



Board Report

File #: 2018-0774, File Type: Plan

Agenda Number: 22.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE JUNE 19, 2019

SUBJECT: TRANSIT TO PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN

ACTION: ADOPT PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

ADOPT the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan.

ISSUE

In response to a Board Motion in June 2016 (Attachment A), Metro has completed the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan ("Plan", Attachment B) summarized in the Executive Summary (Attachment C). Adoption of the Plan by the Metro Board will: 1) affirm the Plan's analytical needs-based framework as a key tool for guiding equitable decision-making around transit to parks; and 2) provide tools and guidance for implementation of transit connections to parks.

BACKGROUND

In recent years, the completion of the Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment and the Angeles National Forest Transit Corridor Analysis, coupled with the passage of Measure A, have served to highlight the growing need for increasing access to parks and open space in Los Angeles County. Amidst growing community support and interest for improved and equitable park access, in June 2016, the Metro Board directed staff to prepare an action plan to better connect disadvantaged, park-poor communities with open spaces. With the support of an advisory committee, Metro prepared the Plan which includes a parks needs analysis, a needs-based framework for guiding decision-making, and potential activities for increasing access to parks and open spaces countywide, especially for communities of need. Consistent with Metro's Equity Platform, the Plan furthers Metro's commitment to working with historically underserved communities to establish meaningful equity goals that guide planning and investment.

DISCUSSION

As a blueprint to guide decision-making on transit access to parks in Los Angeles County, the Plan identifies pilot projects and supporting implementation activities that can be undertaken by entities in Los Angeles County to improve transit access to parks for communities that have high need for park access. The sections below describe the process for developing the Plan as well as key components

in the Plan.

Process

The project team undertook several steps to develop the Plan including researching case studies to identify national best practices for improving access to parks and open space and performing user surveys in partnership with First 5 LA. In addition, an advisory committee was formed consisting of representatives from community organizations along with local and regional entities with expertise in parks and communities that lack access to quality parks. The advisory committee has been instrumental in helping shape and guide the Plan to completion.

To identify strategies that close access gaps to high quality parks and open space, the team developed a needs-based framework and identified potential priority connections between 80 “communities of interest” and 200 “parks of interest”. Consistent with the directing motion, the project team utilized a data-driven approach including analyzing Los Angeles County’s Parks Needs Assessment database and existing transit connections, complemented by input from the advisory committee. The resulting maps provide a framework that can be used by an implementing agency to identify potential transit connections and inform necessary community outreach.

Plan Overview

The Plan includes results of the case study research, maps depicting connections between communities and parks, potential access solution types, potential pilot projects, and overall program and policy guidance to support transit to parks investments. Examples of potential implementation activities in the Plan include: transit to parks branding; marketing campaigns; wayfinding signage; inclusion of key parks in service planning and first/last mile planning analysis; parks educational components; and grant-writing support. In addition, the Plan identifies four potential pilot projects focused on expanding bus/shuttle connections between communities of interest and parks of interest including: 1) Metro Line 212 Extension; 2) Hansen Dam Circulator; 3) Beach Circulator (BCT 109 Frequency Improvements); and 4) Chantry Flat Connector.

The implementation activities described in the Plan include suggestions on potential entities, including Metro, best positioned to implement transit to parks strategies, either individually or through partnerships. A matrix summarizing potential implementation activities is attached to this report (Attachment D) and identifies Metro’s potential role either as a lead or in a support capacity as part of a partnership. The matrix categorizes each potential activity based on the anticipated level of Metro resources needed to complete the work as follows:

Category 1: Existing - Low: can be integrated into existing/ongoing work such as the NextGen Study.

Category 2: New - Medium: requires a medium level of additional resources such as providing grant-writing support services to partner organizations.

Category 3: New - High: requires a high level of additional resources such as expanded Metro service.

Metro is committed to implementing *Category 1* activities as part of carrying out its existing work program and projects. For activities designated as *Category 2* or *3*, Metro will examine funding opportunities on a case-by-case basis, including working with partner organizations to help identify

new resources for implementation.

Equity Platform

The Plan creates a needs-based framework that will feature equity in future transit to parks decision-making. Additionally, through both user surveys and the guidance of subject matter experts on the advisory committee, Metro was able to ensure that on-the-ground experiences, particularly in disadvantaged communities, informed the Plan development. With the Plan, Metro has laid out a blueprint to address inequities in park access decision-making and investment and identified specific opportunities for Metro and its partners to implement solutions for addressing inequity in park access.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The adoption of the Transit to Parks Strategic Plan will not have any adverse safety impacts on Metro employees and patrons.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Adoption of this Plan has no direct financial impact to the budget. However, ongoing coordination would include Metro staff time and resources. Furthermore, any implementation of the Plan's *Category 2* (New - Medium) and *Category 3* (New - High) resource needs as described in Attachment C would require a range of additional funding and staff resources, to be determined on a case-by-case basis by department and business unit impacted by additional workload.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Plan aims to further Strategic Plan Goal #1: Providing high quality mobility options including Strategic Plan Initiative 1.1: Target infrastructure and service investments toward those with the greatest mobility needs. It accomplishes this by establishing a data-driven and needs-based framework for guiding future investment.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could decide to not adopt the Plan. This alternative is not recommended because this Plan fulfills the June 2016 Board Motion and was developed through extensive data analysis and expertise from the advisory committee.

NEXT STEPS

The Plan includes a series of potential pilot projects, programs, and initiatives which are summarized in Attachment D, including categorization of anticipated level of Metro effort in leading or supporting the activity. Metro intends to implement *Category 1* (Existing-Low) activities as part of carrying out its existing work program. Metro will continue working with our partners to identify new resources for implementing additional activities in the Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Board Motion #2016-0511

Attachment B - Transit to Parks Strategic Plan

Attachment C - Transit to Parks Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Attachment D - Implementation Matrix

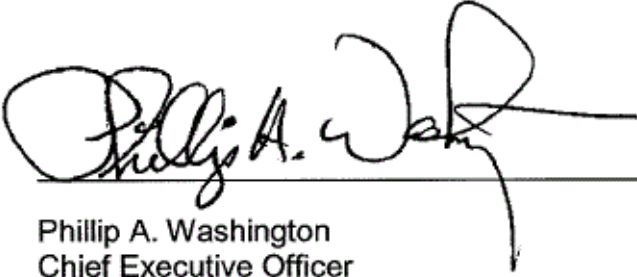
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Metro

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

as amended by Director Solis

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.

SOLIS AMENDMENT: Include rivers and mountains conservancy and water conservation authority.

Attachment B- Transit to Parks Strategic Plan

The Metro Transit to Parks Strategic Plan can be accessed here:

http://media.metro.net.s3.amazonaws.com/projects_studies/toc/images/nextStop_transitToParks_05-2019.pdf

Metro Transit to Parks Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Metro's Transit to Parks Strategic Plan presents a systematic vision for increasing access to parks and open space countywide. The goal is to find targeted, holistic ways to increase access to parks and open spaces, especially for communities of need. These communities, especially those that are not within walking distance or without convenient public transit to a park, are the focus of the Plan. Expanding access is a key priority for the region as demonstrated in the Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment and the Southern California Association of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan, both of which highlight a lack of park and open space access. LA County has a wealth of open space and recreational assets, but often these places are out of reach for County residents, particularly lower income, disadvantaged communities. Metro is committed to initiating partnerships and finding ways to increase access to parks and open spaces for LA County.

Chapter 1: Setting the Stage

This chapter identifies how the Plan supports Metro's Values and Goals. It also identifies associated efforts within Metro including Vision 2028, Long Range Transportation Plan, NextGen, First/Last Mile Strategic Plan, and Active Transportation Strategic Plan, as well as local and regional efforts for transit to parks.

Chapter 2: Process and Methodology

This chapter describes the data-based analysis that served as the foundation for the Plan. It highlights the advisory committee's role in selecting appropriate data points to identify high need communities and high quality parks. It describes the mapping analyses of the community, transit, and park data layers that generated a list and map of potential connections between communities in need and high quality local and regional parks.

Chapter 3: Case Studies

This chapter describes 15 local and national transit to parks case studies. It identifies 10 lessons learned that can be applied to support transit to parks efforts.

Chapter 4: Making the Connections

This chapter describes how the data analysis results (Chapter 2) and the lessons learned from the case studies (Chapter 3) can be applied to creating successful transit to parks projects. The chapter describes five different types of transit services ("access solutions") that can be applied to transit to parks. It also proposes four pilot solutions as examples for how the access solutions can connect communities with high quality local and regional parks as well as beaches and mountains. Finally, this chapter identifies supportive programs and initiatives that can be undertaken to support transit to parks.

Chapter 5: Getting There

This chapter provides a road map for Metro and Countywide partners to move forward to transit to parks planning and implementation. It includes a list of local, regional, state, and federal funding sources and identifies what types of transit to parks projects they could fund.

SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

FY20 budget, as proposed, does not assume any new Transit to Parks activities, as such, new activities require funding to be identified.

PILOT PROJECTS				
NAME	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE	POSSIBLE ROLES / DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL METRO ACTIVITY	METRO DEPARTMENT	METRO RESOURCE CATEGORY
Metro Line 212 Extension	Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program/ Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program/ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program	METRO LEAD: Improve direct access to Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area from the surrounding community and transfer access from Inglewood Transit Center by increasing service levels on the Metro 212 line.	Operations	New: High
Hansen Dam Circulator (DASH Pacoima)	LADOT, Measure A, Clear Transportation Funding/ Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program/ Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program/ Federal Lands Access Program/ BUILD Program	EXTERNAL PARTNER LEAD METRO SUPPORT: LADOT is developing a new DASH Pacoima route by 2020/2021 that would include a stop in Hansen Dam park. Metro support role may include marketing, grant writing services, and First/Last Mile planning.	Communications; Planning (Financial Planning, Programming, Grants, TOC & First/Last Mile)	New: Medium
Beach Circulator (BCT 109 Frequency Improvements)	Measure A, Clear Transportation Funding/ Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program/ Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program/ Federal Lands Access Program/ BUILD Program	EXTERNAL PARTNER LEAD METRO SUPPORT: Provide beach access and alternative to parking for local residents of Willowbrook, Athens, and Westmont; Green and Silver Line riders. Metro support role may include things like grant writing services and a cross-promotional partnership with Beach Cities Transit, on a case-by-case basis.	Communications; Planning (Financial Planning, Programming, Grants, TOC); Operations (Stops & Zones)	New: Medium
Chantry Flat Connector	Measure A, Clear Transportation Funding/ Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program/ Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program/ Federal Lands Access Program/ BUILD Program	EXTERNAL PARTNER LEAD METRO SUPPORT: Connect Arcadia and the LA County rail network to Chantry Flat. Metro support role may include things like grant writing services and a cross-promotional partnership with Arcadia Transit/City of Arcadia.	Communications; Planning (Financial Planning, Programming, Grants, TOC); Operations (Stops & Zones)	New: Medium

SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

IMPLEMENTATION TASK	AGENCIES INVOLVED	POSSIBLE ROLES / DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL METRO ACTIVITY	METRO DEPARTMENT	METRO RESOURCE CATEGORY
1. Help People Find Their Way				
1.1 Evaluate need and develop First/Last Mile Pathway wayfinding strategies. <i>(To be deployed on a project- or program-specific basis)</i>	Transit providers Countywide Cities and municipal agencies Park Management Agencies / Operators/ Metro	<u>EXTERNAL PARTNER LEAD</u> METRO SUPPORT: Wayfinding strategies to link Communities of Interest and Parks of Interest within easy walking distance of transit stations and stops could be researched and developed, as informed by market research. Strategies might include the creation of new wayfinding guidelines to assist municipalities in the programming and design of pathways to link parks with transit and vice-versa.	Communications	New: High
1.2 Include transit connections to parks and open spaces on maps.	Transit providers Countywide/ Metro	<u>EXTERNAL PARTNER LEAD</u> METRO SUPPORT: When appropriate, depending on design feasibility and funding availability, add Facilities of Interest to selected Metro maps. If funding is secured, Metro or supporting agencies could create a map dedicated to identifying the many transit-to-parks connections throughout Los Angeles County.	Communications (Marketing)	New: Medium
1.3 Identify funding to support a communications strategy. <i>(To be deployed on a project- or program-specific basis)</i>	Metro	<u>METRO LEAD:</u> Metro could conduct market research and develop a communications strategy, if funding is identified.	Communications	New: High
2. Make it Easier				
2.1 Existing service could be reviewed from an operational perspective to ensure efficient and quality access to parks.	Transit providers Countywide/ Metro	<u>METRO LEAD:</u> NextGen can refer to priority parks and communities (identified in the Transit to Parks analysis) as part of decision-making during NextGen service development.	Operations (Next Gen)	Existing: Low
2.2 Use transit vehicles that are transit to parks friendly.	Cities and municipal agencies. Community-Based Organizations/ Non-Profits/ Park Management Agencies/ Operators / Metro	<u>EXTERNAL PARTNER LEAD</u> METRO SUPPORT: If funding for privately contracted shuttles is secured, Metro could serve as a coordinator by assigning a pickup/drop-off location and coordinating schedules for shuttles that required access to a Metro rail station or stop.	Operations	New: Medium
2.3 Add transit to parks information on metro.net.	Metro/SCAG	<u>METRO LEAD:</u> Develop publicly-accessible webpage to house Transit to Parks information.	Planning, Communications	Existing: Low

SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

IMPLEMENTATION TASK	AGENCIES INVOLVED	POSSIBLE ROLES / DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL METRO ACTIVITY	METRO DEPARTMENT	METRO RESOURCE CATEGORY
2.4 Support First/Last Mile improvements that encourage safe walking and biking access to parks.	Cities and municipal agencies/ Community-Based Organization/ Non-Profits, Park Management Agencies/ Operators	METRO LEAD / SUPPORT: Include FLM connections to identified Facilities of Interest (p.79 of Plan) as part of FLM work program.	Planning (TOC First/Last Mile)	Existing: Low
3. Make it Fun to Use Parks				
3.1 Initiate educational components at park destinations as well as on Transit to Parks shuttles, buses, or other Transit to Parks infrastructure.	Transit providers Countywide Community-Based Organizations/ Non-Profits, Park Management Agencies/ Operators/ Local Schools/ Youth Groups/ Metro	EXTERNAL PARTNER LEAD METRO SUPPORT: Any educational program should be led/facilitated by the service operator that has secured funding for a shuttle to operate within Transit to Parks program. On a project specific basis, following market research and if funding is secured, Metro support may include a marketing campaign featured in the shuttle or other connecting transit buses or trains.	Communications	New: Medium
4. Make it Last				
4.1 Prioritize transit to parks as an ongoing initiative at the County and local levels.	Transit providers Countywide/ Metro/ Cities and Municipal Agencies/ Metro	METRO LEAD: Metro should reference the community-park connections (identified in the Transit to Parks data analysis) when planning existing and future efforts. For example, the community-park connections should be a consideration in NextGen planning and in siting bike share stations.	Planning, Operations	Existing: Low
4.2 Provide grant-writing support for Transit to Parks projects and initiatives.	Metro	METRO LEAD Provide grant-writing support services to organizations that wish to apply for grant funds identified in the plan to support pilot solutions and other community-supported transit to parks projects.	Planning (Financial Planning, Programming, and Grants; TOC)	New: Medium
4.3 Revisit the data analysis every 5 years in coordination with LA County Department of Parks and Recreation.	Metro	METRO LEAD: Re-run formulas to generate new priority lists depending on need and changes in park amenities and demographics, potentially every 5 years.	Planning (TOC First/Last Mile)	New: Medium
4.4 Initiate demand management at parks to encourage transit-use.	Park management agencies	EXTERNAL PARTNER LEAD METRO SUPPORT: Metro could coordinate with park management agencies and/or prioritize transit to parks projects where transit demand management strategies are in place.	Planning (TOC First/Last Mile)	New: Medium



Next stop: more access to parks and open space

Transit to Parks Strategic Plan

Planning and Programming Committee

June 19, 2019



Recommendation

- **ADOPT** Transit to Parks Strategic Plan



Background

- Community need and interest for increasing park access
- June 2016 Board motion called for action plan to **better connect communities to parks** including:
 - Analysis of existing transit to parks connections and opportunities to increase access, particularly for park-poor disadvantaged communities
 - Recommendations to promote existing park connections and identify opportunities for new transit to parks service and connection
 - Strategies and programs to support implementation including identification of funding sources

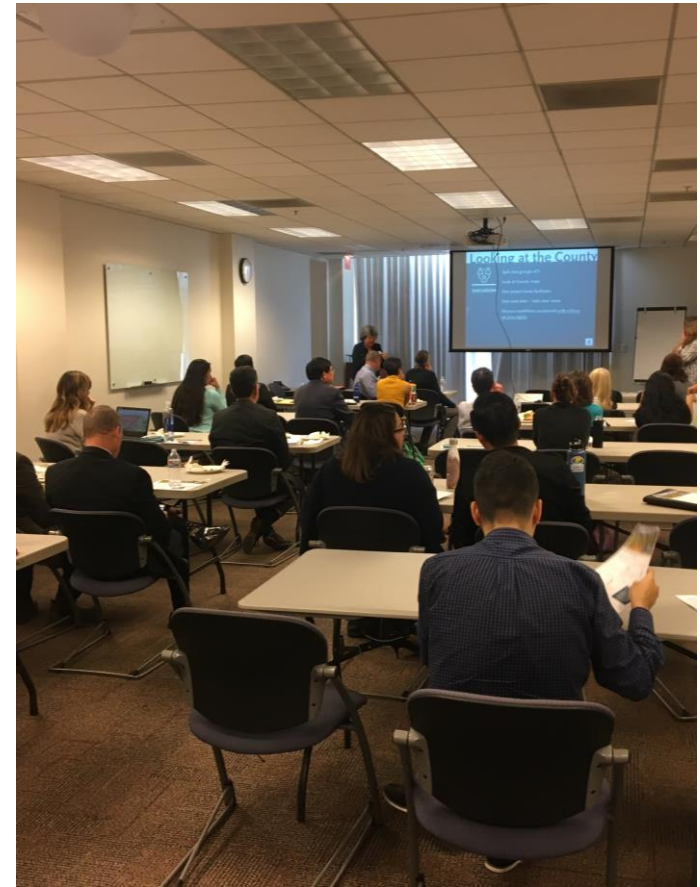
Strategic Plan Overview

Process

- ***Advisory committee*** comprised of government agencies and CBOs
- ***Surveys*** of park users from disadvantaged communities in partnership with First 5 LA

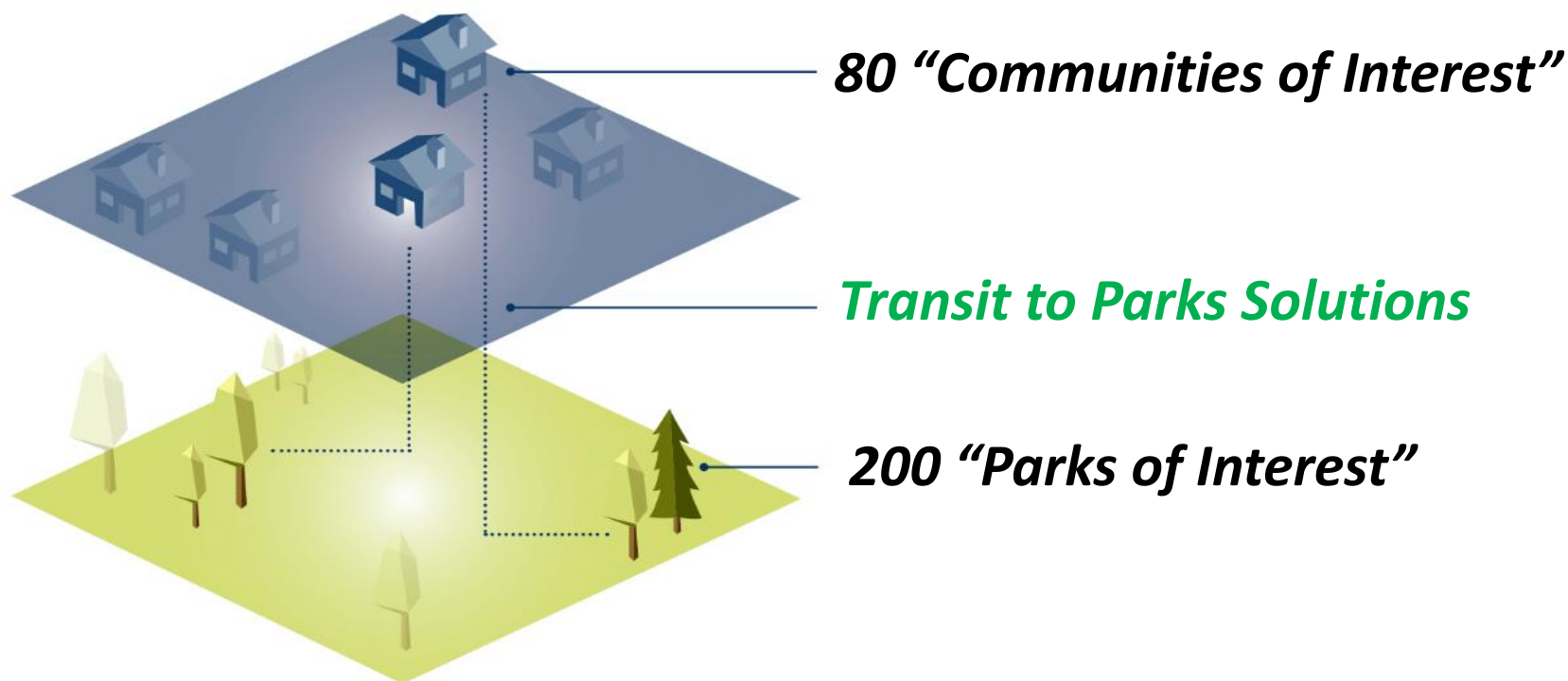
Plan Elements

- Case Studies
- Data Analysis and Mapping
- Recommendations



Data Analysis

- ***Prioritized and mapped connections*** between high-need communities and high-quality parks based on LA County Parks Needs Assessment and stakeholder input



Equity Platform

- 1. *Define and Measure:*** Plan creates a needs-based framework that will feature equity in decision-making.
- 2. *Listen and Learn:*** Advisory Committee played vital, participatory role in planning process; User surveys
- 3. *Focus and Deliver:*** Plan is a blueprint to address inequities in park access



Supportive Programs and Initiatives

- Plan serves as a ***strategic roadmap*** with a menu of supportive programs and initiatives to consider:
 - ❖ Park access prioritization
 - ❖ Grant-writing support
 - ❖ Mapping and data portal
 - ❖ Park-friendly vehicles
 - ❖ Marketing and incentives
 - ❖ Others
- Identifies four potential ***pilot projects***
 - Programs and projects subject to further market research and community engagement on case-by-case basis



Supportive Programs and Initiatives

- Plan identifies ***potential funding sources*** and opportunities for agencies and organizations to ***leverage partnerships*** in improving access to parks and open space
- Potential ***Metro role*** in supporting programs and initiatives are categorized by anticipated resource level:

LOW - EXISTING

No to minimal additional resources for existing work

MEDIUM - NEW

Medium level of additional resources

HIGH - NEW

High level of additional resources

Thank you