive public outreach effort, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) CEO Phillip A. Washington today unveiled a revised expenditure plan calling for a sustained funding approach for a possible November ballot measure that would accelerate and pay for a wide variety of transit and highway projects, roadway improvements and pedestrian and bike paths.

“We need to build and sustain a world-class transportation system here in Los Angeles County to accommodate our ever-changing and continually growing needs,” said Washington. “Working with our community stakeholders, this updated plan brings us a step closer in defining what projects are needed and where a sustained level of funding could come from to accelerate and complete those projects.”

The revision also has a new name: the Los Angeles County Traffic Improvement Plan. It would also devote billions of dollars to commuter rail, transit operations and projects to keep buses, trains and facilities in good repair. The plan would return revenues to local cities on a per capita basis — money those cities could spend on their own local transportation improvements.

In March, Metro staff presented a 40-year draft plan that would ask voters to increase the countywide sales tax by a half-cent and to continue the existing Measure R tax for 18 years, meaning both would run through 2057. In May, the Metro Board of Directors asked agency staff to model a sustained “no sunset” scenario to determine additional benefits that could be delivered if the tax continued beyond 40 years.

Under the new sustained funding scenario, nine projects could be accelerated for a combined 42 years earlier than previously scheduled for a savings of \$9.4 billion. The revised plan also allows the Eastside Gold Line Extension to be built to both South El Monte and Whittier and would also fund the L.A. County section of a new freeway, energy and high-speed rail corridor between the Antelope Valley and San Bernardino County.

In addition, three projects would be upgraded later in the plan: a bus rapid transit project between North Hollywood and Pasadena could be light rail, a high-capacity transit project on Vermont Avenue between Hollywood and the Green Line in South L.A. could be a subway and a proposed bus rapid transit project on Lincoln Boulevard could be light rail.

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The sustained funding recommendation also will increase funding for local return to the 88 cities in L.A. County from 16 percent to 17 percent starting in 2018 and increasing to 20 percent in 2040. It also will increase Metrolink funding by one percent starting in 2040 after meeting service improvements.

The foundation of the plan includes a host of transportation improvement projects submitted by stakeholders across the county. Metro staff evaluated those projects against key performance metrics to determine how they would ease congestion and enhance mobility, provide better access to key destinations, improve safety, grow the local economy, and enhance quality of life.

“This plan includes hundreds of local and regional capital improvement projects,” said Washington. “But this plan goes far beyond building and delivering projects. It includes operating and maintaining the system we build, developing new services that meet the shifting needs of our region and it creates a smarter system that takes full advantage of every technology that is out there today and every technology that has yet to be developed.”

Among the challenges of a 40-year sales tax ballot measure were fewer major projects that could be built, limits on the ability to accelerate projects and opportunities for leveraging additional state and federal funds. A 40-year plan would not provide ongoing funding to maintain and keep transportation systems in good repair.

Projects that would be accelerated under the new sustained plan include Orange Line improvements (five-year acceleration), West Santa Ana Branch Project – Segment 1 (one-year acceleration) and segment two (six-year acceleration), I-5 widening between the I-605 and I-710 project (five-year acceleration), Crenshaw/LAX Line Northern Extension (eight-year acceleration) and the Green Line Extension to the Norwalk Metrolink station (five-year acceleration).

The new staff recommendation also provides funds for paratransit for the disabled; affordable fares for seniors, students and the disabled; active transportation programs to better connect transit to surrounding neighborhoods, and safety programs.

Following three months of public review and input — including public meetings and Telephone Town Halls that reached tens of thousands of L.A. County residents — new polling results show that 72 percent of those surveyed would vote for a ballot measure with a sustained funding approach. Benefits noted by respondents included keeping fares affordable, creating jobs, repairing potholes, retrofitting bridges, and improving freeway traffic flow. In addition, providing transportation options for an aging population were reasons respondents said they were more inclined to vote for the measure.

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The new revised Los Angeles County Traffic Improvement Plan is available at www.metro.net/theplan. The agency's Board of Directors will decide at their June 23 meeting whether to place the plan before the voters of Los Angeles County in November.

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is unique among the nation's transportation agencies. Created in 1993, Metro is a multimodal transportation agency that transports about 1.4 million passengers daily on a fleet of 2,200 clean air buses and six rail lines. The agency also oversees bus, rail, highway and other mobility-related building projects and leads transportation planning and programming for Los Angeles County. Through its oversight of one of the largest public works programs in America, Metro is changing the urban landscape of one of the country's largest, most populous counties.

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