



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro News

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LA Metro Receives \$700,000 FTA Grant to Develop a Pilot Travel Rewards Program

The Federal Transit Administration announced that it has awarded \$700,000 to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to develop a \$1.3-million Travel Rewards Research Pilot Project. The approximately \$1.3-million budget includes \$412,000 of in-kind development from private technology partners.

With this grant, Metro is partnering with the Harvard School of Business, the Duke Center for Advanced Hindsight and private sector technology and mobility partners to identify and test the most effective incentives to persuade travelers to skip driving alone and instead choose transit, ridesharing, walking, bicycling or telecommuting. The FTA grant was awarded as part of its Accelerating Innovative Mobility program, which is designed to drive innovation by promoting forward-thinking approaches to improve transit financing, system design and service.

“Now, more than ever, it’s important for Metro to find innovative ways to not just recover, but come back stronger from this challenging pandemic,” said Metro CEO Phillip A. Washington. “We’re thankful that this grant from the FTA will allow us to explore creative new ways to get more people walking, biking, rolling and riding on transit to help solve traffic in Los Angeles County.”

The idea for the pilot came from a 2018 forum hosted by Metro’s Office of Extraordinary Innovation called [“Think You Can Solve Traffic?”](#) The forum was designed to solicit private industry solutions to solving traffic problems in L.A. County. From that forum came several proposals to develop a travel rewards incentive program to get more riders to choose transit over driving alone.

The project will focus on understanding how people choose to travel around the county and region. Not only will it encourage people to take transit and other alternatives to driving alone, it also envisions rewarding them for their actions. It will also help Metro’s goals of reducing traffic and travel times in Los Angeles County.

The results of the pilot will be shared with other transit agencies, allowing them to learn from and consider adopting the lessons learned by Metro’s innovative pilot.

That effort takes on renewed significance as Metro works to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected ridership at transit agencies nationwide. To that end, [Metro](#)

[created a Recovery Task Force](#) which is working to develop recommendations to ensure a clean and safe return for riders, contribute to an equitable economic recovery for L.A. County, and to preserve mobility without congestion. As part of these efforts, the task force is exploring how we can further [encourage telecommuting as a tool to solve traffic](#).

The percentage of people in LA County who telecommute to work is about the same as those who take transit in (5.6% telecommuting vs. 5% transit per the 2018 Journey to Work Census) and based on experiences during the pandemic it may be an efficient and welcomed way to keep more commuters out of traffic during peak times. The task force expects to release draft recommendations and seek further input from the public this fall.

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is currently providing lifeline service for essential trips and frontline workers. Metro continues building the most ambitious transportation infrastructure program in the United States and is working to greatly improve mobility through its [Vision 2028 Plan](#).

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