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June 21, 2018

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON PAW
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: THERESE W. MCMILLAN TMC
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

SUBJECT: TRANSIT TO PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

ISSUE

On June 23, 2016, the Metro Board of Directors approved Motion File 2016-0511 directing an action plan to better connect communities to open space and parks. This board box provides a status update on the development of a plan.

BACKGROUND

In response to the board motion, Metro engaged a consultant in October 2017 to assess transit access to parks for communities, research best practices, and facilitate an advisory committee to develop a strategic plan that will include recommendations to improve transit access to parks. It is anticipated that the recommendations may include activities such as pilot projects, programs, and funding strategies to establish and/or support transit connections to parks.

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Analyze park access needs with a focus on park poor communities of need
- Review and evaluate prior efforts by Metro and other transit agencies to improve open space access
- Guide decision making on cost-effective future projects and investments
- Engage potential partners and other stakeholders
- Recommend potential Metro and partner activities to improve access to parks and open space

The project team is undertaking the following tasks to develop the strategic plan:

- *Advisory Committee:* Twenty-five stakeholders representing various CBOs and government agencies throughout Los Angeles County, were invited to participate in a total of four advisory committee meetings. Three of four advisory committee meetings have already convened. The committee provided input on how to define community need, identify parks and open spaces, and define types of transit connections. The committee also acted as a sounding board for data analysis. Stakeholders suggested relevant case studies and provided detailed information about specific communities and parks.
- *Case Studies:* The project team reviewed local and national case studies to determine best practices from other transit to parks projects. These case studies included park shuttles, public shuttles, education programs, incentive programs, and new technology. The case study research indicates the value of good partnerships, marketing and advertising, temporary pilot shuttles, community input on service and programs, and incorporating transportation demand management strategies. The Case Studies report is complete.
- *Data Analysis:* The intent of the data analysis is to: identify communities in need of better park access; identify desirable park and open space facilities around the county, and the need for transit connections between communities and parks. This analysis relied on input from the advisory committee, demographic information, transit data, and park data to identify communities that need better access to different types of parks and park amenities. The Data Analysis is complete.
- *Strategic Plan:* The Transit to Parks Strategic Plan will summarize the research and analysis above and put forth specific project recommendations and funding strategies.

NEXT STEPS

The project team will continue drafting the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan with input from the Advisory Committee. We expect that the Plan will be completed Fall 2018. The Plan and associated recommendations are anticipated to be completed in Fall 2018 and will be presented to the Metro Board.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Board Motion 2016-0511



Board Report

File #:2016-0511, File Type:Motion / Motion
Response

Agenda Number:52

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JUNE 23, 2016**

Motion by:

Directors Solis, Kuehl and Fasana

June 23, 2016

Transit to Open Space and Parks

Los Angeles County is a community rimmed by dramatic open spaces from the tranquil coasts to the rolling Santa Monica Mountains and vast deserts. The San Gabriel Mountains are closer to downtown Los Angeles than Denver is to the Rockies. Yet, access to the majestic places remains unattainable for many members of our community.

The purpose of this action is to develop a systematic plan for increasing access to parks and open space, countywide. This is a key priority for the region as demonstrated in the LA County Parks Needs Assessment and the Southern California Association of Governments' Long Range Transportation Plan highlighting a lack of access to the newly designated San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

In December of 2015, the Board affirmed its commitment to increasing access to parks and open space when it adopted performance measures for project in the Long Range Transportation Plan and Potential Ballot Measure that included Sustainability & Quality of Life and Accessibility. Both categories reference access to parks and open space. Metro has taken actions to provide access to green space to communities, but further gains in connecting people to open space could be achieved with more coordinated efforts.

Given that the Los Angeles Basin is home to 10+ million people, it is critical that we provide affordable, publically managed, transit to parks, open spaces, and publicly managed land. The LA basin is park-deficient-the only way we can ensure the health of Angelenos is by providing access to transit that connects communities, especially disadvantaged (income-poor and park-poor) communities to parks. For instance, 3 million people visited the San Gabriel National Monument last year, but there are no viable public transit options to access the area.

There are funding opportunities to support these programs at the federal, state and local levels, but a lack of coordination and information can prevent local municipalities and transit agencies from accessing these funds. Metro, as a regional leader, is uniquely able to help coordinate efforts and

assist public land managers, transit authorities, nonprofits and municipalities seeking to increase access to parks and open space.

MOTION by Solis, Kuehl, Fasana that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to report back to the Metro Board in October 2016 with an action plan to better connect communities to parks and open space. The plan shall include the following elements:

- A. An overview of existing transit system connections to parks and open space and identification of opportunities to increase access to parks and open space. This assessment should draw upon, but not be limited to, data from the following agencies:
1. the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation;
 2. the National Park Service;
 3. U.S. Forest Service;
 4. California State Parks;
 5. the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy;
 6. the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority; and
 7. Southern California Association of Governments.
- B. Identification of funding sources for transit to parks and open space including, but not limited to:
1. Federal Grants and Programs like the Federal Lands Access Program, the Federal Lands Transportation Program, the Transportation Alternatives Program, and the National Parks Service Challenge Cost Share Program;
 2. Existing eligible local revenue like Proposition A, Proposition C and Measure R;
 3. Nongovernmental and private partnerships; and
 4. Other Creative funding opportunities
- C. Methods to support the implementation of programs to connect communities to parks and open space, such as offering technical assistance and grants to jurisdictions.
- D. Recommendations to promote the usage of current services and the building of the new service including:
1. Shuttle services from transportation infrastructure such as MTA Metro Rail stations, busway stations, bus stops, and regional rail stations as connector hubs for direct shuttles to parks and

open space.

2. Prioritized services for communities with 20% lowest per capita open space acreage in the county; communities that have less than 3 acres of parkland per 1000 people, making them park poor, and incomes below \$48,706 median household income, making them income poor.
3. Connections to parks and opens space through active transportation corridors such as bike lanes, walkways and greenways.
4. Potential extensions of existing public transit bus lines to park and open space.

ADDITIONALLY WE MOVE that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to engage with other agencies with related planning processes such as the California Collaborative Regional Transportation Plan and the Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan and the United States Forest Service San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.