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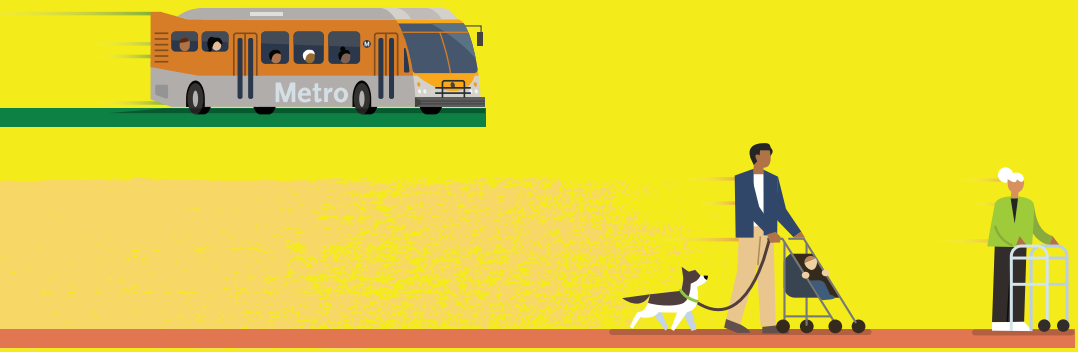
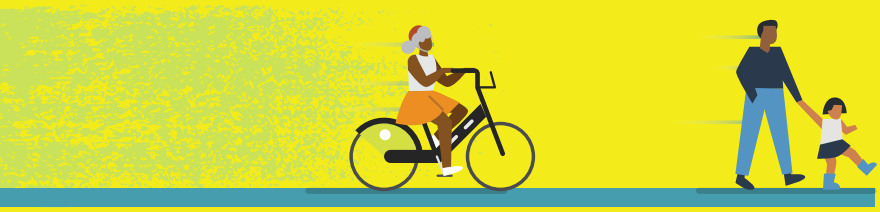
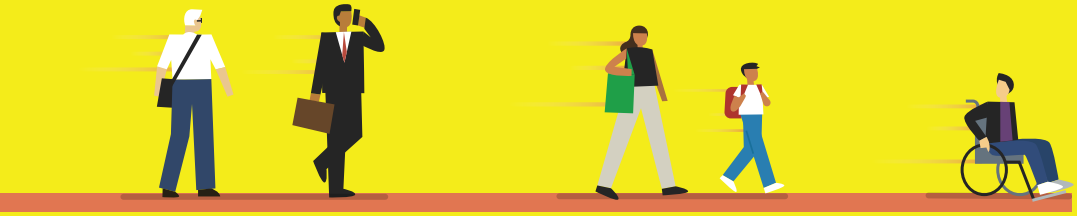
COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2021–2024







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Acknowledgments

Metro
Ruben Cervantes
Anne Flores
Adam Stephenson
Metro Design Studio
Metro Marketing

TransLink Consulting, LLC
Lisa Young
Yolanda DeLong
Rebecca Wicks
Michael Consunji
Natasha Kumar

Arellano Associates
Melissa Holguin
Josh Francis
Edna Jimenez
Julie Diaz

AMMA Transit Planning
Dennis Brooks

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) 2021-2024 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (herein referred to as the "Coordinated Plan" or the "Plan") addresses the mobility needs and service gaps in Los Angeles County (LA County) for seniors (over the age of 65), persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, and veterans (herein referred to as "target populations") by providing a framework of strategies and projects to improve service levels through an open stakeholder engagement process.

Significant funding for human services transportation – approximately $9 million per year in LA County – comes from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Program. Per the FTA, human services transportation refers to transportation services provided by or on behalf of a human service agency. Human service agencies (herein referred to as "service agency") provide access to services and/or meet the basic, day-to-day mobility needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations, especially individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes. This funding is combined with State, Local and private investment funding to deliver transportation services to individuals for whom public transit is insufficient or unavailable. The goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding transportation mobility options. This program also requires that projects receiving Section 5310 funding derive from a Coordinated Plan, which must be developed with the involvement of seniors and persons with disabilities.

The Plan does the following:

- Assesses transportation services provided for target population groups.
- Considers and evaluates current and future target population transportation needs.
- Develops goals and strategies to address gaps in existing transportation services.
- Prioritizes projects and programs that will improve mobility for target population groups.
- Allows Metro to fulfill its responsibilities as the Designated Recipient for Section 5310 funds in LA County.

Existing Conditions

The LA County Planning Region includes three large Urbanized Areas (UZAs) as defined by the U.S. Census as populations of at least 200,000 persons: the Los Angeles/Long Beach/

Anaheim UZA, Lancaster/Palmdale UZA, and Santa Clarita UZA, as well as Rural and Non-Urbanized Areas defined as populations of less than 50,000 persons. Overall, the LA County Planning Region is around 4,058 square miles and home to about 10.2 million persons, the most populous county in the U.S. Within LA County's three UZAs, there is a significant percentage of seniors and persons with disabilities (23.1 percent) as well as low-income individuals (14.2 percent) and veterans (2.6 percent). Not only does the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Anaheim UZA have the largest senior population in the state of California, it also has the second highest number of seniors nationwide, second only to the New York-Newark, NY-NJ-CT UZA. As such, it is important that LA County's unique mobility needs are addressed.

Within LA County, Metro and other transit providers operate over 7,000 buses and 300 miles of rail. Combined, Metro's local services, 16 municipal bus operators and 42 local operators serve around 1.6 million daily bus passengers while Metro rail and Metrolink trains carry over 340,000 daily passengers.

Mobility Needs and Service Gaps

To engage stakeholders and assess mobility needs and service gaps for all of LA County, a comprehensive outreach process targeted participation geographically and by specific populations. The outreach process included interacting with stakeholders and gathering data and information on transportation needs and preferences from service agencies. Outreach efforts included three virtual focus group meetings, distribution of 7,000 surveys and project concept forms to individuals associated with service agencies, outreach to Metro's stakeholder database, presentations to target population stakeholders, a virtual community meeting, and a 30-day public review and comment period of the Plan.

For the release of the Plan, outreach efforts included a variety of traditional and digital notification methods to research target populations throughout LA County. Notification materials were prepared in both English and Spanish and included eblasts, printed copies at 18 public libraries throughout LA County and Metro Headquarters, digital and social media campaigns, postcard mailings, toolkits sent to over 170 stakeholders, 5,000+ bilingual announcements on Metro buses and an open-forum community meeting. Stakeholders submitted comments via a website comment form, email, helpline and mail-in comment cards.

Focus Groups

Three virtual focus group meetings were conducted in November 2020 to collect input and identify mobility needs and service gaps from target population groups and service agencies. More than 400 LA County targeted stakeholders were invited to participate in these focus group meetings. A total of 62 participants attended via an online platform and phones, representing 36 service agencies and other non-profit, and for-profit organizations across LA County. These included advocacy groups, municipalities, county departments, institutions of higher learning, social services providers, non-profits, private firms, health services providers, residential program providers, and target population riders.

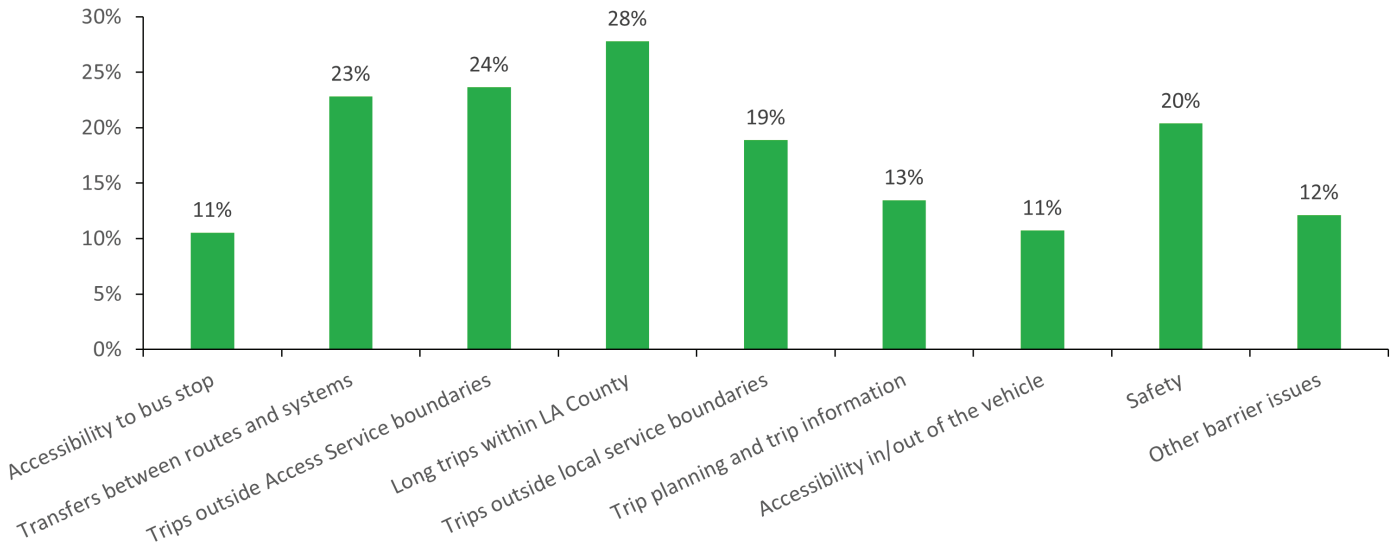
The major mobility needs and themes discussed included: need for expanded services, need for safety measures, access to on-demand transportation services, need for funding after COVID-19, targeted communication, connectivity and reliability, regional mobility management, and information gaps.

Human Service Agency Surveys

Approximately 7,000 surveys were distributed to individuals associated with service agencies throughout LA County. The agency survey identified the anticipated transportation service gaps over the next four years for service agencies region-wide. Agency respondents identified the following key mobility issues:

- **Difficult trip types** – The most difficult trips were medical trips, local doctor or health clinic visits, and essential shopping. Other difficult trips were non-peak hour trips, as well as same-day/immediate (on-demand) trips.
- **Barriers for access/mobility** – The most common response was long trips within LA County, trips outside Access Service boundaries, transfers, and safety areas (see Figure 1).
- **Barriers for agencies** – Common themes agencies described included the need for regional inter-agency cooperation, funding, understaffing, last minute service requests, safety and security, as well as the need for more rolling stock and equipment.
- **COVID-19** – The majority of agencies (around 80 percent) stated that COVID-19 restrictions and protocols had significantly affected delivery of their services. Revising communications and interactions, reduced hours of operation, applying social distancing guidelines, and limiting services to those deemed essential were some of the changes in service described by agencies. Operational and safety barriers were identified as the top two challenges agencies were facing during the COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Barriers using technology** – Issues with technology were discussed to understand challenges in communicating with seniors, persons with disabilities and others. Attaining information and having reliable Wi-Fi connections were the top challenges cited to using technology today.

Figure 1: Access and Mobility Barriers in Transportation Services



Source: 2021-2024 Agency Survey, Question #16, January 2021.

Community Meeting

A virtual community meeting was held in early April 2021 to present an overview of the draft Plan and provide an additional opportunity to receive comments from the public. The draft Plan was available for public review and comment from March 19 to April 19, 2021. With simultaneous Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, along with live closed captioning, the virtual meeting fostered a well-attended and participatory environment with 44 attendees providing comments on the draft Plan. The presentation was recorded and posted on the Metro Coordinated Plan website, and a thank you eblast with a link to the recording, and information on how to submit comments on the draft Plan was also provided to encourage additional participation. An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible version of the draft Plan was made available on the website.

The most common topics discussed by attendees at the community meeting were opportunities for communication and outreach to target population groups, and access to on-demand travel services (e.g., Access Services, dial-a-ride, and microtransit). Other comments were related to funding and the availability for accessible transportation options in more suburban communities.

In addition to the community meeting, two stakeholder briefings were held on March 23 and 25, 2021 to provide opportunities for interested organizations to engage with Metro in a more focused setting. Participants included MoveLA, Access Services, PIH Health, Help Me Help You, SCRS-ILC, L.A. Care, Antelope Valley Senior Center, Griffith Park Adult Community Center, Epilepsy Foundation of Los Angeles, and Cal State LA. Metro also delivered additional presentations, attended meetings, and/or provided materials to Metro's advisory committees, including the Local Transit Systems Subcommittee (LTSS), the Aging and Disability Transportation Network (ADTN), and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

Goals

Building on the 2016-2019 Coordinated Plan, regional and local plans, and input received throughout the outreach effort, the following goals and strategies have been identified to address the mobility needs and service gaps of LA County's target populations:

> **Goal 1: Fund Mobility Options** – Sustain, fund, and continue to expand public, private and other transportation services in LA County.

> **Goal 2: Address Mobility Gaps** – Improve coordination between public transportation and human services transportation to address mobility gaps.

> **Goal 3: Provide Support Services** – Provide support services to enable access for target populations.

> **Goal 4: Promote and Improve Information Portals** – Promote, improve and expand multi-cultural information portals on mobility options.

> **Goal 5: Enhance Accountable Performance Monitoring Systems** – Enhance customer feedback and accountable performance monitoring systems to ensure that high quality service is maintained.

> **Goal 6: Provide COVID Support Services** – Support transportation providers in serving target populations during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projects and Programs

Project concept forms, previous Section 5310 awards, and projects and programs in earlier Coordinated Plans were identified as potential strategies and projects to address the gaps between current service and needs and opportunities to achieve efficient in-service delivery. These strategies and projects were compared to the goals to determine the overall project and program needs for the Plan. Based on this information 29 project and program types were identified.

Priorities for Implementation

One of the key outcomes of the Plan is a prioritized list of projects and programs to address the mobility needs and service gaps identified for target populations. The Plan's prioritization process, results and recommendations were based on a comparative evaluation of the projects and program types identified under each goal.

The outreach and public input obtained through focus groups, surveys, and project concept forms created the foundation of understanding the critical needs of target populations over the next four years. Coupled with implementation considerations such as availability of resources, feasibility and timeline, evaluation criteria were developed to identify priorities among the 29 projects and program types. The purpose of providing a comparison priority ranking is to identify Metro's priorities for investment towards human services transportation and to guide LA County private and public transportation operators in planning their own investment approaches. Figure 2 on the following page presents the overall prioritization ranking of the project and program types.

Figure 2: Overall Prioritization Ranking

PRIORITY RANKING	PROJECT AND PROGRAM TYPES
Priority 1	Safety protocols and standards
	Safety equipment, supplies and services
	Vehicle and fleet expansion and replacement
	Programs to serve same-day transportation for critical need trips
	Vehicle modifications and upgrades
	Programs to serve inter-county and multi-city trips
	Capacity and service level improvements
	Dial-a-ride services for First/Last Mile access to stations
	New door-through-door transportation
	Pool multi-city agency resources
	Promote senior-friendly vehicle operator training
Priority 2	Expand door-to-door and door-through-door services
	Information, outreach and communication
	Travel training programs
	Mileage reimbursement programs for difficult-to-serve trips
	Real-time transit information
	Integration of mobility management for target groups into transit centers
	Fund local trip coordinators
	Subsidized vanpool/carshare programs
	Programs to serve same-day transportation for non-critical need trips
	First/Last Mile plans and improvements
	Street improvement projects for access to stops and stations
	Subsidies and voucher-based programs
	Multi-language format guides
Priority 3	Find-a-ride trip planner
	Fare integration among operators
	Social media to promote mobility options
	Performance measurement monitoring and reporting program
	Expand satisfaction surveys

Source: Metro 2021

Note: Projects and programs are listed by total scoring value.

Conclusions

Addressing mobility needs and service gaps of target populations requires sustained public participation opportunities to help identify and develop the projects and programs that require investments. This includes supporting existing transportation services, investing in new or expanded transportation services, adapting to changing demographics, responding to unforeseen circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and continuing our commitment to bridge connections with communities and individuals who have deep relationships and insights into community-specific needs and opportunities.

As identified through a comprehensive public participation process, the highest priorities for service agencies and target population groups are: safety protocols and standards; safety equipment, supplies and services; followed by programs to serve same-day transportation and serving critical need trips. In addition, more traditional capital investment in vehicle and fleet expansion/replacement; upgrading and modifying vehicles; and better mobility management/pooling multi-agency resources are also high on the priority list.

As the Designated Recipient of Section 5310 funds in urbanized areas within LA County, Metro will allocate Section 5310 funds for projects and programs included in this Plan. Given trends identified in the assessment of transportation services, input received during the public participation process, and the goals and strategies developed for the next four years, the highest priority projects and programs have been established. These prioritized projects and programs will guide private and public transportation operators in planning their own investment approaches, and establishes the list of eligible activities under the Section 5310 program. Overall, the Plan is a roadmap to address the mobility needs and service gaps for seniors, persons with disabilities, as well as low-income individuals and veterans in LA County.

Introduction

The 2021-2024 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan was developed by Metro to identify the transportation needs of seniors, individuals with disabilities, as well as low-income individuals and veterans. The Plan provides strategies for meeting those needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. The chapters and key sections of the Plan are as follows:

1 – Introduction

What is a Coordinated Plan?

Description of FTA's Section 5310 program

2 – Existing Conditions

Discussing demographic trends

Assessment of transportation services

3 – Mobility Needs and Service Gaps

Key findings from outreach, focus groups and agency surveys

COVID-19 implications

4 – Goals and Strategies

Developing goals of the plan

Description of goals and strategies

5 – Projects and Programs

Identifying Section 5310 eligible project and programs

6 – Prioritization and Implementation

Methodology for prioritization

Evaluation of project and programs

7 – Conclusions

Addressing mobility needs and service gaps

Serving as a guide for LA County priorities

What is a Coordinated Plan?

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) 2021-2024 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (herein referred to as the "Coordinated Plan" or the "Plan") addresses the mobility needs and service gaps in Los Angeles County (LA County) for seniors (over the age of 65), persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, and veterans (herein referred to as "target populations") providing a framework of strategies and projects to improve service levels through an open stakeholder engagement process.

Significant funding for human services transportation – approximately $9 million per year in LA County – comes from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Program. Per the FTA, human service transportation refers to transportation services provided by or on behalf of a human service agency. Human service agencies (herein referred to as "service agency") provide access to services and/or meet the basic, day-to-day mobility needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations, especially individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes. This funding is combined with State, Local, and private investment funding to deliver transportation services to individuals for whom public transit is insufficient or unavailable. The goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding transportation mobility options. This program also requires that projects receiving Section 5310 funding derive from a Coordinated Plan, which must be developed with the involvement of seniors and persons with disabilities.

The Plan does the following:

- Assesses transportation services provided for target population groups.
- Considers and evaluates current and future target population transportation needs.
- Develops goals and strategies to address gaps in existing transportation services.
- Prioritizes projects and programs that will improve mobility for target population groups.
- Allows Metro to fulfill its responsibilities as the Designated Recipient for Section 5310 funds in LA County.

Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program

In June 2014 the FTA published Circular 9070.1G, which guides the administration of the transit assistance program for seniors and individuals with disabilities under 49 U.S.C. 5310. The goal of the Section 5310 Program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available when public transit is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable by a) exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; b) improving access to fixed route service and decreasing reliance on complementary paratransit; and c) providing alternatives to public transportation.

The Section 5310 Program provides operating and capital assistance for public transportation projects. The program requires that these transportation projects derive from a Coordinated Plan, which must be developed with the involvement of seniors and persons with disabilities.

The Section 5310 Program addresses human services transportation needs in LA County by funding eligible capital expenditures that qualify as "Traditional" Section 5310 projects, as well as "Other" projects that are other capital and operating projects. Traditional projects are described as capital projects that are planned, designed, and carried out to meet the specific needs of seniors and persons with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable, or inappropriate. A minimum of 55 percent of all Section 5310 funds for a given apportionment area must be obligated to Traditional projects before any Other projects can be funded. This requirement reinforces the importance of strategies that can be supported by funding Traditional Section 5310 projects.

Traditional projects deemed as eligible under the Section 5310 program include the following:

> Acquisition of replacement and expansion rolling stock, including vehicle rehabilitation, preventative maintenance, extended warranties, radios, communication equipment and wheelchair lifts, and ramps and securement devices.

> Purchase and installation of passenger facilities and equipment related to Section 5310-funded vehicles, including benches, shelters, and other passenger amenities.

> Vehicle related equipment to support the delivery of transportation, including computer hardware and software, intelligent transportation systems, and dispatch systems or fare collection systems.

> Lease of equipment when leasing is more cost effective than purchasing equipment.

> Mobility management and coordination programs, including the operation of transportation brokerages and one-stop transportation information centers by telephone or internet, or coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers.

> Acquisition of new transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement. Capital and operating costs associated with new contracted services are eligible Traditional capital expenses.

Other projects are described as other capital and operating projects that are i) planned, designed, and carried out to meet the specific needs of seniors and persons with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable or inappropriate; ii) exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990; iii) improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit service; and/or iv) provide alternatives to public transportation to meet the specific needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. Up to 45 percent of all Section 5310 funds for a given apportionment area can be obligated to other projects.

Other projects deemed as eligible under the Section 5310 program include the following:

> Expanding the ¾ mile ADA complementary paratransit service area requirement, expansion of current hours and days of operation, implementing same-day service and assistance beyond the curb, including door-to-door, and door-through-door service.

> Providing "feeder" services for access to bus, rail and transit centers beyond ADA requirements.

> Public transportation alternatives for seniors and persons with disabilities, including mileage reimbursement programs, service provided through accessible taxis and ridesharing companies, vanpool programs supported with accessible vehicles, and vouchers for transportation not provided through public fixed-route or complementary ADA service.

> Accessibility improvements to the fixed-route system, including building an accessible path to a bus or rail stop that is currently inaccessible, curb cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals, improved signage or other features.

In compliance with FTA guidance to "establish performance goals to define the level of performance" and to also "establish performance indicators to be used in measuring relevant outputs, service levels, and outcomes," the Plan sets forth goals and strategies to define and establish performance indicators based on:

> An analysis of target populations' socio-economic and demographic data.

> Comprehensive outreach to over 7,000 individuals, including over 3,500 agencies, community groups, service agencies and stakeholders. The service agencies identified currently fund and/or provide human services to target populations in LA County.

> An agency survey to gather information about their operations, estimated number of rides for seniors and individuals with disabilities, and how COVID-19 protocols have changed their services.

> A list of potential Section 5310 eligible concept projects and programs received from service agencies between November 2020 and January 2021.

> Mobility needs and service gaps identified and discussed during three virtual focus groups conducted in November 2020.

> A review of relevant documents, plans, programs, policies, regulations and data sources that address target populations within LA County.

The performance indicators are used in order to fulfill obligations to the FTA and ensure that the implementation of strategies result in outcomes associated with the program.

Metro is the Designated Recipient of Section 5310 funds apportioned for the areas in LA County that are within the urbanized areas of Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, Lancaster-Palmdale, and Santa Clarita. As the Designated Recipient, Metro allocates the funds for project and programs included in this Plan. Metro will conduct competitive solicitations for proposals to select projects for funding. Metro will also prepare and submit grant applications to the FTA on behalf of all subrecipients approved by the Metro Board of Directors to receive a Section 5310 funding award, and as applicable, on behalf of agencies selected to receive a funding award from other federal subrecipient programs.

Approximately $9 million of Section 5310 funds are available per year for LA County, and every few years Metro allocates these funds utilizing a formula and competitive solicitation process. This Plan sets forth the goals, strategies, eligible activities, and project priorities to provide a baseline for Metro's allocation of these Section 5310 funds in LA County.

Other Metro Funding Opportunities

As described in Metro's 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Metro administers revenues received from the sales tax measures to local jurisdictions and is the recipient for state and federal funding programs that pass through to local jurisdictions. Per the 2020 LRTP, Metro will allocate an anticipated $38 billion over the next 30 years to the Local Return program with the largest percentage going to support local public transit and dial-a-ride services.

Metro's Section 5310 Program Management Plan describes its policies and procedures for administering and programming transportation funds in LA County. This role includes monitoring and participating in state and federal funding distribution, allocation, and management. State and federal transportation funding is integral to implementing regional, and local transportation programs and projects. Metro's transportation funding webpage provides information and resources on funding management, programming, and opportunities. One resource includes the Metro Funding Sources Guide (Guide) that provides an overview of the funding sources available for transportation in LA County. The Guide is intended to assist the reader in understanding the various funding sources and their eligible uses. This Guide separately presents the three distinct governmental sources of revenue (Local, State, and Federal) by program source, and where appropriate, estimates of the funding available in LA County.

Existing Conditions

This chapter provides an overview of the existing demographic trends and an assessment of transportation services for seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals and veterans.

Building from current U.S. Census information, this chapter describes key characteristics from LA County's large urbanized areas, plus growth trends compared to the previous 2016-2019 Coordinated Plan. The comprehensive transportation services offered to target populations in LA County include fixed-route, paratransit, commuter rail, human services transportation, rideshare/vanpool and private transportation options. An assessment of human services transportation was based on results of an agency survey. By researching LA County's existing services, we can better understand current conditions and how services compare to target populations and their projected growth.

In five years, LA County's senior population increased by **22 percent** and persons with disabilities grew by **94 percent**.

Demographics

Per Metro's 2019 Aging and Disability Transportation Report, one out of eight Angelenos are over 65 years old, and by 2030, this ratio may reach one out of every five. Coupled with the number of persons with disabilities that have almost doubled in the past five years, the percentage of LA County's target population in need of mobility services will outpace the growth in work age adults (age 25-64) by 2040. By 2050, the ratio of seniors to working age adults will reach one senior for every two working adults in LA County. As such, it is important to understand the population growth trends of target populations.

The demographic characteristics of the large Urbanized Areas (UZAs) that comprise the LA County Planning Region includes the Los Angeles/Long Beach/ Anaheim UZA, Lancaster/Palmdale UZA, Santa Clarita UZA, and Rural and Non-Urbanized Areas (see Figure 3). As defined by the U.S. 2010 Census, a large UZA is comprised of at least 200,000 persons; small UZAs have populations between 199,999 and 50,000, and non-urbanized areas have less than 50,000 persons. Information discussed in this section is based on the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) from the U.S. Census and mobility, equity information provided by Metro in November 2020. The information was analyzed and illustrated at the Census Tract level.

The LA County Region comprises of a land area of about 4,058 square miles and is home to over 10.2 million persons living in 88 incorporated cities as well as the unincorporated areas. As the most populous county in the U.S., the three large UZAs comprised within LA County, is distributed as follows:

> Approximately 9.58 million persons live within the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Anaheim UZA.

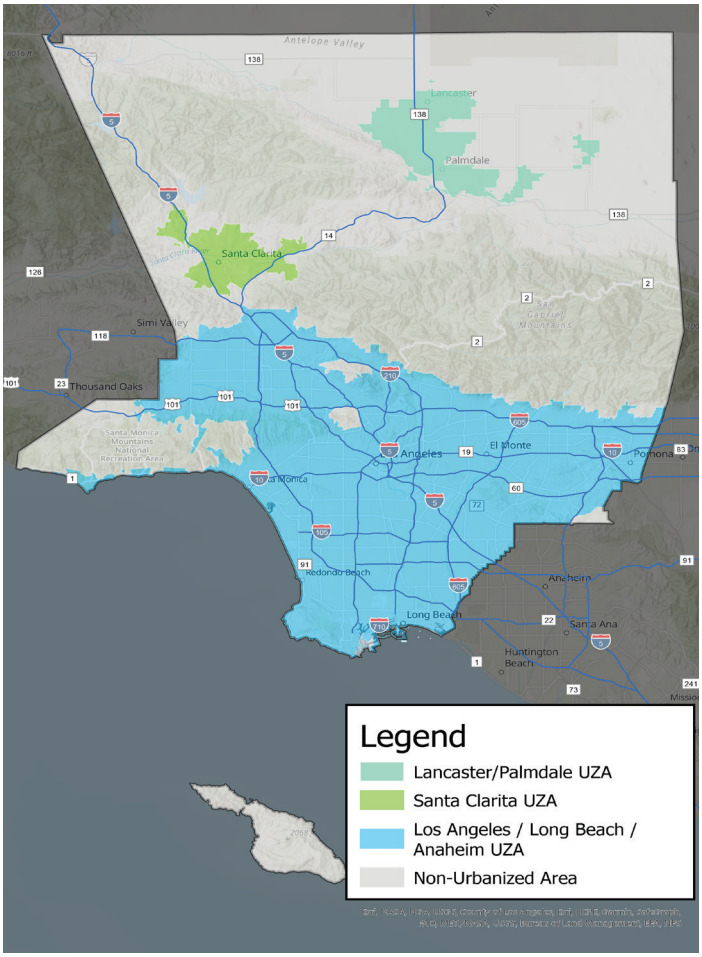
> Approximately 389,600 persons live within the Lancaster/ Palmdale UZA.

> Approximately 272,100 persons live within the Santa Clarita UZA.

Not only does the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Anaheim UZA have the largest senior population in the state of California, it also has the second highest number of seniors nationwide, second only to the New York-Newark, NY-NJ-CT UZA.

The rest of the population of LA County lives in non-urbanized, rural areas, primarily located in the North LA County Region surrounding the Lancaster/Palmdale and Santa Clarita UZAs.

Figure 3: Urbanized Areas of the LA County Planning Region



Source: Metro 2020 Decennial Census 2010-2019, Urbanized Areas

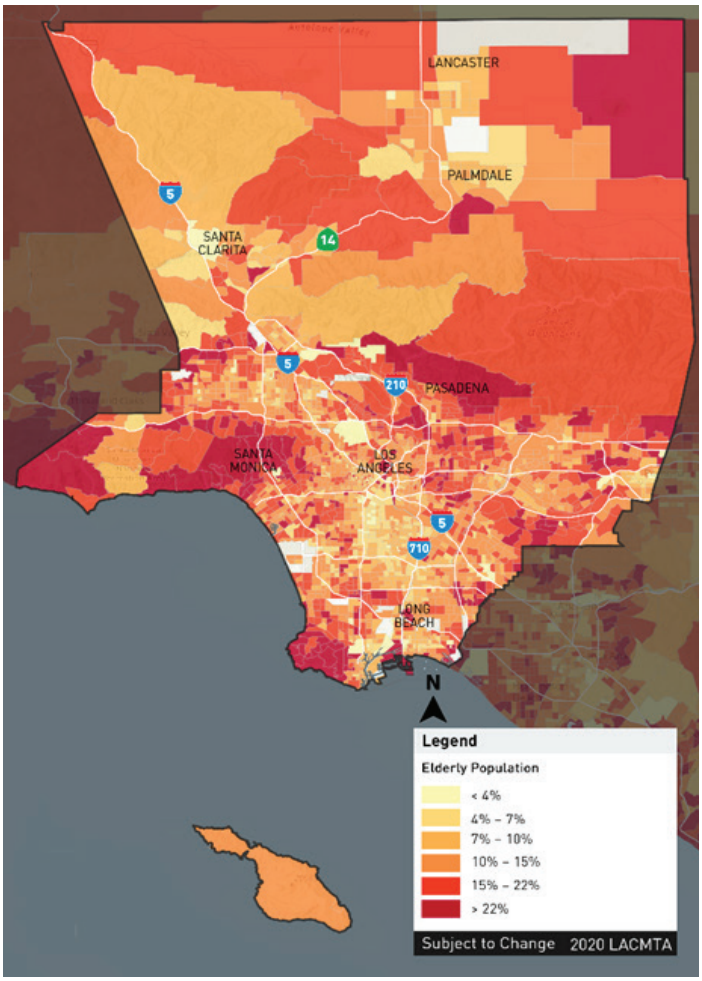
The following summarizes the major findings for the UZAs and Rural and Non-Urbanized Areas of LA County:

> The largest and most populated UZA (9.58 million persons), the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Anaheim UZA includes a significant number of seniors and persons with disabilities (9.8 and 2.5 percent, respectively).

> Although the UZAs of Santa Clarita and Lancaster/ Palmdale have lower overall populations (272,100 and 389,600 persons, respectively), they have higher concentrations of persons with disabilities representing 10.4 percent of the population in the Lancaster/Palmdale UZA and 9.3 percent in the Santa Clarita UZA.

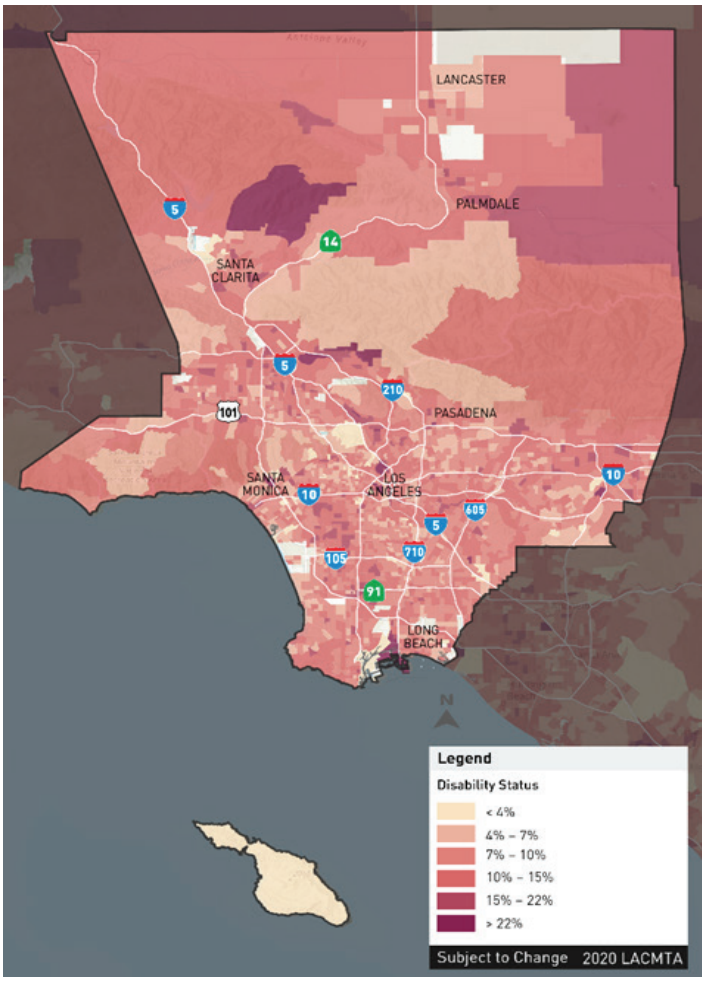
> The Rural and Non-Urbanized Areas within LA County have around 60,000 residents (around 0.6 percent of LA County's total population). Of this population, around 16.1 percent are seniors and 10.7 percent are persons with disabilities.

Figure 4: LA County Senior Population



Source: Metro 2020, ACS 2018 Estimates

Figure 5: LA County Persons with Disabilities Population



Source: Metro 2020, ACS 2018 Estimates

Compared to population characteristics from five years ago, the overall population of LA County has grown, particularly for target populations. According to the California Department of Aging, the percent of seniors in LA County is projected to increase by over 150 percent over a 50 year period (from 2010-2060). The following information is provided to help understand changes in target populations since the 2016-2019 Coordinated Plan:

> The total population of LA County **increased by approximately 3.5 percent** (an increase of around 350,000).

> Of LA County's 10.2 million population, **over 23 percent** are seniors and persons with disabilities (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).

> The percentage of the population classified as seniors significantly grew from 11.2 percent to 13.3 percent, an (increase of about **248,000**).

> The percentage of the population identified as persons with disabilities increased from 5.2 percent to 9.8 percent of LA County's population (increase of about **488,300**).

> Approximately **14.2 percent** of LA County's population are considered **low-income individuals** with reporting incomes at or below the federal poverty level (about 1.43 million individuals).

> Approximately **2.6 percent** of LA County's total population are **veterans** (about 331,640 veterans).

Based on the large share of these target population groups, services for seniors and persons with disabilities are a significant need in LA County. This need is particularly acute in the rural areas of LA County.

Transportation services that serve target populations are important with the number of seniors and persons with disabilities growing at a higher percentage (22.3 and 94.1 percent, respectively) compared to LA County's population as a whole (3.5 percent) (see Figure 6). The next section describes the existing transportation services in LA County that serve these growing target population groups.

Figure 6: 2013-2018 Population Trends in LA County

	TOTAL LA COUNTY	SENIORS	PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
2013 Population	9.89 million	1.11 million	518,800
2018 Population	10.24 million	1.35 million	1.01 million
Total Growth (2013 to 2018)	350,000	248,000	488,300
Rate of Growth	3.5%	22.3%	94.1%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2013 and 2018 Estimates

Assessment of Transportation Services

Serving LA County's 10.2 million population, Metro and other LA County transit providers operate over 7,000 buses and 300 miles of rail. In combination with Metro's local services, LA County's 16 municipal bus operators (e.g., city operated buses) and 42 local operators (e.g., neighborhood shuttles) collectively serve around 1.6 million daily bus passengers. Metro and Metrolink trains also carry over 340,000 daily passengers.

Transportation service information from the National Transit Database (NTD) includes an asset inventory and condition assessment used by the FTA in their apportionment formulas including that for the Section 5310 program. Figure 7 on the following page presents information from the NTD for Metro in 2019, the most recent data available. As the NTD only requires mandatory reporting from direct recipients or beneficiaries of Section 5307 and Section 5311 funds, additional information was obtained through the agency survey to document trips provided by service agencies.

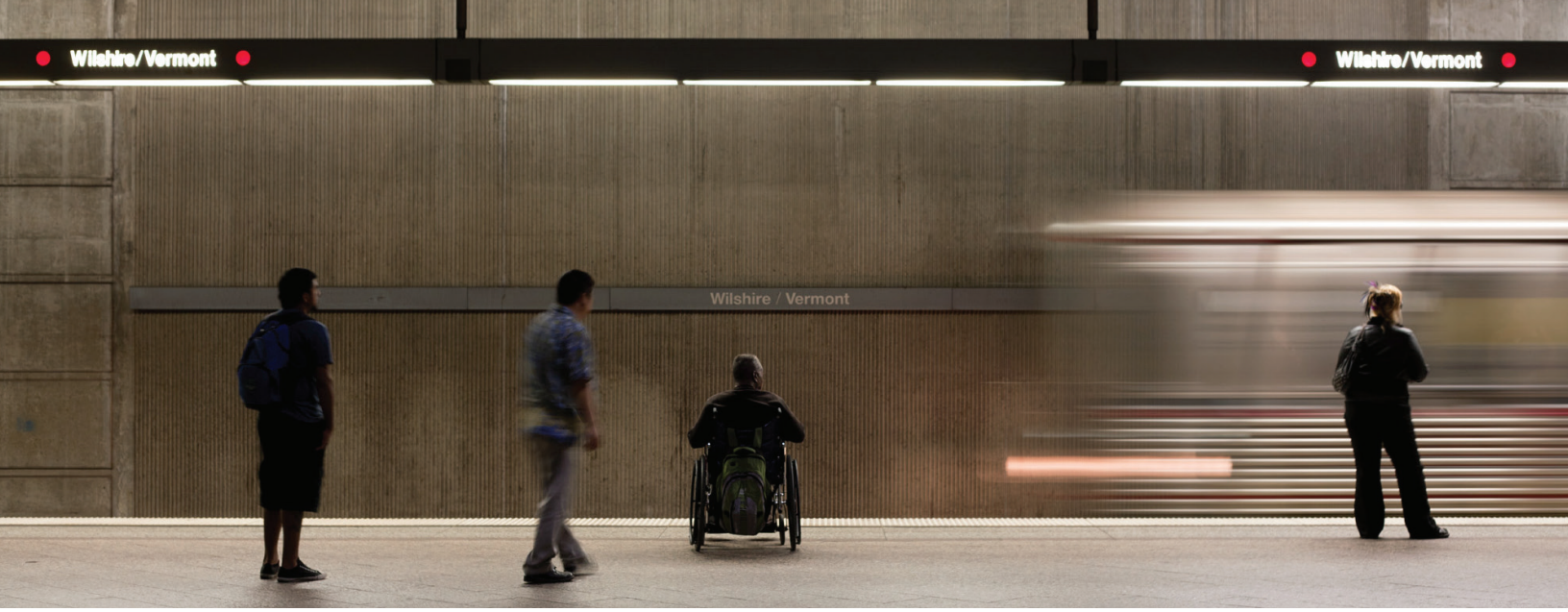
LA County's public transit network includes regional and subregional rail, fixed-route bus and demand response paratransit providers. These public systems are augmented by the services provided by agency services that help to fill gaps and hard-to-serve needs in the public network.

Figure 7: Overview of LA County Public Transportation Trips and Vehicle Fleets by Mode

LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC AND SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION						
National Transit Database Reporting, Fiscal Year (FY) 2019						
*2021-2024 Coordinated Plan Agency Survey						
MODES	**Operator Totals**		**Mode Level Totals**			
	Passenger Trips	Vehicles in Max. Service	Passenger Trips	% of Total	Vehicles in Max. Service	% of Total
RAIL	**115,553,701**	**excluded**	**115,553,701**	23.4%	excluded	n/a
Metrolink (Heavy Rail)	12,824,059					
Metro Rail (Heavy Rail - D and B Lines)	43,074,277					
Metro Rail (Light Rail - A,C,L and E Lines)	59,655,365					
BUS - Core Regional Network	**87,364,179**	**2,418**	**371,963,707**	**75.2%**	**3,401**	**37%**
Metro (Bus)	266,887,614	1,918				
Metro (Bus Rapid Transit)	6,860,145	41				
Commuter Bus	1,563,113	112				
Foothill Transit	12,053,307	347				
BUS - Inter-Community and Community Service	**84,599,528**	**983**				
Municipal/City (Bus) 30 cities	84,599,528	983				
Small operators (Bus) - 32 of 48 city programs	n/a	n/a				
PARATRANSIT - Regional Demand Response Services	**4,458,330**	**1,485**	**5,740,137**	**1.2%**	**1,836**	**20%**
Access Services	4,458,330	1,485				
PARATRANSIT - Municipal Demand Response Service	1,281,807	351				
Demand Response	1,281,807	351				
Small Operators DR (Dial-A-Ride)	n/a	n/a				
TOTAL ALL NTD REPORTED PUBLIC TRANSIT			**493,257,545**	**99.7%**	**5,237**	**57%**
Coordinated Plan Agency Survey - Human Services	**1,279,153**	3,880	**1,279,153**	**0.3%**	**3,880**	**43%**
Estimated Contracted Services	1,111,153					
Estimated Directly Operated	156,000					
Estimated # of Volunteered Drivers	12,000					
TOTAL ALL Los Angeles County Transportation Documented			**494,536,698**	**100%**	**9,117**	**100%**

Source: National Transit Database, 2019 Annual Agency Profile.

Notes: N/A (2019 data not available for small operators). Human Services totals exclude survey reported trips and vehicles from city operated services and school districts to avoid double counting.



Fixed-Route Transit

Metro Bus serves as the primary regional fixed-route bus system for LA County. Metro's 119 current bus routes, consisting of Local lines that stop every few blocks, Express lines that travel on freeways, and Metro Rapid lines with fewer stops only at major intersections, connect residents of LA County to travel destinations throughout the region and facilitates transfers with other available transit services. More than 273 million one-way trips were provided on Metro Buses in FY 2019.

Subregional fixed-route transit is provided by Foothill Transit in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, Santa Clarita Transit in the Santa Clarita Valley and Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) in the Antelope Valley. The Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH) circulates through many communities in the City of Los Angeles, providing frequent and affordable transit to the city's residents. Some local fixed-route bus routes operated by individual cities provide interjurisdictional transit between cities and communities, while others serve as intracity circulators for city residents. In addition to the regional ADA service provided by Access Services, many of LA County's municipal and local operators provide demand response service to seniors and persons with disabilities within their service areas or within city limits. Local paratransit programs generally require lower passenger fares and eligibility criteria that is easier to meet than ADA paratransit.

Regional ADA Paratransit

Metro provides funding for countywide paratransit service for the elderly and people with disabilities via LA County's Access Services. A flexible service, paratransit is a federally mandated right through ADA for persons with disabilities who have difficulty using fixed-route buses and other forms of public transit to meet some or all of their trip needs. Paratransit, typically provided via vans or mini-buses, is on-demand and does not follow fixed routes or schedules. Access Services enables persons with verifiable disabilities to travel within ¾ miles of the nearest fixed-route bus within the greater Los Angeles basin. Access Services annually provides 4.5 million trips to 150,000 eligible riders using a fleet of more than 1,700 vehicles.

Commuter Rail Services

Commuter rail services for the greater Los Angeles regions are provided by Metrolink, a heavy rail system that shares existing train tracks with freight trains and intercity rail lines. Metrolink provides intercity travel across seven rail lines between Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties. Metrolink provided almost 12 million passenger trips in FY 2019.

The Metro Rail and Busway system, operated by Metro, is a fixed guideway network of above ground light rail, subway trains, and buses that connect the communities of LA County. These eight lines stretch from the City of Long Beach to Chatsworth in the San Fernando Valley at its furthest points and delivered almost 103 million trips in FY 2019.

Amtrak is a national rail provider that connects America's cities via 21,000 route miles across 46 states, Washington, D.C. and three Canadian provinces. Amtrak operates more than 300 trains each day that travel at speeds up to 150 mph, covering more than 500 destinations. In FY 2019, Amtrak customers took 32.5 million trips, which is an average of almost 90,000 trips per day.

Human Services Transportation

Human services transportation programs provide essential mobility options for the target populations of the Plan, meeting specialized transportation needs and filling gaps in the public transportation network. These specialized programs are often flexible and vary in service design, including door-through-door transportation, subsidization of vouchers and bus passes, mileage reimbursement and volunteer driver programs, public transit travel training, and transit information and mobility management brokerages. Based on the agency survey respondents (which is a sample of all service agency providers), 1.28 million annual passenger trips and 3,880 vehicles were reported.

Transportation for non-emergency trips to medical appointments, pharmacies and dialysis treatment are also provided by L.A. Care and Health Net, the two Medi-Cal funded transportation providers for LA County. These services are available to approximately 30 percent of the county's population and were providing more than 100,000 trips per month before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rideshare and Vanpool

Metro Micro is Metro's new on-demand rideshare service, offering trips within several zones in LA County. The new service is for short trips and uses small vehicles (seating up to 10 customers). Micro is part of Metro's family of services and has been designed hand-in-hand with Metro's NextGen Bus Plan. The service is meant to be a fast, safe and convenient option for quick trips around town without having to transfer. The service is currently available in portions of Watts, Willowbrook, Long Beach, Carson, South Gate, Lynwood, Downey, Inglewood, El Segundo, Westchester, Playa Del Rey, North Hollywood, Burbank, Compton, Baldwin Park, Rosemead, El Monte and South El Monte, with an average wait time of 10 minutes and a promotional $1.00 fare.

The Metro Vanpool program provides a monthly subsidy of $500 to eligible vanpools traveling at least 30 miles round-trip each day. Vanpool members can create their own vanpools with coworkers or other persons with common commute patterns. Metro's Vanpool program provided 3.2 million trips on almost 1,300 vanpools in FY 2019.

Private Transportation

Private providers of intercity bus are part of a larger bus infrastructure that transports people across the country. Amtrak extends its rail service to communities not served directly by Amtrak trains by running approximately 150 Thruway bus routes providing guaranteed connections to trains. Some Thruway buses are dedicated as train feeder service and only carry Amtrak train passengers, while other Thruway buses are coordinated with other carriers to provide access to Amtrak. Annually there are approximately 1.5 million Thruway trips. Greyhound intercity bus service supports travel to more than 2,700 destinations on 123 routes across the country, operating more than 1,700 buses. Greyhound operates Express service for regularly scheduled trips between cities and the Connect service that links rural communities with the larger Greyhound network. The MegaBus specializes in low-cost intercity bus service throughout North America. MegaBus coach style vehicles are wheelchair accessible and offer free Wi-Fi and AC power outlets at every seat. Fares can be as low as $1.00 depending on service demand for a particular trip.

Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft provide app-based rideshare trip booking for on-demand transportation as a modern alternative to taxis. These demand response ride-hailing models give passengers an innovative way to reserve and pay for trips through a smartphone that estimates the cost of the desired trip and provides real-time vehicle mapping and arrival time estimates. Both companies have worked on efforts in recent years to be more accommodating to customers with disabilities and riders using mobility devices.

Mobility Management and Information Resources

211 LA provides 24/7 multi-lingual access to a centralized information and referral database that is accessible by telephone (dial 2-1-1), internet, e-mail or two-way texting. 211 LA is also a member of the 211RIDE collaborative that offers a multimodal trip planning tool, designed to help clients find transportation options that best meet their needs. Accessible at www.211ride.org, 211RIDE advances and enhances commuting in five Southern California counties.

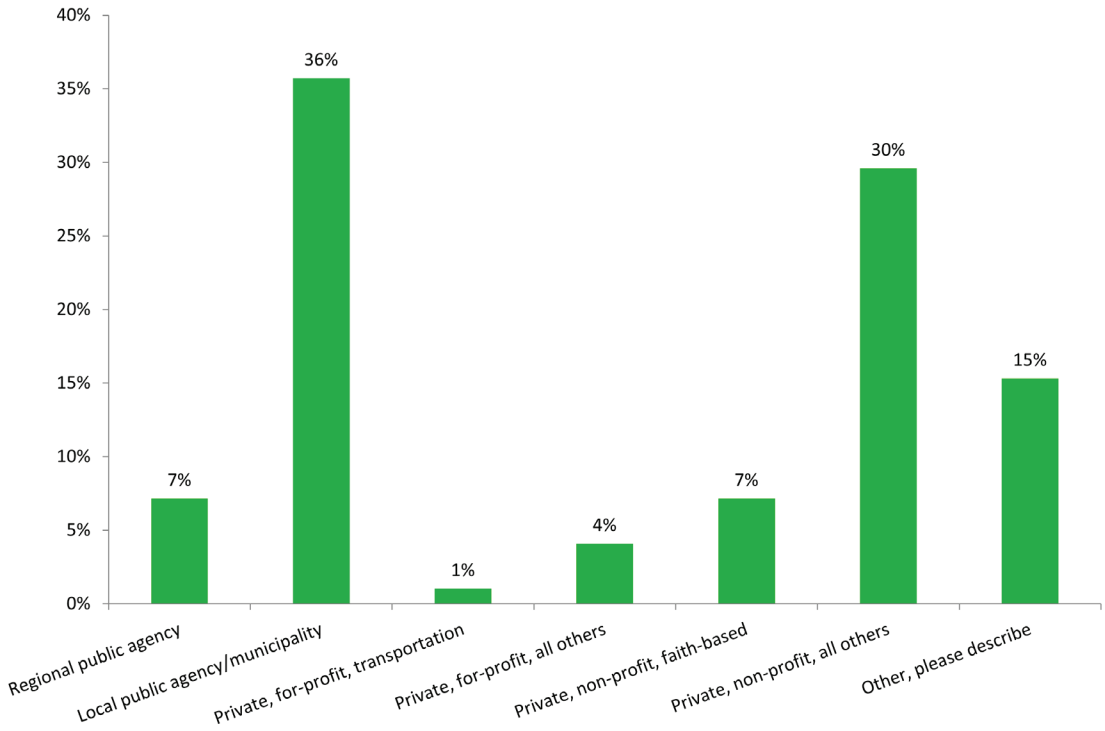
The online one-click solution simplifies trip planning by providing the best transportation options based on a user's demographic characteristics or specified needs. It enables a user to choose the most appropriate mode of transit by presenting fixed-route transit, demand-response transit, TNCs, and volunteer transportation services that best match their mobility needs.

Assessment of Human Service Agencies

A service agency survey was conducted in November 2020 to understand their operational and service needs over the next four years. The 97 survey responses provided detailed information about service agency operations, clients and how COVID-19 protocols have changed their services. The respondents were a cross section of local and regional agencies, private and for-profit organizations, as well as representatives from the health and education industries. Figure 8 shows the percentage of participation by the various groups.

Approximately 18 percent of respondents reported they were a direct operator, while 30 percent reported they contract out their services to outside entities. A smaller portion indicated they only provide transportation information assistance (about 11 percent) and arrange transportation through volunteer drivers (about 5 percent). The remaining agencies (about 22 percent) responded they do not operate transportation services. Around 14 percent stated that they provide "other" services such as transportation subsidies, transportation job training or use their personal vehicles to transport clients.

Figure 8: Percentage of Service Agencies Represented in Surveys



Source: 2021-2024 Agency/Service Provider Survey, Question #2, January 2021.

Figure 9: Regional, Local, and Private Ridership Range of Demand

DEMAND TYPE	REGIONAL PUBLIC AGENCIES	LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCIES	PRIVATE OPERATORS/ NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS
Annual Passenger Trips	17,000 to 3.54 million	2,600 to 178,800	1,000 to 240,000*

*Source: 2021-2024 Agency Survey, Question #7, January 2021. *Note: excludes outliers.*

Passenger Trips

Demand for one-way passenger trips varied by the different types of survey respondents. These include regional agencies such as Access Services, LA County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services, and Pomona Valley Transportation Authority; local agencies including City of Santa Monica, City of Carson and Los Angeles Department of Transportation; and private operators/non-profit organizations such as Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital Health, AIDS Project Los Angeles Health, and AltaMed Health Services. Figure 9 above shows the range of annual one-way passenger trips. Respondents also provided information on the range of population groups that utilize their services. Most commonly were persons with disabilities, followed by seniors over the age of 65 and low-income individuals. Persons with limited English proficiency and veterans were also common population groups noted. Some respondents also provided services to the general public and students/youth.

Existing Operations and Budgets

Responding service agencies provided an inventory of 2019 operational and budget information. In total, 58 agencies reported 3,880 fleet vehicles in service. Of those fleet vehicles, nearly 96 percent of these were owned by the agencies themselves, while only four percent were leased or rented. Respondents reported that standard buses were the most common type of vehicles used, followed by van/cutaways and SUVs/minivans. Sedans/cars and shuttle buses had lower percentages reported by respondents, and no large articulated buses were reported. Around 51 percent of vehicles were ramp or lift equipped. Figure 10 below show the percentage of vehicle inventories by vehicle type.

In total, 178 vehicles were reported as needing to be replaced within the next four years. Of these vehicles, the age of the vehicles was generally evenly distributed with a third at around 100,000 miles, a third at around 150,000 miles, and a third at around 200,000 miles.

Agency survey respondents reported that they acquired their assets through a variety of methods, such as direct purchases, contracts and leases, Metro grants (e.g., 5310 grant), and donations. The reported annual operating budget for regional agencies ranged from $220,900 to $187 million, with capital budgets in FY 2019 ranging from $190,000 to $10 million to purchase new vehicles, equipment, assets, and facilities. Local agencies had annual operating budgets ranging from $60,000 to $4 million, with capital budgets in FY 2019 of $16,000 to $400,000 allocated to purchase new vehicles, equipment, assets, and facilities.

Figure 10: Vehicle Inventories

DEMAND TYPE	% OF REPORTED VEHICLES
Large Articulated Bus (>80 passengers)	0%
Standard Bus (40-60 passengers)	43%
Shuttle Bus (25 passengers)	3%
Van/Cutaway (up to 15 passengers)	24%
SUV or Mini-Van (up to seven passengers)	21%
Sedan or Car (up to four passengers)	8%
Other	1%
Lift or ramp-equipped vehicles in your fleet	51%

Source: 2021-2024 Agency Survey, Question #21, January 2021.

Private/non-profit organizations had variable operating budgets depending on the size of the organization, with the highest reported at $10.8 million and the lowest reported at $6,500 annually. Two private/non-profit organizations reported their capital budgets range from $300,000 to $450,000. Most respondents reported that a significant portion of their budgets were directly funded and/operated by a public agency in 2019.

Most agencies (approximately 62 percent) reported their expenses increased from FY 2018 to FY 2019; 36 percent reported no change and only two percent reported a decrease in expenses. In addition, around a third of respondents reported they were likely to expand their programs, 40 percent planned to maintain their current services and around a fourth of respondents were unsure if they were going to expand services once COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

Most respondents (around 42 percent) said their agencies would participate in the Regional Mobility Management Program for LA County, whereas only four percent said they would not participate. When asked about applying for future Section 5310 grant funding, most of the respondents (45 percent) were unsure, while 42 percent planned to apply and only four percent did not plan to apply.

Based on the assessment of existing transportation services, there is a variety of transportation options for seniors and persons with disabilities in LA County. However, with the anticipated growth patterns of target populations, particularly in the Santa Clarita and Lancaster/Palmdale UZAs, additional services are likely needed to serve these communities. The next chapter further explores the mobility needs and service gaps within LA County.

Mobility Needs and Service Gaps

Assessing mobility needs and service gaps are a key component of the Plan as it highlights the issues and challenges that constrain service agencies from providing the needed service levels to target populations. These needs and service gaps were identified through virtual focus group meetings and agency surveys. In addition, this chapter discusses COVID-19 implications and the resulting barriers transportation services are facing. These areas of need feed into the goals and strategies as well as the prioritization of projects and programs.

"We are still moving people...but we have [mostly] switched where we are now **delivering essential goods** to **vulnerable populations** such as meals and fans during the summer."

The Plan included a comprehensive and inclusive process with participation from targeted populations including seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, veterans, other members of the public, and representatives of public, private, non-profit transportation agencies and service agencies.

With LA County's large geographic area, in order to promote coordination of transportation services and address the mobility needs of target populations, outreach was conducted through a series of activities to ensure representative participation from the large UZAs that comprise the LA County Planning Region.

Outreach

To engage stakeholders and assess mobility needs and service gaps for LA County, an outreach process was developed to target participation geographically and by target population group. As part of this process, multiple outreach efforts to interact with stakeholders and gather information on transportation needs and preferences were conducted, including:

> Three virtual focus group meetings (see Figure 11).

> Distribution of 7,000 surveys and project concept forms to individuals associated with human service agencies.

> Updates to Metro's stakeholder database.

> Dedicated helpline and Metro email address.

> Updates to the Metro website of the Coordinated Plan.

> Bilingual eblast notifications of the focus group meetings.

> Follow-up phone calls and email reminders of the focus group meetings and surveys.

> Presentations to target population advocacy groups and human service agencies.

> For the release of the Plan, efforts include eblasts, printed copies, digital and social media, mailings, toolkits sent to over 170 organizations, 5,000+ bilingual announcements on Metro buses, and an open-forum community meeting.

> Solicitation of public comments via a website comment form, email, helpline and mail-in comment cards.

Figure 11: Virtual Focus Group Meeting

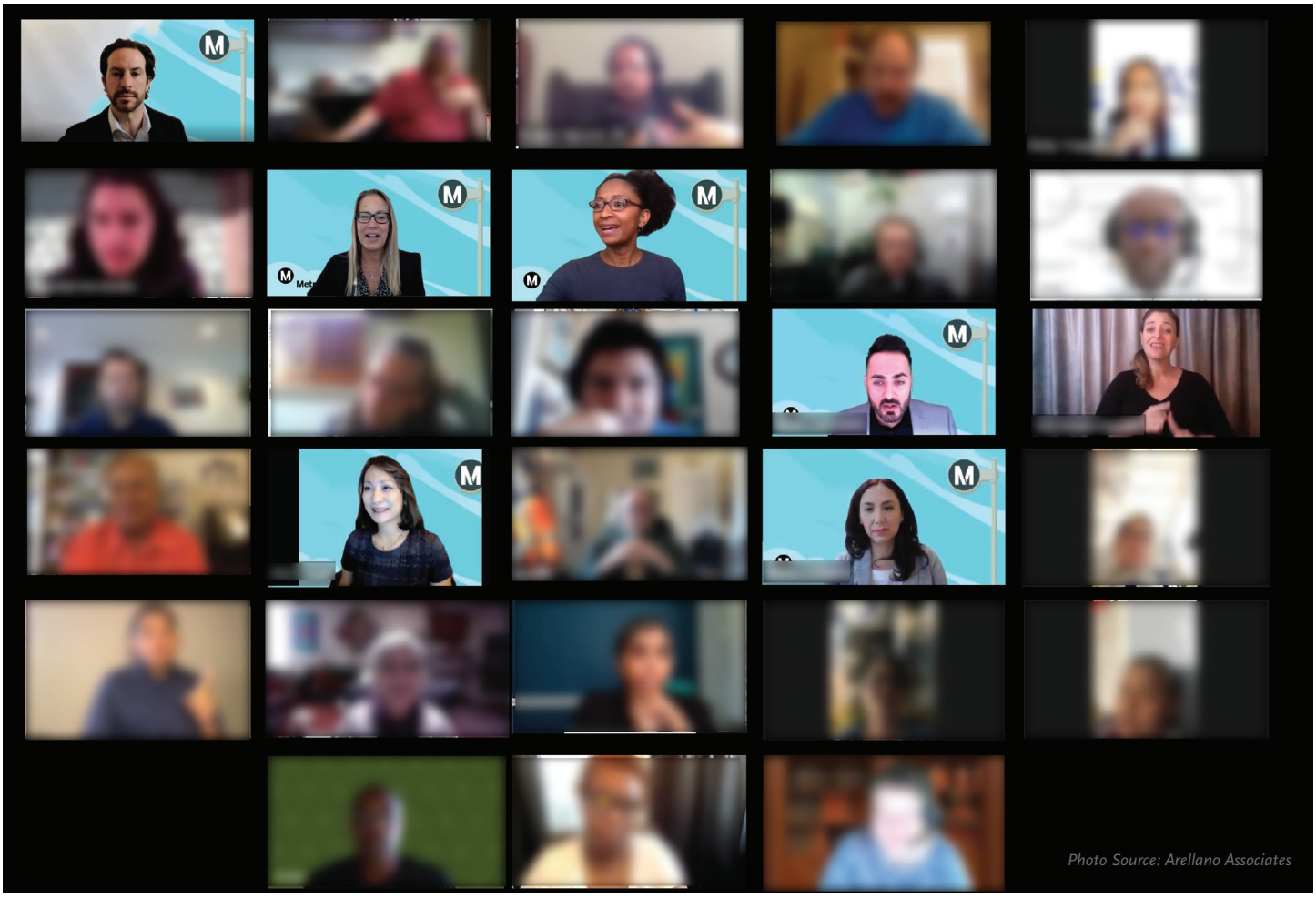


Photo Source: Arellano Associates

Focus Groups

Three virtual focus group meetings collected input and identified mobility needs and service gaps. More than 400 LA County human service agencies, riders, and other members of the public were invited to participate in these focus group meetings. Hosted in November 2020 a total of 62 participants attended via an online platform and phone.

In total, 36 service agencies and other non-profit and for-profit organizations across LA County were represented including advocacy groups, municipalities, county departments, institutions of higher learning, social services providers, non-profits, private firms, health services providers residential program providers, as well as target population riders. The meetings were open to the general public, although Metro identified a specific target audience for two of the three meetings (older adults for the November 17, 2020 session, and persons with disabilities for the November 18, 2020 session).

"It is really hard regionally, working with all the transit agencies to consolidate fares."

Attendees participated in virtual breakout sessions and were guided by a facilitator in their discussions. These breakout sessions provided valuable information and input regarding the transportation challenges faced by service providers and their clients/riders. Most importantly, the issues of target populations before and during COVID-19 restrictions were discussed, including gaps in access and mobility, their ability to travel to their destinations safely and the availability and use of transportation services. Major mobility needs themes included:

> **Need for Expanded Services** – Target populations are now at even greater risk due to COVID-19, services for seniors and persons with disabilities need to be expanded and coordinated among providers. A comprehensive network of services is needed to safely serve these vulnerable populations. This includes support in transporting essential goods such as food delivery services, pharmacy and household items which are all crucial for these target populations.

> **Safety Measures** – Additional and robust protocols and communication of safety measures for all customers (English as a Second Language, disabled, equitable communities) is now needed more than ever. Target populations need to be assured vehicles are utilizing safety precautions and encouraged to follow safety rules on vehicles.

"Making sure that we make things much simpler for the passengers..."

> **Access to On-demand Transportation Services** – There is a greater need for on-demand and Dial-A-Ride services. There are opportunities for agencies and accessibility-based private companies to partner and comprehensively provide better access to services. If services like smaller "hopper" vans can connect and provide access or private companies like RideCo, Lyft and Uber partnered with local agencies and non-profits, on-demand and First/Last Mile trips can serve critical medical and same-day trips.

"Dial-A-Ride and on-demand ride services are needed for essential goods like medical, groceries, household items, pharmacy, emergency food box deliveries, etc."

> **Funding after COVID-19** – Will reliable funding for transportation be available? Concerns were raised about service coverage, ridership decline, and availability of voucher programs. Servicing these target populations will require continuous capital investment in vehicles (low-floor/zero-emission) and services.

> **Communication** – Personalized interaction among seniors and persons with disabilities is needed. While online and digital communication is valuable, in-person interaction is most effective with a large majority of this target population. Targeted outreach is required for equitable user groups. This includes access to Wi-Fi, communicating safety precautions via new technologies, and explanation of costs, services and schedules.

> **Connectivity and Reliability** – Gaps and issues include travel time of current services due to transfers and schedule limitations. Trips during COVID-19 are taking longer than normal. Connections and mobility continue to be difficult outside of service areas. There is a need to promote a variety of services with education on how to access transit. There is also a need to provide better options for essential trips.

"Riders want to see the ETA of their ride, if they know their ride is going to be late, they can see it and feel reassured."

> **Regional Mobility Management** – There is a need for better networking between transit providers in order to tackle issues of countywide coordination, fragmented service, and connections between cities. Jurisdictional limits and service parameters continue to create barriers and confusion for customers.

> **Information Gaps** – Agencies/organizations that offer transportation services and accessibility services need to communicate their services to better guide those using the application. The target population users need to clearly understand the full extent of services offered before they attempt to use them. This includes providing step-by-step travel training for transfers, changes in modes, scheduling, payments and fare collections, travel options at destinations and end-to-end travel times.

"Transfer trips are difficult to plan, for example getting to Ventura County, Santa Clarita and the Antelope Valley."

Human Service Agency Surveys

The agency surveys also included a section on transportation needs, mobility, and technology barriers. The key mobility issues expressed by the respondents included:

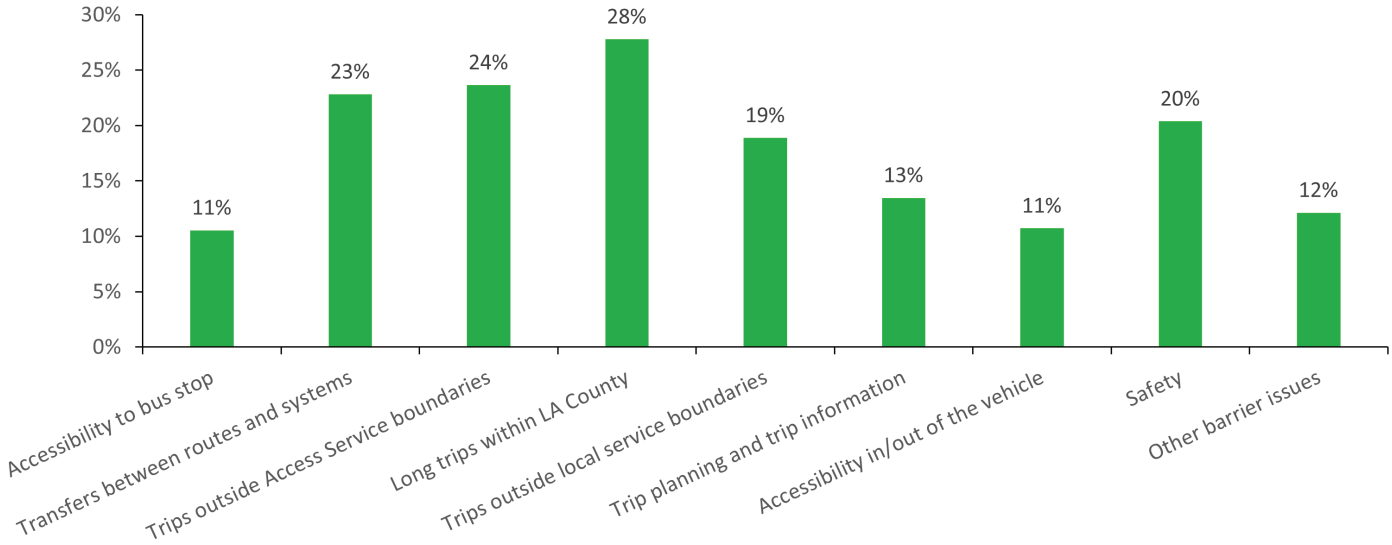
> **Difficult trip types** – The most difficult trip types respondents cited were medical trips, local doctor or health clinic visits, and essential shopping (pharmacy, groceries, etc.). Other difficult trip types were non-peak hour trips (e.g., midday, evening, late evening, and weekend), as well as same-day/immediate (on-demand) trips.

> **Barriers for access/mobility** – When asked about barriers, the most common response was long trips within LA County. Other major access and mobility issues included trips outside Access Service boundaries, and transfers between routes and systems, safety and trips outside local service areas (see Figure 12).

> **Barriers using technology** – Issues with technology were posed to gain a better understanding of challenges in communicating with seniors, persons with disabilities and others. Attaining information and having reliable Wi-Fi connections were the top challenges cited to using technology today.

> **Barriers for agencies** – An open-ended question was posed asking about barriers in providing services to target populations. Common themes included: connecting to other social services; financial, health risk challenges, mobility-aids/equipment on vehicles; aging fleet; need for additional rolling stock and operational costs; regional inter-agency cooperation; safety and security; funding; understaffing; long wait times for round-trip service; last-minute service requests; service boundaries; increasing demand on paratransit and rising cost for providing service; and expanding service area and hours.

Figure 12: Access and Mobility Barriers in Transportation Services



Source: 2021-2024 Agency Survey, Question #16, January 2021.

Community Meeting

The draft Plan was available for public review and comment from March 19 to April 19, 2021 and a comprehensive notification effort utilized a variety of traditional and digital methods to reach target populations throughout LA County. To further garner interest and encourage public comment, a virtual community meeting was held on April 7, 2021. Notifications were prepared in both English and Spanish and included:

- Print Notifications: Full-colored postcards printed and mailed to over 700 stakeholders; bus car cards installed on Metro buses; hard copy distribution available at 18 libraries and Metro Headquarters; and a version adapted to be more accommodating for persons with vision impairment.
- Electronic Notifications: Eblasts notifications sent announcing the draft Plan and the community meeting; website updates with important dates, comment form, and link to the community meeting; social media and blogs (via The Source and El Pasajero); and project helpline with recorded announcements and ability to leave verbal comments.

The community meeting presented the purpose of the Plan, overview of what the Plan included, and solicited public input through written or verbal comments. With simultaneous Spanish and ASL interpretation along with live closed captioning, the meeting fostered a participatory environment with 44 attendees providing comments on the draft Plan. The presentation was recorded and posted on the Metro Coordinated Plan website.

During the community meeting, comments were accepted verbally and through the chat feature. The major comment categories were opportunities for communication and outreach to target population groups and access to on-demand travel services (e.g., Access Services, dial-a-ride services, and microtransit). Other comments were related to funding and availability for accessible transportation options in more suburban communities. Requests for supplemental outreach such as more flyers, access/copies of the Plan, and additional stakeholder briefings were made particularly for those who were not be able to be reached by digital means of communication.

In addition to the community meeting, two stakeholder briefings were held on March 23 and 25, 2021 to provide opportunities for interested organizations to engage with Metro in a more focused setting. Participants included MoveLA, Access Services, PIH Health, Help Me Help You, SCRS-ILC, L.A. Care, Antelope Valley Senior Center, Griffith Park Adult Community Center, Epilepsy Foundation of Los Angeles, and Cal State LA. Metro also delivered additional presentations, attended meetings, and/or provided materials to Metro's advisory committees, including the Local Transit Systems Subcommittee (LTSS), the Aging and Disability Transportation Network (ADTN), and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

Comments made during the community meeting, stakeholder briefings, and other outreach activities were combined with all comments received during the public comment period (March 19 to April 19, 2021). In total, 90 comments were received through written comments, emails, voicemails, stakeholder briefings, and during the community meeting. Figure 13 below provides a summary of all the comments received presented by category, number of comments received, and major themes. General public comments unrelated to the Plan were recorded and forwarded to the appropriate Metro departments. It should be noted that some public comments addressed multiple categories.

Figure 13: Summary of Comments on the Plan

COMMENT CATEGORY	COMMENTS RECEIVED	MAJOR THEMES	DISCUSSED IN PLAN
Access to On-demand Transportation Services	18	> Funding for on-demand travel programs should be increased so they can be more reliable. > Important to have service that allows people to make non-critical trips and have choices. > Transportation needs of people with disabilities and seniors who are low-income for work and school need to be met. > Need more TNC programs with wheelchair accessible vehicles. > Upgrading technology of on-demand service with apps can increase convenience. > Add information about Medi-Cal transportation provided by L.A. Care and Health Net.	On-demand services have the potential to address many unmet transportation needs in areas where existing transportation may be insufficient. The Plan's Goal 2, Strategy 2.4 supports on-demand transportation services for essential and non-critical trips including partnerships with TNCs. In addition, Goal 4, Strategy 4.1 addresses the need for technology improvements that facilitate on-demand transportation. Medi-Cal has an important role supporting transportation for its members; the program has been added to the types of providers documented in the Plan.
Communication	32	> Discuss the outreach actives that were done for the Plan. Were there efforts to reach those without digital access? > In-person communication is important. > Social media is a good venue for announcements and participation.	The Plan describes the comprehensive outreach efforts in Chapter 3 Mobility Needs and Service Gaps. This includes providing information digitally using social media and other platforms, and through traditional printed announcements. In addition, the Plan and outreach materials were adapted to accommodate persons with vision impairments and those without digital access. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, in-person communication needs were addressed through phone calls and virtual meetings with stakeholders and community-based organizations (CBOs).
Connectivity and Reliability	5	> Need for continued service in areas that are at the periphery of LA County (e.g., Antelope Valley, Pomona Valley, etc.). > Reliability needs to be improved. > Paratransit is needed for those who cannot access fixed route services.	Improving and providing connections throughout all of LA County is critical to address gaps in services for target populations. Goal 2, Strategy 2.2 supports expansion of programs to encourage regional coordination and specialized services. Strategy 2.3 further supports services in areas within and between all UZAs, as well as Rural and Non-Urbanized Areas. Strategy 2.5 addresses connectivity issues to improve customer experience and reliability with multi-operators. Paratransit should be inclusive for different riders including those who have difficulty using fixed-route buses and other forms of public transit (see Chapter 2, Regional ADA Paratransit).

COMMENT CATEGORY	COMMENTS RECEIVED	MAJOR THEMES	DISCUSSED IN PLAN
Expand Services	13	> Paratransit has access limitations, extension of services would address gaps. > Special subscription bus/shuttle service would be beneficial. > Extend services to the northern portions of LA County. > Travel training is important to consider.	Paratransit services are generally provided to complement existing fixed-route services. However, specialized transportation projects that fill service gaps in the network are supported by this Plan (see Goal 2, Strategy 2.2), including special subscription programs and extension of services to northern portions of LA County. Goal 3, Strategy 3.1 also supports increasing resources for travel training and other rider campaigns.
Funding	6	> Consider funding programs that offer low-cost options that emphasize safety and assisting with unexpected trips. > Does the Plan support funding COVID-19 related projects? > As the pandemic ends, will upgrades and expansion of services still be prioritized? > Will funding support electric vehicles?	Lower-cost options are important to provide, particularly for target groups. This is addressed through Goal 1, Strategy 1.4, which describes broadening cost-effective mobility choices. The Plan supports regional COVID-19 protocols and standards to ensure public safety and encourage future ridership. In particular, Goal 6, Strategies 6.4 and 6.5 support upgrades and modifications to vehicles to increase social distancing and other future operational requirements. The Plan also supports projects and programs concepts that are consistent with FTA Section 5310 funding including upgrades to services and expansion of services (see Goal 1 strategies) that are not necessarily COVID-19 related. This includes acquisition of accessible rolling stock (including electric and other clean fuel vehicles).
Regional Mobility Management	4	> Programs such as microtransit and On the Move Riders are beneficial for regional access and should be expanded. > Not all taxi companies serve all areas of LA County. Other travel options should be considered.	The Plan encourages innovation in delivering support services to target populations. In particular, Goal 1, Strategy 1.4 looks to broaden cost-effective mobility choices and Goal 3, Strategy 3.7 supports innovative transportation options. These include microtransit, vanpool, partnerships with TNC's and more traditional services like taxis and volunteer driver reimbursement programs. Metro's On the Move Riders Program is a travel training and trip planning service that promotes transit for target populations. Programs such as this are encouraged under Goal 3, Strategy 3.1.

COMMENT CATEGORY	COMMENTS RECEIVED	MAJOR THEMES	DISCUSSED IN PLAN
Safety Measures	12	> Pedestrian crossings for older adults and individuals with disabilities are important. > Safety of passengers is a priority, including cleanliness of buses and provision of protective bus shelters. > Improvements to address safety/ security challenges are needed (emergency button, cameras, security services).	First/Last Mile access is important to connect target populations to public transportation. Under Goal 2, Strategy 2.6, improvements to sidewalks, crossings, bikeways, and other roadway features will enhance safety and reduce the barriers that target populations currently experience. Addressing cleanliness and promoting healthy and safe travel are described in Goal 5, Strategy 5.5 and Goal 6, Strategy 6.2, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Safety and security for target populations on public transportation is also an important issue. Goal 6, Strategy 6.3 highlights the need for safe travel conditions through information, outreach and communication. In addition, funding for safety equipment, supplies and services was identified as one of the highest priorities to help address LA County's safety/ security challenges.

Source: Public comments received on the Plan (March 19 to April 19, 2021).

COVID-19 Pandemic Implications

This section describes how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted human service agencies' operations. Overall, the majority of agency respondents (around 80 percent) stated that COVID-19 restrictions and protocols have significantly affected delivery of their services. These include the following:

> Communications and interactions are now completely online or telephone in lieu of in-person visits and meetings.

> Some services are limited to those that are deemed essential.

> Indefinitely suspending or eliminating passenger shared rides.

> Social distancing guidelines are being applied in all vehicles (e.g., reduced capacity, safety barriers, face coverings, etc.).

> Reduced hours of operation.

> Transportation resources being used to deliver essentials to users (e.g., meals and groceries).

Figure 14 presents the barriers in transportation services during COVID-19 identified by the service agencies.

Respondents indicated they could better serve their clients during COVID-19 restrictions by providing the following:

> Continuous education of riders on updated restrictions.

> More options for delivery of goods.

> Reducing costs and making services more accessible.

> Increased safety protocols such as face coverings, stricter social distancing guidelines, and increased barriers.

> More vehicles and staff to provide reduced capacity on vehicles.

> Assisting users with more resources to various transportation information.

> Improving communication with users on operational and scheduling updates.

> Increasing accessibility to technology to bridge digital divide with older populations.

> Increasing transportation services to essential locations (medical, food, etc.).

Figure 14: Barriers in Transportation Services During COVID-19

OPERATIONAL BARRIERS	SAFETY BARRIERS
• Limited budget or lack of funding for providing services • Personnel funding/limited staff • Cost to provide a responsive service during a significant decline in ridership • Limited amount of taxis readily available • Lack of dedicated bus or train routes • Difficulty hiring and maintaining drivers as service hours decreased • Suspension of collection fares • Lack of funding to purchase new vehicles • No funding for public services	• Target populations with heightened risks to COVID-19 exposure • Efficiently disinfecting vehicle after every passenger trip • Perceived lack of safety when using public transportation. • Limited amount of taxis readily available • Fear of patients and their families/caregivers to have seniors travel for care • Volume of travelers on public transit • Vehicles are not equipped with COVID-19 plexiglass shields
ADA ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS	**COMMUNICATION BARRIERS**
• Insufficient number of vehicles equipped to assist clients with disabilities	• Difficulty communicating with seniors as many are not technology-savvy

Source: 2021-2024 Human Service Agency Survey, Question #43, January 2021.

Goals and Strategies

The goals and strategies for the Plan address the mobility needs and service gaps identified in Chapter 3. Goals from the previous 2016-2019 Coordinated Plan provided a framework for the Section 5310 funding decisions in LA County. These goals were then updated to account for new input gathered during the outreach process, and further expanded to address COVID-19 related transportation needs. Overall, this chapter describes the development and description of the goals and strategies for the Plan.

Developing Goals for the Plan

Goals from previous LA County Coordinated Plans provided the framework for discussion during the outreach process. The following sections describe how and why these earlier goals continue to address the mobility needs and service gaps within LA County.

Goal 1: Fund Mobility Options

Sustain, fund, and continue to expand public, private, and other transportation services in LA County.

LA County has over 2,300 peak hour buses and nearly 98 miles of rail service within Metro's service area of about 1,433 square miles. Most communities are served by a combination of transit and paratransit provided by LA County's regional providers such as Metro and Access Services, as well as local transportation services provided by cities and other service agencies. Local transit services vary widely and range from local and sub-regional fixed route networks to local Dial-A-Rides and subsidized taxi programs.

Service agencies shared the following challenges they face in meeting the needs of their communities:

> There is increasing demand on paratransit and rising cost for providing service. Additional funding is needed to meet this increasing demand of customers. In addition, agencies report aging fleet issues, the need for additional rolling stock, the need for additional staff and operational costs as challenges.

> Wheelchair capacity of vehicles has not kept up with the increasing number of persons traveling with mobility devices.

> Safety/security, reduced frequency of public transit, long wait times for round-trip service and last-minute service requests were also reported as challenges.

Metro has in place several short-range and long-range plans that will address many of the issues faced by the target populations. Fully funding these plans is critically important to the future mobility needs of the target populations. Below is a list of some of the LA County plans that support target populations:

> Metro 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan

> Metro 2014 Short Range Transportation Plan

> Metro 2014 First/Last Mile Strategic Plan

> Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan

> Metro Customer Experience Plan 2020

> Metro NextGen Bus Plan 2020-2021

> Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) (Connect SoCal)

Goal 2: Address Mobility Service Gaps

Improve coordination between public transportation and human service transportation to address mobility and service gaps.

LA County has a significant and complex layering of mobility options at the local, subregional, and regional levels. As human service transportation is typically provided based on jurisdictional boundaries, services for target population can have gaps in access and mobility. Trips within and between regional and local destinations can be difficult for many members of the target populations. Mobility concerns identified through the outreach process included:

> Higher demand for same-day response services, particularly to address medical needs. This was reported as a difficult trip by almost 70 percent of agency survey respondents.

> Demand does not adhere to city boundaries, with travelers often wishing to cross jurisdictional lines, which creates challenges particularly for demand response services. Trips outside service area boundaries were reported as a barrier (often or sometimes) by approximately 64 percent of all respondents. Trips outside Access Service boundaries were reported as a barrier (often or sometimes) by more than 50 percent of agency survey respondents.

> First-mile and last-mile access to transit is a challenge for seniors and persons with disabilities.

> Local medical trips and essential shopping (groceries, pharmacy, etc.) were reported as a difficult trip (often or sometimes) to make by about 67 percent of agency survey respondents. Medical trips were also increasingly regional, requiring long-distance travel, often outside of local jurisdictions, such as from the South Bay to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

> There was a desire for early morning, midday, late night, and weekend service as the 24/7 economy drives the demand for longer service hours, particularly for entry level workers to reach service and shift jobs.

> Long trips within LA County were reported as a barrier (often or sometimes) by approximately 59 percent of all agency survey respondents.

> Transfers were reported as a barrier (often or sometimes) by 58 percent of respondents, as they were considered difficult to plan. For example, there were challenges getting from Central LA County to Ventura County, Santa Clarita, and the Antelope Valley area. Connections between the San Gabriel Valley and downtown LA were considered difficult, especially in areas without a rail connection.

In an effort to address the transfer barrier, Access Services expanded its transfer trip service in July 2020. The expansion is aimed at improving travel between Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita, and the rest of LA County. Transfer opportunities were expanded from three to eight times a day, added on weekdays, weekend, holidays, services and fares were permanently reduced.

Goal 3: Provide Support Services

Provide support services to enable access for target populations.

The stakeholder outreach and review of relevant documents revealed the need to provide additional support services to target populations:

> Human service agencies that offer transportation services and accessibility services need to clearly outline and define their services to better meet the needs of those using the service. Not all services provide the same level of transportation amenities or access. The target population users need to understand the full extent of services before they attempt to use them.

> There is a unique opportunity for human service agencies and accessibility-based companies to partner and comprehensively provide better transportation. If large scale transportation network companies (TNCs) partnered with local agencies, they can better understand the needs of those trying to utilize these types of services.

> Services for seniors and persons with disabilities need to be expanded outside of transportation. Purchasing household items, laundry services, and food delivery services are all crucial for these target populations, many of which are now at even greater risk due to COVID-19.

> Face-to-face interaction among seniors and persons with disabilities is best. While online and digital communication is valuable, continuous in-person interaction is most effective. Seniors benefit the most from continuous in-person interaction. The in-person relationship helps reinforce information and ensures it is clearly understood.

> Agencies reported challenges connecting their customers to other social services and expressed a need for regional inter-agency cooperation.

Goal 4: Promote and Improve Information Portals

Promote, improve and expand multi-cultural information portals on mobility options.

Closely related to the issue of mobility is the ability of seniors, persons with disabilities and other target populations to understand and navigate new transportation options. Questions such as: what types of travel options are available; do I need to transfer; how long will the trip take; how much will it cost; and is it safe are frequently asked.

Based on the agency surveys, the following were highlighted as informational barriers:

> The need to promote a variety of services, and education on accessing transit to address information gaps. Some seniors do not have access to cellular phones or help, making it difficult and stressful to obtain this information. There is a request for services that result in less stress, time and offer better options.

> Keep websites up to date so customers can rapidly obtain accurate and current information as services change.

> Customers desire real-time arrival information and ease of transit fare transactions for regional travel.

> There is a desire for regional mobility management and networking between transit providers. The belief is that issues of coordination and fragmented service lead to customer confusion.

> Agencies reported challenges connecting their customers to other social services and expressed a need for regional inter-agency cooperation.

Goal 5: Enhance Accountable Performance Monitoring Systems

Enhance customer feedback and accountable performance monitoring systems to ensure that high quality service is maintained.

Metro has taken important steps on customer feedback and accountable performance monitoring systems for bus and rail systems. Programs such as Metro customer satisfaction surveys and the Mystery Rider Program which reports on wheelchair accessibility issues have provided feedback and, in the case of wheelchair accessibility, accountable performance monitoring systems. More specifically, the following programs are currently in place:

> Metro's Customer Satisfaction Surveys provide yearly input from bus and rail passengers.

> The Metro Wheelchair Accessibility Quarterly Reports use "Mystery Riders" to report on specific items related to Metro policies regarding the transportation of persons in wheelchairs.

> Metro's Customer Experience Plan includes a list of areas for improvement for security, cleanliness and at bus stops. Pilot programs include having elevator attendants to deter crime, urination, defecation, and drug use, and make elevators safe and pleasant for seniors, people with disabilities, travelers with luggage and others.

> Metro's NextGen Plan has extensive and continuous public engagement and outreach to ensure the Metro bus system is addressing the needs of current and future target population riders.

It will be important to build on these accountability efforts in order to enhance user satisfaction. For example, Access Services is conducting a series of comprehensive operational reviews (COR) of its Operations, Customer Service and Eligibility Determination programs with the goal to improve customer experience. Although the majority of the recommendations were implemented, such as extending hours of service and expanding or modifying oversight staff, continual monitoring of the programs will ensure services are responsive, maintained and adjusted to meet the needs of riders.

Goal 6: Provide COVID-19 Support Services

Support transportation providers in serving target populations during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, agency providers have adjusted their service offerings and requirements to meet ridership levels and customer needs. For example, providers have increased Same Day Service, required face coverings and implemented Meal Delivery Programs. In addition, service agencies highlighted the following needs regarding COVID-19:

> Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safety measures are needed to assure customers of safe travel conditions. Safety protocols such as cleanings of vehicles, social distancing, passenger limits, air circulation, larger vehicles, and mask requirements need to be implemented and clearly communicated.

> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting Safer-at-Home and Stay-at-Home orders, there has been a reduction in the number of riders and a demand for other essential services. Per a focus group respondent, "We are still moving people, but we have [mostly] switched to where we are now delivering essential goods to vulnerable populations such as meals and fans during the summer. The greatest concern is still serving the vulnerable populations even if they are not traveling." Funding options are needed to maintain and expand service offerings.

> If service demands remain the same with COVID-19, there will be a need for more vehicles to allow for social distancing.

> Access Services started providing same day service due to less demand for riders overall during COVID-19.

> Funding is needed to provide PPE to drivers and customers and for additional staff support based on new COVID-19 requirements.

Goals and Strategies for the Plan

Building from earlier Coordinated Plans, consistency with regional and local plans, and input received throughout the outreach effort, the following goals and strategies have been identified to address the mobility needs and service gaps of LA County's target populations. The following are the Plan's goals and brief descriptions of the regional and local strategies. See Figure 15 for the detailed strategies related to each goal.

> **Goal 1: Fund Mobility Options** – Sustain, fund, and continue to expand public, private and other transportation services in LA County.

- **Regional Strategies:** Consistencies with regional and municipal plans and funding projects, programs and activities that have cost-sharing opportunities and broaden traditional mobility choices.
- **Local Strategies:** First/Last Mile policies and standards, capacity and service level improvements, as well as upgrading, replacing and expanding vehicle fleets.

> **Goal 2 : Address Mobility Gaps** – Improve coordination between public transportation and human service transportation to address mobility and service gaps.

- **Regional Strategies:** Improvements in regional coordination, inter-agency agreements and holistic transit connections throughout LA County.
- **Local Strategies:** Address the travel needs of target populations including: expansion of on-demand services, coordination of multi-operator and cross jurisdictional trips, increasing the span of services, and First/Last Mile improvements to enhance safety and reduce barriers.

> **Goal 3: Provide Support Services** – Provide additional support services to enable access for target populations.

- **Regional Strategies:** Increasing resources and providing guidance to increase mobility through travel training, rider campaigns and equity base fares.
- **Local Strategies:** Developing and broadening assistance to target populations. This includes addressing interactive, immediate and short-term transportation needs.

> **Goal 4: Promote and Improve Information Portals** – Promote, improve and expand multi-cultural information portals on mobility options.

- **Regional Strategies:** Encourage collaborative information sharing and increasing the effectiveness and use of social media to promote mobility options for target populations.
- **Local Strategies:** Providing current, clear, and comprehensive travel information to target populations, acknowledging the diversity and equity needs within LA County. This includes collaboratively promoting mobility management functions at the local and regional levels.

> **Goal 5: Enhance Accountable Performance Monitoring Systems** – Enhance customer feedback and accountable performance monitoring systems to ensure that high quality service is maintained.

- **Regional Strategies:** Set the framework for the provision of high-quality services through the use of surveys, monitoring and quarterly reporting.
- **Local Strategies:** Encourage the implementation of performance standards, goals, and policies as a means to establish service levels, plus processes to obtain and act upon feedback from riders.

> **Goal 6: Provide COVID-19 Support Services** – Support transportation providers in serving target populations during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Regional Strategies:** Ensuring safety standards and protocols for vehicles and personnel that serve target populations.
- **Local Strategies:** Address the need to provide a safe environment for the target populations while traveling using equipment, supplies and protocols. In addition, communication of these standards and approaches is needed.

Figure 15: Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Fund Mobility Options

Sustain, fund and continue to expand public, private, and other transportation services in LA County.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES	LOCAL STRATEGIES
1.1 Strategy: Fund regional and municipal operators to address recommendations included in SCAG's 2020-2045 RTP/SCS (Connect SoCal) and Metro's 2014 SRTP and 2020 LRTP.	**1.5 Strategy**: Develop First/Last Mile access improvements in support of Metro's 2018 Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Policies and 2014 First/Last Mile Strategic Plan & Planning Guidelines.
1.2 Strategy: Fund projects and activities that address high-priority strategies identified in the 2021-2024 Coordinated Plan to enhance mobility of seniors, persons with disabilities, veterans, low-income and other target populations.	**1.6 Strategy**: Fund local municipality-based service improvements to address capacity and service level issues for target populations.
1.3 Strategy: Fund projects, programs and activities that are eligible for cost-sharing arrangements among transportation resources such as Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) and other federal funding sources.	**1.7 Strategy**: Upgrade human service agency fleets to become more accessible by persons with disabilities and encourage private sector taxi and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) to operate more accessible vehicles.
1.4 Strategy: Broaden cost-effective mobility choices such as Access Services, micro transit/vanpool, Dial-A-Ride, Medi-Cal transportation, County New Freedom Transportation Program and other travel assistance services that support goals included in SCAG's and Metro's regional plans.	**1.8 Strategy**: Institute vehicle replacement and expansion for public transportation and human service agencies to serve the target populations.

Goal 2: Address Mobility Gaps

Improve coordination between public transportation and human service transportation to address mobility gaps.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES	LOCAL STRATEGIES
2.1 Strategy: Improve county-to-county senior and paratransit trips through best practice solutions and formalized inter-agency agreements.	**2.4 Strategy**: Provide on-demand transportation services for critical and non-critical target population travel needs such as medical, essential shopping and off-peak hour trips.
2.2 Strategy: Expand and support programs to encourage regional coordination of specialized transportation services such as a Regional Mobility Management program with strategies to connect seniors and paratransit riders with local and regional transportation options.	**2.5 Strategy**: Address connectivity issues to improve the customer experience with trips involving multi-operators.
2.3 Strategy: Improve transit connections throughout all of LA County including areas within and between the Los Angeles/ Long Beach/Anaheim UZA, Lancaster/Palmdale UZA, Santa Clarita UZA, and Rural and Non-Urbanized Areas.	**2.6 Strategy**: Improve First/Last Mile access within local communities, including improvements to sidewalks, crossings, bikeways, and other roadway features to enhance safety and reduce barriers for target populations.
	2.7 Strategy: Provide incentives for collaborative partnerships to better address immediate, cross jurisdictional and other hard-to-meet travel needs.
	2.8 Strategy: Increase the span of service on weekdays and weekends, recognizing off-peak service needs such as early morning, midday, late night and weekend.
	2.9 Strategy: Improve transfers from one mode or type of service to another service including connections to other counties and the Rural/Non-Urbanized areas within LA County.

Goal 3: Provide Support Services

Provide support services to enable access for target populations.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES	LOCAL STRATEGIES
3.1 Strategy: Increase resources for travel training and related rider campaigns to promote transit and human service transportation for target populations.	**3.4 Strategy**: Develop and support volunteer driver and mileage reimbursement programs for difficult-to-serve trips for seniors and persons with disabilities.
3.2 Strategy: Address the need to connect target populations to other social support services through interagency communication, cooperation, and agreements.	**3.5 Strategy**: Broaden assistance programs to encourage face-to-face interaction for additional assistance needs including door-to-door and door-through-door transportation.
3.3 Strategy: Support and broaden means-based fare discounts to low-income populations to enable their accessibility and use of public transportation access.	**3.6 Strategy**: Develop transit stops/station improvements, path-of-access, and other local pedestrian and bicycle improvements for target populations.
	3.7 Strategy: Support innovative transportation options (e.g., microtransit/vanpool, TNCs, taxis, volunteer driver and mileage reimbursement programs) that could be more cost-efficient/cost-effective for target populations.
	3.8 Strategy: Expand support services to meet the immediate transportation needs of target populations including transporting critical items such as medical supplies, household items, laundry services and food delivery services.
	3.9 Strategy: Ensure communication with target populations embraces a broad array of methods including in-person opportunities, when possible.

Goal 4: Promote and Improve Information Portals

Promote, improve and expand multi-cultural information portals on mobility options.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES	LOCAL STRATEGIES
4.1 Strategy: Support for technology improvements and enhancements to trip planning to incorporate all types of transportation options including public, human service agencies, and private sources and provide current and clear travel directions for target populations and other users. This includes easily accessible multimodal "find-a-ride" functions and maintaining it with up-to-date information.	**4.4 Strategy**: Support local and coordinated regional transportation services by providing real-time information.
4.2 Strategy: Increase the effectiveness and use of social media to promote mobility options to the target populations.	**4.5 Strategy**: Provide clear and comprehensive information at bus stops and rail stations including route/schedule information and stop/station identification, particularly for low-frequency routes.
4.3 Strategy: Provide comprehensive travel information for target populations from a single resource to lessen customer confusion.	**4.6 Strategy**: Ensure that information is available in multiple languages and formats acknowledging the diversity and equity needs of LA County.
	4.7 Strategy: Promote mobility management functions to assist and enable target populations to connect to transit and other transportation options. Collaboratively promote mobility management functions at the local and regional level.

Goal 5: Enhance Accountable Performance Monitoring Systems

Enhance customer feedback and accountable performance monitoring systems to ensure that high quality service is maintained.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES	LOCAL STRATEGIES
5.1 Strategy: Expand Metro Customer Satisfaction Surveys to include questions on other transit and paratransit support services.	**5.4 Strategy**: Adopt standard compliant policies that can be applicable to municipal and other human service providers.
5.2 Strategy: Ensure continued attention to the quality of the ride for target population users through quarterly reporting and ongoing plans such as Metro's Customer Experience Plan and NextGen Bus Plan.	**5.5 Strategy**: Develop performance standards that can be consistent among various service modes. Develop target performance goals for on-time performance, transfers, safety, and cleanliness.
5.3 Strategy: Establish performance monitoring and reporting for transportation pilots and projects that address the needs of the target populations.	

Goal 6: Provide COVID-19 Support Services

Support transportation providers in serving target populations during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

REGIONAL STRATEGIES	LOCAL STRATEGIES
6.1 Strategy: Adopt regional COVID-19 safety protocols and standards for personnel and vehicles serving target populations that can be applicable to municipal and other human service providers.	**6.2 Strategy**: Provide funding for personal protection equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfecting supplies, additional staff and other services, to address target population needs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
	6.3 Strategy: Assure target populations of safe travel conditions through information, outreach and communication.
	6.4 Strategy: Upgrade and modify vehicles with safety measures to increase social distancing and provide devices to limit exposure.
	6.5 Strategy: Support the operation of additional or larger vehicles to increase social distancing during travel for target populations.

Source: Metro 2021.

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Projects and Programs

Project and program concepts are identified and associated with each of the goals and strategies. This chapter includes a description of each of the project and program types, discusses their eligibility for Section 5310 funding, and provides examples. The list of potential projects and programs derive from project concept forms that were distributed to the service agencies. To supplement the breadth of types of projects and programs for the Plan, previously-awarded Section 5310 projects were also included as part of the concept list.

Projects and Programs

As part of the outreach process, project concept forms were distributed to approximately 7,000 service agencies to understand the potential project and program needs for the Plan. Collected from November 9, 2020 to January 8, 2021, a total of 40 project concept forms were completed and submitted. Previous Section 5310 awarded projects and programs were also included as part of the concept list to supplement the types of projects and programs that may be applied for in the next grant offering.

These "Traditional" capital and "Other" capital and operating projects and programs represent a comprehensive list of activities that would enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities in LA County and that are eligible for future Metro Section 5310 funding. Note that other target populations groups such as low-income individuals and veterans may benefit from these projects; however, Section 5310 funds are directed to specifically serving seniors and persons with disabilities. This list also reflects information gathered through the outreach process and efforts during the past Coordinated Plans, and feedback collected through the review of this Plan may expand the project and program types.

Categorized by goal, Figure 16 presents a list of project and programs type concepts. The project type, project description, Section 5310 eligibility (Traditional or Other) and examples, provide potential funding applicants context and guidance for future Section 5310 applications.

Figure 16: Projects and Program Concepts

Goal 1: Fund Mobility Options

PROJECT TYPE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	SECTION 5310 ELIGIBLE (TRADITIONAL OR OTHER)	EXAMPLE
Vehicle and fleet expansion and replacement	Acquisition of expansion accessible rolling stock (e.g., buses, vans, minivans) for additional service areas; acquisition of replacement accessible vehicles for existing service areas	Traditional	Purchase of expansion accessible vehicles to provide service to new geographic areas; purchase of replacement accessible vehicles for reliable and continued transportation
Capacity and service level improvements	Acquisition of expansion accessible rolling stock for increased service levels; procurement of internal systems, equipment, or passenger facilities to allow enhanced capacity, frequency and/or service levels	Traditional	Purchase of expansion accessible vans and new dispatching system to increase hours of operation
Dial-a-ride services for First/Last Mile access to stations	Procurement of internal systems; operating assistance; staffing resources	Other	Funds for new or continued operating assistance
New door-through door transportation	Procurement of internal systems; operating assistance; staffing resources	Other	Funds for new or continued operating assistance
Subsidized vanpool/ carshare programs	Procurement of internal systems; operating assistance; staffing resources	Other	Promote and subsidize vanpool initiative

Goal 2: Address Mobility Service Gaps

PROJECT TYPE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	SECTION 5310 ELIGIBLE (TRADITIONAL OR OTHER)	EXAMPLE
Programs to serve inter-county and multi-city trips	Provision of new mobility services between multiple jurisdictions within LA County; provision of connections to locations outside LA County	Other	Coordination of service hours and operational parameters among cities throughout San Gabriel Valley
Programs to serve same-day transportation for critical and non-critical need trips	Provision of new on-demand services for daily travel needs; staffing resources; internal systems	Other	Providing multi-jurisdictional shuttle to access regional facilities.
Pool multi-city agency resources	Establish resource pooling and allocation process; staffing resources, internal systems	Other	Funds for new or continued operating assistance
Fare integration among operators	Study of consistent fare structure and payment methods; internal systems; staffing resources	Other	Study to assess viability of using Transit Access Pass (TAP) card for dial-a-ride payments
First/Last Mile plans and improvements	Construction for First/ Last Mile projects to improve access to transit facilities	Other	Widening sidewalks around obstacles near light rail platform

Goal 3: Provide Support Services

PROJECT TYPE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	SECTION 5310 ELIGIBLE (TRADITIONAL OR OTHER)	EXAMPLE
Travel training programs	Establish programs to educate target populations on travel options, fares, and reimbursement processes; internal systems; staffing resources	Traditional (mobility management)	One-on-one travel counseling to residents at retirement communities
Mileage reimbursement programs for difficult-to-serve trips	Establish programs to provide direct payment for miles traveled by personal vehicles for trips that cannot be served by available transportation options; internal systems; staffing resources; funds for distribution	Other	Establishing travel bank for reimbursement of personal vehicle trips
Expand door-to-door and door-through-door services	Implementation of new door-to-door or door-through-door activities; training programs; staffing resources	Other	Providing training to vehicle operators to safely transport riders to and within buildings
Street improvement projects for access to stops and stations.	Construction for roadway projects to improve access to transit facilities	Other	Paving sidewalks and adding ADA ramps at transit bus and rail stops near key destinations
Subsidies and voucher-based programs	Establish program to provide help funding travel options by target populations; internal systems; staffing resources; funds for distribution	Other	Implementing voucher systems for seniors to utilize shared-ride services

Goal 4: Promote and Improve Information Portals

PROJECT TYPE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	SECTION 5310 ELIGIBLE (TRADITIONAL OR OTHER)	EXAMPLE
Find-a-ride trip planner	Implementation of software to facilitate identification of nearby mobility options; internal systems; staffing resources	Traditional (mobility management)	Developing an app to identify nearest transit options from a destinated location
Social media to promote mobility options	Developing information to share through social media (e.g., Facebook, NextDoor) regarding mobility services a nd operators	Other	Posting service hours, fares and service areas on operator's Facebook page
Real-time transit information	Implementation of provision of real-time transit arrival and departure information (at transit stop or through web portal); internal systems; equipment; staffing resources	Other	Installing variable message signs at community center to display next bus information
Multi-language format guides	Developing and publishing mobility service information in English and non-English languages	Other	Publishing and distributing travel guides in Spanish
Integration of mobility management for target groups into transit centers	Establish mobility management facilities (e.g., information kiosks) and related staffing	Traditional (mobility management)	Establishing an information kiosk at LA Union Station to provide information on transit fares and applicable senior discounts

Goal 5: Enhance Performance Monitoring Systems

PROJECT TYPE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	SECTION 5310 ELIGIBLE (TRADITIONAL OR OTHER)	EXAMPLE
Expand satisfaction surveys	Developing, administering and/ or assessing surveys regarding the satisfaction of current system users; internal systems; staffing resources	Other	Email survey to users of transit system to obtain feedback on timeliness of service
Fund local trip coordinators	Funding of staffing resources for trip coordinators to assist in local trip-making	Traditional (mobility management)	Hourly costs for trip coordinator at local medical center
Promote senior-friendly vehicle operator training	Implementing and/or publicizing of training for operators to improve relations and safety for senior travelers	Other	Enrolling vehicle operators in certified senior-related training program
Performance measurement monitoring and reporting program	Administering and/ or reporting of systemwide performance indicators; internal systems; staffing resources	Other	Collecting data on ridership levels of transit vehicles to determine potential overcrowded conditions

Goal 6: Provide COVID-19 Support Services

PROJECT TYPE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	SECTION 5310 ELIGIBLE (TRADITIONAL OR OTHER)	EXAMPLE
Safety protocols and standards	Establish protocols and standards for vehicles, facilities and/or staff interactions	Other	Preparation of written safety procedures regarding interactions between staff and drivers
Safety equipment, supplies and services	Purchasing of cleaning and/or disinfectant equipment and supplies, including masks and other PPE supplies; installation of sneeze guards and safety shields; staffing resources; contracting with outside cleaning and disinfecting services	Other	Contract with daily cleaning and disinfecting crew for each vehicle in service
Information, outreach, and communication	Programs to inform target populations about safety measures and processes	Other	Publishing of website content regarding cleaning and disinfecting protocols
Vehicle modifications and upgrades	Modifying vehicles with measures to increase safety and distancing for drivers and passengers, including the installation of safety barriers and modifications to vehicle interior layout to create distance between passengers and drivers	Traditional	Overhaul vehicle interior layout to protect drivers and customers

Source: 2020 Focus Groups; 2021-2024 Human Service Agency Survey and Project Concept Forms; 2021 Community Meeting and Stakeholder Briefings, and FTA Section 5310 Award Recommendations (FY2019).

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Prioritization and Implementation

This chapter presents the methodology and results of the project and program concepts prioritization process. The criteria used in this process included: (1) ranking of importance by service agencies, (2) ability to address mobility needs and service gaps, and (3) feasibility and ability to implement. The prioritized list of projects and programs incorporated the outreach and public input, as well as implementation considerations such as resources, benefits and costs. The purpose of this ranking is to identify Metro's priorities for investments and to help guide private and public transportation operators in planning their own investment approaches.

Prioritization and Implementation

One of the key outcomes of the Plan is to provide a prioritized list of projects and programs to address the mobility needs and service gaps identified for target populations. The Plan's prioritization process, results, and recommendations are based on a comparative evaluation of the projects and program types identified under each goal. The outreach and public input obtained through focus groups, surveys, and project concept forms created the foundation of understanding the critical needs of target populations over the next four years. Coupled with implementation considerations such as availability of resources, feasibility and timeline, evaluation criteria identified priorities among the 29 projects and program types. The purpose of providing a comparison priority ranking is to identify Metro's priorities for investment toward human service transportation and to guide LA County private and public transportation operators in planning their own investment approaches.

In the evaluation process, some projects typically perform well in some criteria, but less satisfactory in others. The overall summary of a project's and program's performance provides an understanding of the advantages and tradeoffs, which allows Metro to incorporate this consideration in the evaluation of Section 5310 funding applications.

Methodology

Evaluation criteria were developed to assess how well each project/program concept satisfies the overall goals and strategies established for the Plan.

Based on the six goals and the resultant strategies, the following were used to assess the overall priority of each project and program type:

> Priorities identified by service agencies

> Addresses target population mobility needs and service gaps

> Ease of implementation and feasibility

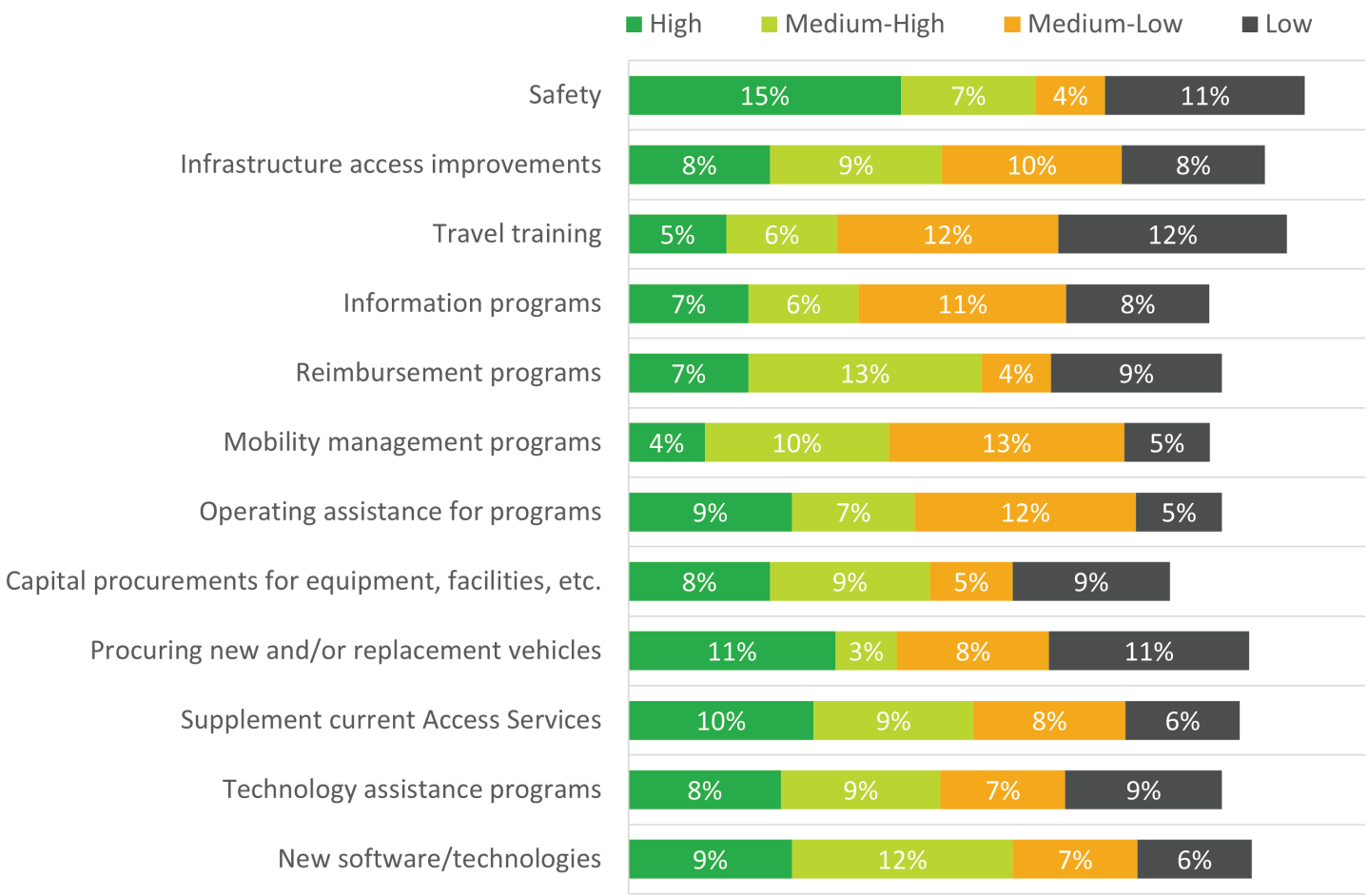
Evaluating Agency Priorities

Evaluating priorities identified by service agencies is important because they reflect the transportation service and operational needs. As part of the agency surveys, the agencies identified and ranked the strategies, activities, and programs that were most important within the next four years (2021-2024). Based on the responses, priorities were ranked as either "high," "medium-high," "medium-low," or "low." Figure 17 presents the priorities identified by the service agencies.

Note that "other" was also given as an open response option. Open-ended responses provided included: educating the public on the cost-effectiveness of transportation systems; the need for seamless, integrated systems for seniors in LA County; and reliable transportation options to augment current services.

Based on the evaluation of service agency responses, safety, procuring new and/or replacement vehicles, and supplementing current Access Services had the highest priorities. Reimbursement programs and new software/ technologies were most often ranked as medium-high priorities. Travel training was most often ranked as a lowest priority compared to the other types of projects and programs.

Figure 17: Priorities by Service Agencies



Source: 2021-2024 Coordinated Plan Update Agency Survey, Question #19

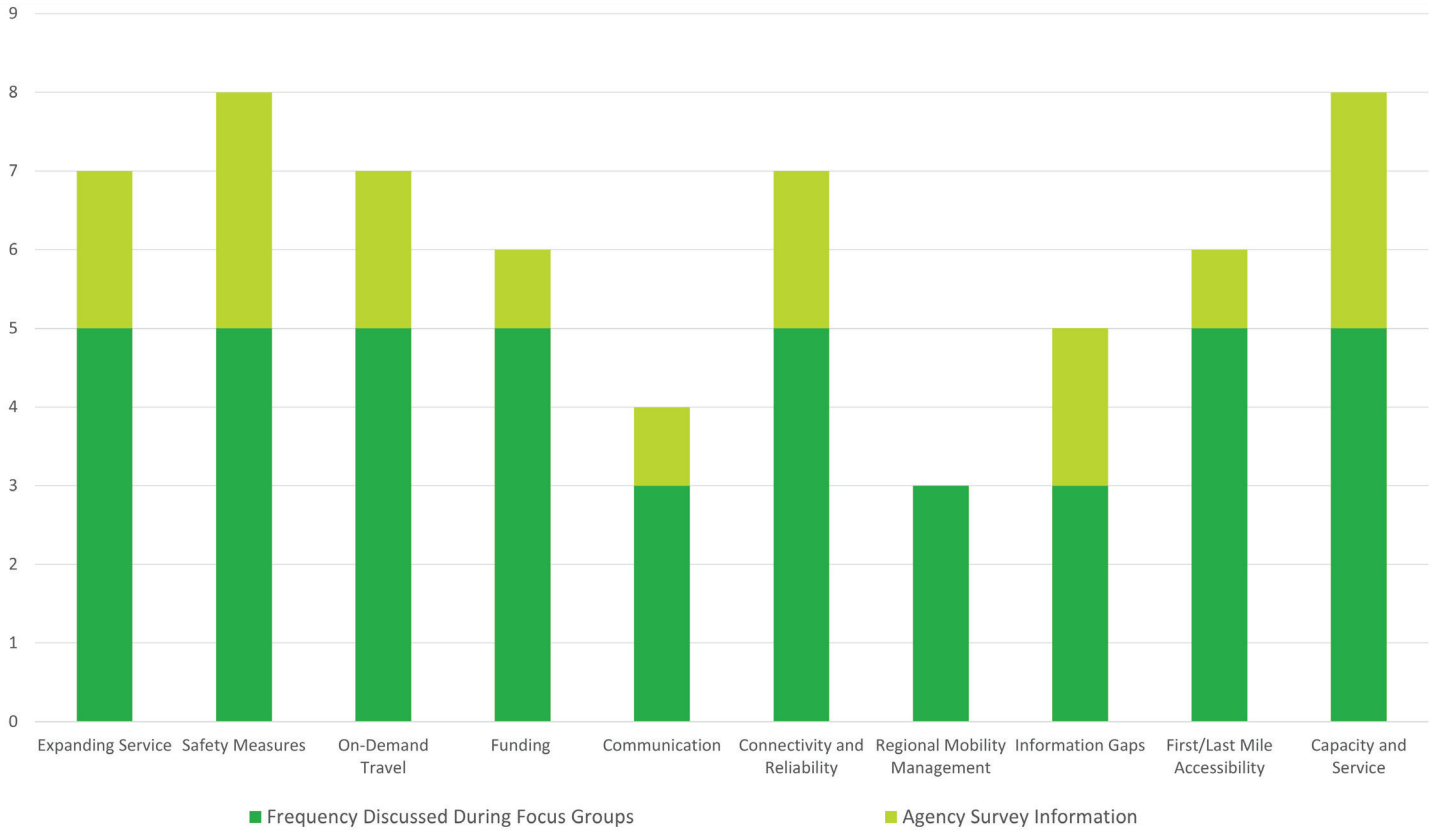
Evaluating Mobility Needs and Service Gaps

The focus group outreach, agency surveys and the demographic analysis for LA County's UZAs identified major mobility needs and service gaps for target populations. Overall, more than 23 percent of LA County's population are seniors and persons with disabilities, and this percentage is expected to continue to increase since these target groups have grown by 22 percent and 94 percent, respectively, over the past four years. As such, existing transportation services for target populations will be strained unless new funding opportunities are identified, and available resources are deployed more efficiently and equitably. The needs and service gaps of the target populations reflect the travel constraints, risks and challenges these population groups will encounter.

The major themes identified from the focus groups guided the ranking of the project and program types. Based on how often the topics were discussed during focus groups, the mobility needs were scored on a 1 (least discussed) to 5 (most discussed) scale. In addition, bonus points were added if the topics were mentioned as either issues or barriers in the agency survey questions. Figure 18 presents the key mobility needs and service gap priorities identified during the outreach process and their representative scores and priority rankings.

As shown in the figure, the major discussion topics cited throughout the outreach process were the need for safety measures as well as capacity and service, followed by expanding services, on-demand travel and connectivity and reliability.

Figure 18: Priorities Identified by Outreach



Source: 2020 Focus Groups; 2021-2024 Coordinated Plan Update Agency Survey and Project Concepts Forms

Feasibility and Implementation

The ease of implementation is also a reflection of the feasibility of the various project and program types. This criterion considers several aspects of implementation including magnitude of capital/operational cost, availability of funding resources, and cost-effectiveness. Although through the Section 5310 application process specific projects will have varying degrees of funding commitments and schedules, this evaluation considers the magnitude of costs, funding commitments and overall ease of implementation for project and program types.

Information gathered through project concept forms included estimated magnitude of capital and operational costs, identification of funding sources that could be leveraged, and cost-effectiveness (level of benefits commensurate of costs) of potential projects.

To reflect the magnitude of costs, capital and operating costs were sorted based on the relatively higher versus lower cost of projects and programs. The "high" versus "low" rating was based on information provided in the project concept forms and previous Section 5310 project allocations. For example, vehicle and fleet expansion and replacement projects had estimated capital costs ranging from $93,000 to $40 million, and the relative operational costs would also be high for new fleet vehicles. As such, these projects would have a high-cost finding. In comparison, information, outreach, and communication programs would have relatively lower capital and operational costs, and therefore received a low-cost finding.

In terms of benefits, the project concept forms identified projects that may provide a higher level of annual passenger trips, vehicle trips, or would directly support seniors, persons with disabilities, or other target populations. As such, projects were scored based on high, medium or lower level of benefits. After identifying the level of benefits, this was compared to the relative magnitude of costs (both capital and operational), and a benefit to cost ratio was developed for each project and program type. In addition, bonus points were added if the project or program had identified potential funding commitments on the project concept forms.

Prioritization of Project and Programs Types

Based on the prioritization methodology, the identified project and program types were evaluated and ranked. From this approach, the overall prioritization rank was determined by accounting for the performance of each concept with respect to: priorities identified by service agencies; addressing the mobility needs and service gaps of the target populations; and feasibility and ease of implementation.

Note that the resulting ranking was based on the relative value of each project or program (i.e., concepts that were determined to better address the three criteria were assigned a higher ranking). Figure 19 presents the overall prioritization ranking of the project and program types.

Figure 19 : Overall Prioritization Ranking

PRIORITY RANKING	PROJECT AND PROGRAM TYPES
Priority 1	Safety protocols and standards
	Safety equipment, supplies and services
	Vehicle and fleet expansion and replacement
	Programs to serve same-day transportation for critical need trips
	Vehicle modifications and upgrades
	Programs to serve inter-county and multi-city trips
	Capacity and service level improvements
	Dial-a-ride services for First/Last Mile access to stations
	New door-through-door transportation
	Pool multi-city agency resources
	Promote senior-friendly vehicle operator training
Priority 2	Expand door-to-door and door-through-door services
	Information, outreach and communication
	Travel training programs
	Mileage reimbursement programs for difficult-to-serve trips
	Real-time transit information
	Integration of mobility management for target groups into transit centers
	Fund local trip coordinators
	Subsidized vanpool/carshare programs
	Programs to serve same-day transportation for non-critical need trips
	First/Last Mile plans and improvements
	Street improvement projects for access to stops and stations
	Subsidies and voucher-based programs
	Multi-language format guides
Priority 3	Find-a-ride trip planner
	Fare integration among operators
	Social media to promote mobility options
	Performance measurement monitoring and reporting program
	Expand satisfaction surveys

Source: Metro 2021. Note: Projects and programs are listed by total scoring value.

Conclusions

Addressing mobility needs and service gaps of target populations requires sustained public participation opportunities to help identify and develop the projects and programs that require investments. This includes supporting existing transportation services, investing in new or expanded transportation services, adapting to changing demographics, responding to unforeseen circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and continuing our commitment to bridge connections with communities and individuals who have deep relationships and insights into community-specific needs and opportunities.

As the Designated Recipient of urbanized areas within LA County, Metro will allocate Section 5310 funds for projects and programs included in this Plan. Developed through a comprehensive process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, veterans, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers, and other members of the public, it allows Metro to fulfill its responsibilities as the Designated Recipient of FTA Section 5310 funds. Metro can also certify that Traditional and Other projects and programs selected for funding under the Section 5310 program (or other federal, state, and local funding programs with similar requirements) are included in this locally developed Plan and are therefore eligible for a grant award by the FTA (or by other funding agencies, as applicable).

The highest priorities for service agencies and target population groups are safety protocols and standards and safety equipment, supplies and services; followed by programs to serve same-day transportation and serving critical need trips. More traditional capital investment in vehicle and fleet expansion/replacement, upgrading and modifying vehicles, and better mobility management/pooling multi-agency resources are also high on the priority list.

Given trends identified in the assessment of transportation services, input received during the public participation process, and the goals and strategies developed for the next four years, the highest priority projects and programs have been established. These prioritized projects and programs serve to guide private and public transportation operators in planning their own investment approaches and establishes the list of eligible activities under the Section 5310 program. Overall, the Plan is a roadmap to address the mobility needs and service gaps for seniors, persons with disabilities, as well as low-income individuals and veterans for LA County.

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Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACC	Accessibility Advisory Committee
ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADTN	Aging and Disability Transportation Network
ASL	American Sign Language
AVTA	Antelope Valley Transit Authority
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCAM	Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility
COR	Comprehensive Operational Reviews
Coordinated Plan	Metro 2021-2024 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
DASH	City of Los Angeles Downtown Area Shuttle
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
Guide	Metro Funding Sources Guide
IRS	Internal Revenue Services
LA County	Los Angeles County
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
LTSS	Local Transit Systems Subcommittee
Metro	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
NTD	National Transit Database
Plan	Metro 2021-2024 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TNCs	Transportation Network Companies
TOC	Transit Oriented Communities
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
UZA	Urbanized Areas

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