



## Board Report

File #: 2020-0810, File Type: Informational Report

Agenda Number: 31.

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### OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE JANUARY 21, 2021

**SUBJECT: MOTION 22.1: NEXTGEN BUS SPEED ENGINEERING WORKING GROUP STATUS UPDATE**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE the status report in response to Motion 22.1 entitled NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group (July 2019). This update provides details regarding a technical working group appointed by Metro and its efforts to coordinate with a complementary group from Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to develop a work program to improve bus priority and assess the need to coordinate with other jurisdictions and municipal operators.

#### **ISSUE**

In July 2019, the Board approved Motion 22.1 entitled NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group as part of the NextGen Service Concept. This motion requests the following:

- A. Develop a list of priority bus supportive infrastructure projects needed to support the NextGen bus service plan, with an emphasis on near-term improvements that can be implemented concurrently with each phase of NextGen;
- B. Form a NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group co-chaired by the Metro CEO and the General Manager (GM) of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), or their designees, and establish a regular meeting schedule, at least monthly;
- C. Assess the need for coordination with additional local jurisdictions and municipal operators where bus delay hotspots exist; and
- D. Report back to the Operations, Safety and Customer Experience Committee on the above in April 2020, and quarterly thereafter.

This report provides a status update for FY21 Q2 on the response to Motion 22.1.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In July 2018, the Board adopted Motion 38.1, endorsing travel speed, service frequency, and system reliability as the highest priority service design objectives for the NextGen Bus Study. These objectives were incorporated into the Regional Service Concept approved by the Board in July 2019, which provides the framework for restructuring Metro's bus routes and schedules.

Concurrent to the approval of the Regional Service Concept, the Board approved Motion 22.1: Engineering Working Group, which provides direction to staff to establish a partnership between Metro and LADOT to identify, design, fund and implement transit supportive infrastructure to speed up transit service as part of the NextGen Bus Plan.

The Metro CEO appointed a Technical Working Group focused on identifying, planning, designing and implementing bus speed and reliability improvements. This group, consisting of Metro Service Planning, will work in close partnership with LADOT's equivalent technical team, consisting of Traffic Operations, Active Transportation, Vision Zero, and Transportation Planning Groups, meeting on a regular basis (every 2-4 weeks) to ensure ongoing coordination and advancement of the program. Additional Metro departments (e.g. Communications, Planning, OMB, OEI, Program Management, Security), as well as other municipal traffic departments and transit operators, will be engaged as needed when specific projects have been defined and advanced towards design and implementation.

An External Affairs Working Group was also established as a subcommittee of the Technical Working Group. It is comprised of staff from Metro Community Relations, LADOT External Affairs, StreetsLA, the Los Angeles Mayor's Office, Metro Board Staff and Metro Service Planning. Their work focuses on coordinating to communicate with and prepare communities for coming improvements including identifying and addressing potential impacts, as well as coordinating outreach and engagement efforts for these projects.

At major milestones and as needed, the Technical Working Group will report on progress to the Metro CEO and LADOT's GM, and/or their designees, to seek direction on goals and objectives of the Technical Working Group, as well as policy guidance on balancing priorities for roadway and curb space.

## **DISCUSSION**

Since the last update provided to the Board on October 15, 2020, the Technical Working Group has met regularly on the following:

### **Alvarado Street Bus Priority Lane**

In partnership with LADOT and Caltrans, the Technical Working Group is studying the feasibility and impacts of converting the peak hour, curbside mixed flow lane into a bus priority lane on Alvarado Street from 7<sup>th</sup> Street to Sunset Boulevard.

- Weekdays between 7:00-10:00 AM Southbound // 3:00-7:00 PM Northbound
- Typically, 8 buses per hour use Alvarado, which equates to one bus every 7 ½ minutes
- Significant equity benefits for transit riders on Alvarado Street
  - Over 12,000 boardings per weekday (pre-COVID) on Alvarado
  - 94% of bus riders on Alvarado do not own or have access to a car and therefore rely on Metro bus service
  - 77% of bus riders on Alvarado use Metro bus service at least five days per week
  - 63% of bus riders on Alvarado are below the poverty line

- 96% of bus riders on Alvarado are people of color (POC)
- Aligned with LADOT's Vision Zero goals, Bus Priority Lanes have been shown to improve overall traffic and pedestrian safety by reducing accidents caused by aggressive lane weaving, excessive speeding and failure to yield
- Curbside parking would remain during midday, evening and weekends (outside of proposed bus priority lane hours) and curbside parking would always generally be available on at least one side of the street, where it exists today
- Minor impacts to traffic flow could be expected of up to 90 seconds additional, pre-COVID drive time, or approximately one red light cycle

Community outreach for the Alvarado Bus Priority Lane is expected to begin in January 2021, with a goal for implementation in Spring 2021.

### Grand Avenue & Olive Street Bus Priority Lanes

In May 2020, LADOT reported that the Working Group identified Grand Avenue (southbound) and Olive Street (northbound) as high frequency bus corridors that would benefit from bus priority lanes. In coordination with StreetsLA's ADAPT resurfacing program, LADOT designed and relocated the existing bike lanes on both one-way corridors to the left side of the roadway to reduce conflicts with transit and allow for future bus priority lanes. The joint working group anticipates that community outreach for these dedicated bus lanes will begin in Spring 2021, with a goal of implementation by Summer 2021.

- Weekdays between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM
- Typically, over 60 buses per hour use either Grand Avenue or Olive Street, which equates to one bus every minute
- Benefits to bus riders using routes from South LA, San Gabriel Valley and Gateway Cities
- Benefits to municipal transit operators LADOT DASH, Foothill Transit Commuter Express and Torrance Transit 4X

### Looking Ahead

The NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group is continuing to discuss and analyze future corridors along key arterials for equitable opportunities and are actively collaborating with partner agencies and stakeholders. Staff plans to provide further details about these corridors in the next quarterly update in April 2021.

Additionally, Metro is working with LADOT to expand TSP to more buses and along non-TSP Tier 1 corridors under the NextGen Bus Plan. Today, only Metro Rapid (Red) buses receive TSP, which can extend green lights to prioritize certain buses. Given the NextGen Bus Plan to combine the best of Metro Rapid priority attributes with Metro Local access for all riders, Metro is exploring the viability to install TSP transponders on its entire 2,300 bus fleet and work with LADOT to increase opportunities for Metro buses to receive signal prioritization along Metro Tier 1 bus routes.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

This report does not have a negative effect on the safety of our customers or employees.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Recommendations support strategic plans:

**Goal #1:** Provide high quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling. Improving the speed and reliability of the bus network will reduce transit travel times, as well as improve competitiveness with other transportation options.

**Goal #2:** Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system. These initiatives help to move more people within the same street capacity, where currently transit users suffer service delays and reliability issues because of single occupant drivers.

**Goal #3:** Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. With faster transit service and improved reliability, residents have increased access to education and employment, including Cal State LA Station, with greater confidence that they will reach their destination on time.

**Goal #4:** Transform Los Angeles County through regional collaboration and national leadership. Because Metro does not have jurisdiction over local streets and arterials, collaboration with other partner agencies such as LADOT, City and County of Los Angeles are necessary to ensure these speed and reliability improvements are successfully implemented.

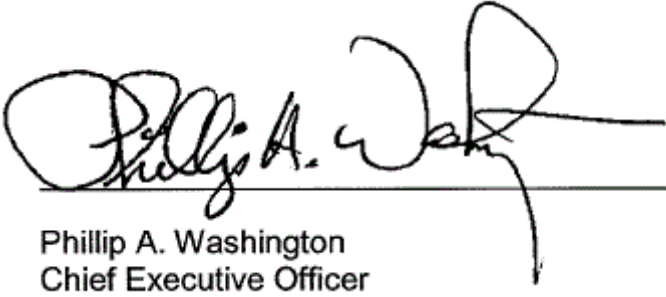
### **NEXT STEPS**

Metro and LADOT will continue to collaborate on implementing transit supportive infrastructure and provide quarterly progress reports to the Board.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Motion 22.1

**Prepared by:** Stephen Tu, Director, Service Planning, (213) 418-3005  
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**Reviewed by:** James T. Gallagher, Chief Operations Officer, (213) 418-3108



Phillip A. Washington  
Chief Executive Officer



## Board Report

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**File #:** 2019-0572, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

**Agenda Number:** 22.1

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### REGULAR BOARD MEETING JULY 25, 2019

#### Motion by:

#### **DIRECTORS BONIN, GARCETTI, KREKORIAN, SOLIS AND GARCIA**

Related to Item 22: NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group

In June 2018, the Metro Board endorsed speed, frequency, and reliability as the highest priorities for Metro's bus service in the NextGen Bus Study. In recent years, the primary contributor to slow speeds and poor schedule reliability has been growing traffic congestion on city streets. This congestion directly increases Metro's operating costs and reduces the quality of the service that Metro can afford to provide. Providing high-quality transit options with competitive travel times is the single most important step Metro can take to retain and grow ridership, increase the carrying capacity of local roadways, and shift regional travel patterns toward more efficient modes. These goals are essential components of both Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan and the City of Los Angeles' Mobility Plan 2035 and Sustainable City pLAN.

The phenomenon of traffic congestion impeding mass transit operations is particularly acute in Downtown Los Angeles and nearby neighborhoods -- and the experience of the recent Flower Street pilot bus lane has demonstrated the effectiveness of strategic bus-supportive infrastructure in allowing transit riders to bypass congestion. Other types of bus-supportive infrastructure may include queue jumpers, signal priority, or boarding islands. Combined with operational improvements like All Door Boarding, these types of infrastructure improvements can cut stop times and improve bus speeds by 20% or more.

Metro buses operate on streets controlled by local jurisdictions. Therefore, close coordination between Metro and local agency partners is essential to successfully implement infrastructure changes. A working group is needed to ensure close coordination between Metro's Operations Department and city transportation agencies.

**SUBJECT: NEXTGEN BUS SPEED ENGINEERING WORKING GROUP**

APPROVE Motion by Directors Bonin, Garcetti, Krekorian, Solis and Garcia that the Board direct the CEO to:

- A. Develop a list of priority bus-supportive infrastructure projects needed to support the NextGen bus service plan, with an emphasis on near-term improvements that can be implemented concurrently with each phase of NextGen;
- B. Form a NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group co-chaired by the Metro CEO and the General Manager of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, or their designees, and establish a regular meeting schedule, at least monthly;
- C. Assess the need for coordination with additional local jurisdictions and municipal operators where bus delay hotspots exist; and
- D. Report back to the Operations, Safety, and Customer Experience Committee on the above in October 2019, and quarterly thereafter.

ITEM 31



# NEXTGEN Bus Plan

## Bus Speed Engineering Working Group Update



Metro®

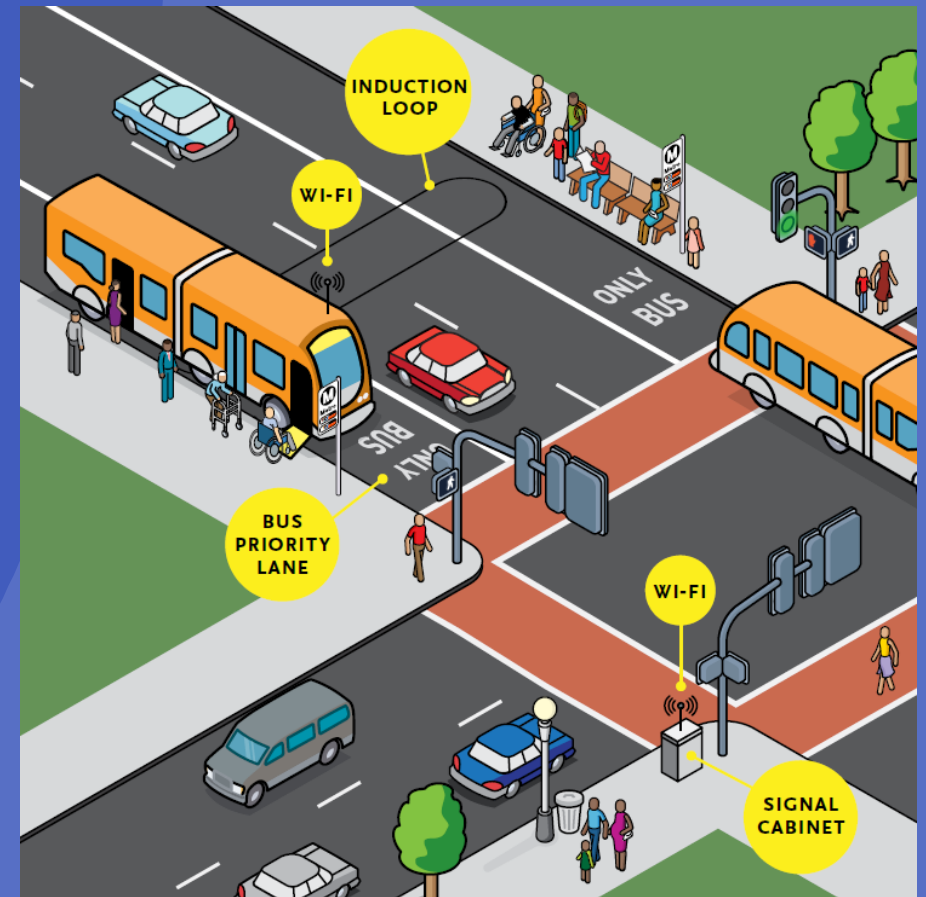
JANUARY 2021



# Background

Pursuant to Motion 22.1 (July 2019)

- Develop a list of priority bus supportive infrastructure projects to support NextGen Bus Plan
- Form a Working Group co-chaired by the Metro CEO and GM of LADOT, or their designees, and establish a regular meeting schedule
- Assess need for coordination with additional local jurisdictions and municipal operators where bus delay hotspots exist
- Report back to Operations, Safety and Customer Experience Committee on a quarterly basis



## Meeting Frequencies

Since the last update provided to the Board in Oct 2020:

- **Technical Working Group** has been meeting on a monthly basis
- **External Affairs Working Group** has been meeting on a bi-weekly basis

# Flower St Bus Lane (DTLA)



Investing in Place  
@InvestinPlace



This bus only lane got us like 🥳 Today the @metrolosangeles bus only lane opened on Flower #betterbusesforla #GoMetro @CurrenDPriceJr @josehuizar @MayorOfLA @LADOTofficial @metrolosangeles



1,002 9:28 PM - Jun 3, 2019

238 people are talking about this

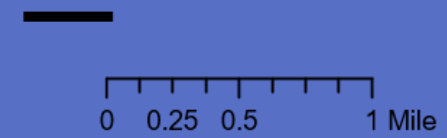
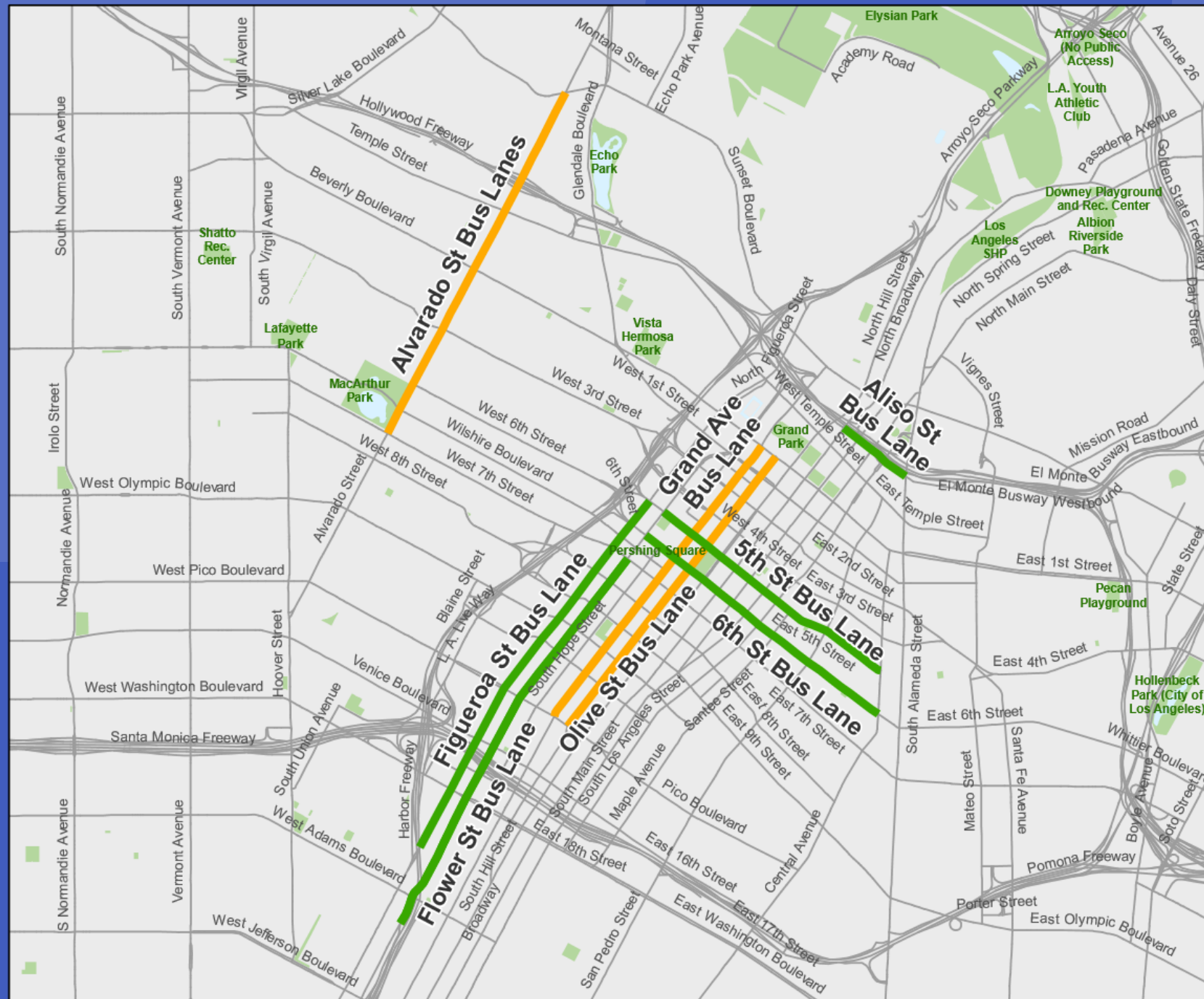
# Bus Lane Projects

Downtown LA Detail Map  
DRAFT, 12/11/2020



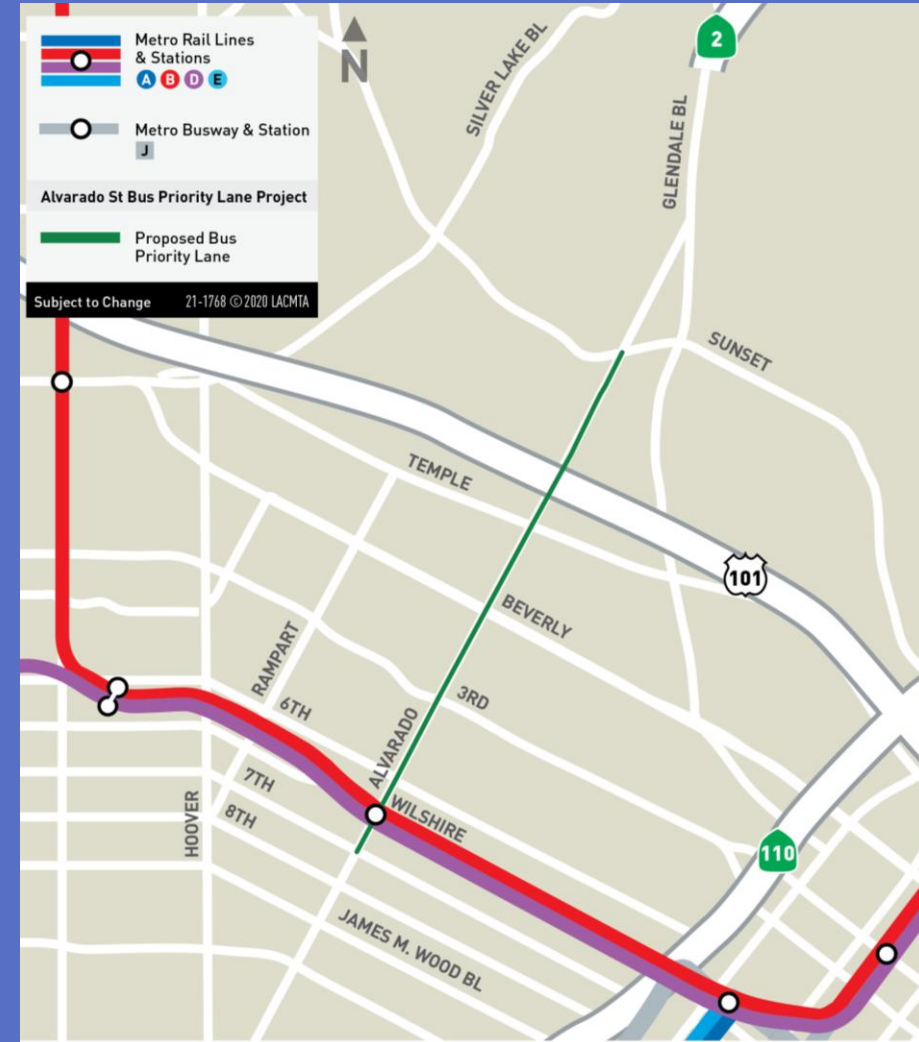
## Bus Lanes

- Completed Corridors
- In-Progress Corridors



# Alvarado St Peak Bus Priority Lane

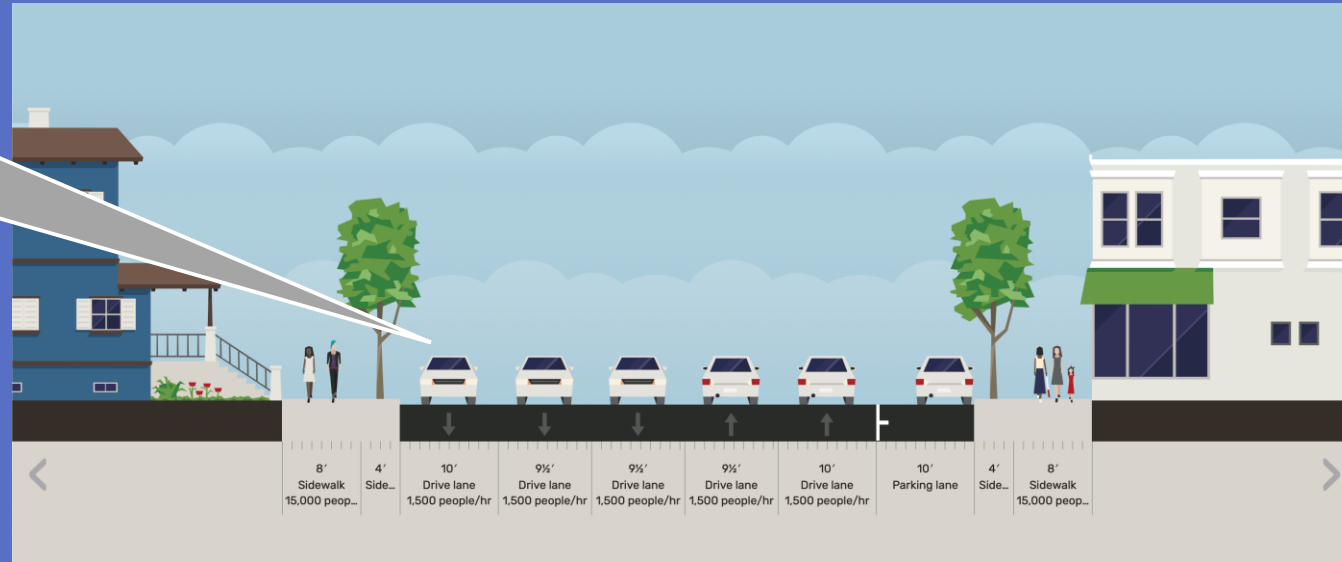
- 1.7 miles from Westlake/MacArthur Park to Sunset Blvd
- Proposed hours are southbound 7-10am and northbound 3-7pm
- Over 12,000 boardings per day
- Significant equity benefits
  - 94% of riders do NOT own or have access to a car
  - 2 out of 3 riders do NOT transfer from another line, indicating they live and/or work in the immediate area
  - Nearly 9 in 10 Alvarado bus riders are people of color (POC)
  - 6 in 10 Alvarado bus riders are below the poverty line
  - Nearly all Alvarado bus riders use Metro at least several times per week, indicating they rely on good transit service within the community
- Improves overall safety and aligned with Vision Zero program
- Maintains street parking on weeknights, weekends and most of midday
- Conducting stakeholder outreach now and plan to incorporate input to open in Spring 2021



# Alvarado St Peak Bus Priority Lane

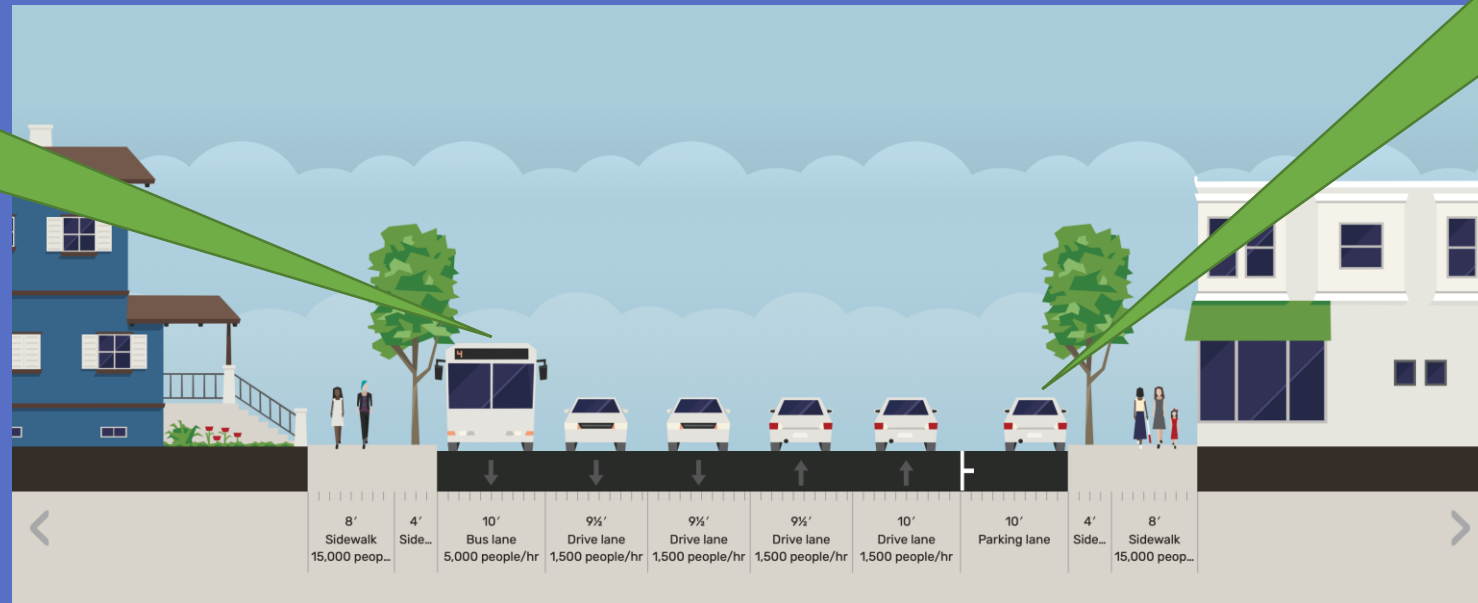


Today's Curbside Lane:  
Mixed flow traffic  
during peak period



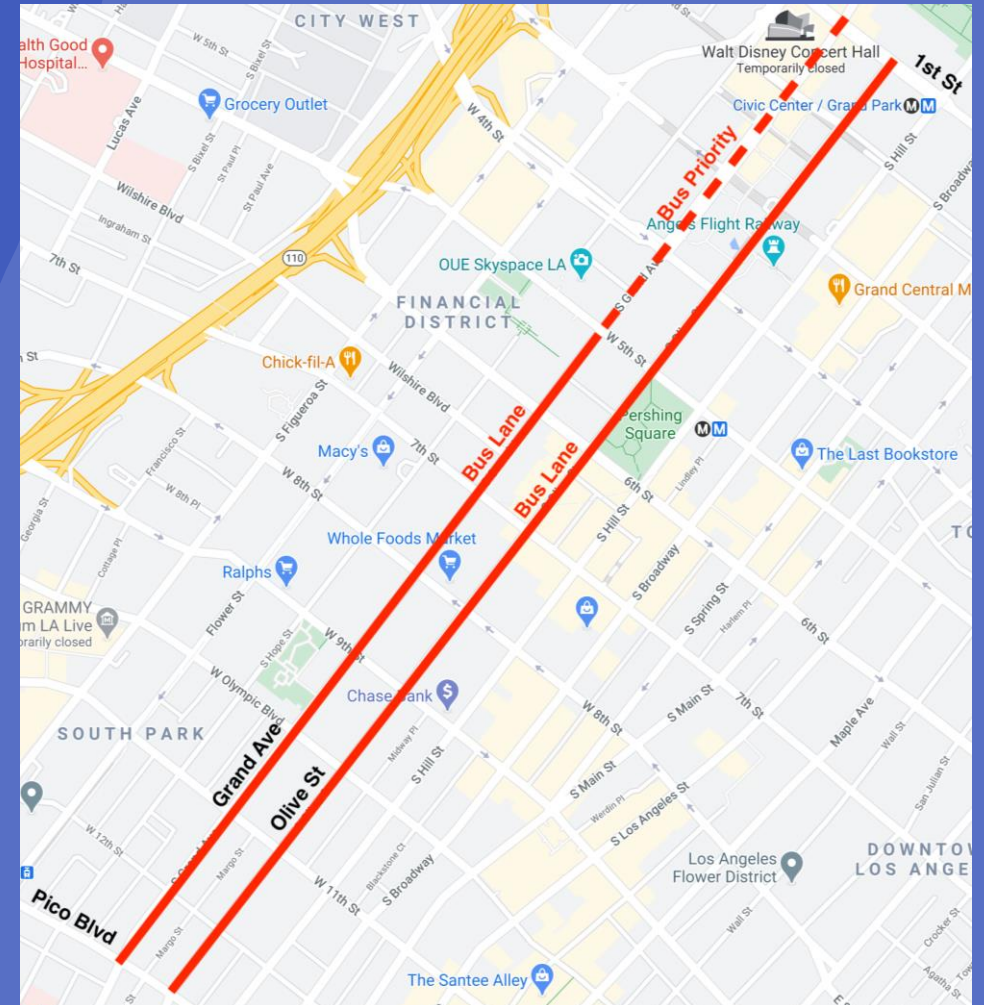
Curbside  
parking  
available  
on other  
side at all  
times

Proposed Curbside Lane:  
Buses & Right Turns Only  
during peak period



# Grand Av-Olive St Bus Priority Lanes

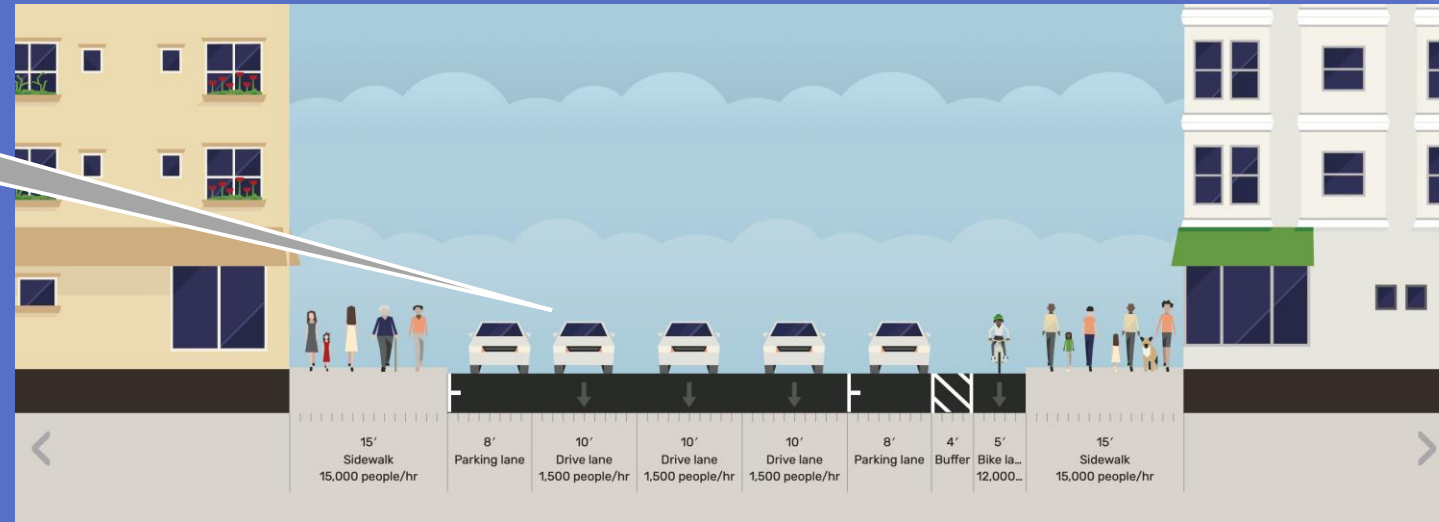
- 1.5 miles from 1<sup>st</sup> St (Civic Center) to Pico Blvd (South Park)
- Proposed hours are weekdays 7am-7pm
- Up to 60 buses per hour (1 bus per minute)
- Aligned with StreetsLA ADAPT program
- Maintains curbside parking
- Buffered bike lane on left hand side of road
- Stakeholder outreach to begin in Spring 2021 and plan to incorporate input to open in Summer 2021



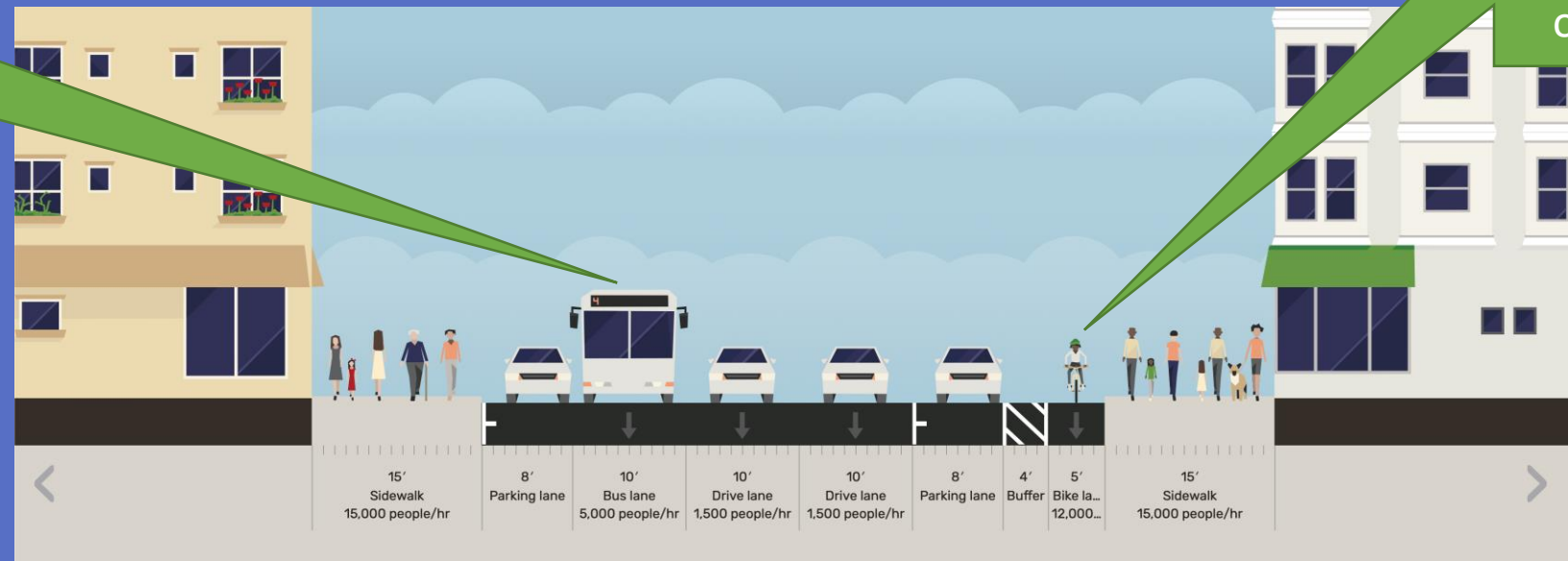
# Grand Av-Olive St Bus Priority Lane



Today's Right Lane:  
Mixed flow traffic



Proposed Right Lane:  
Buses & Right Turns Only  
during peak period  
Curbside parking available



New  
buffered  
bike lane  
on left  
hand side  
of road

# Looking Ahead

- Working Group continues to discuss and analyze future corridors for equitable opportunities with ongoing collaboration with partner agencies and stakeholders
- Metro working with LADOT and others to expand “Transit Priority Signaling” (TPS)
- Previously, only Metro Rapid (Red) buses received priority
- Expanding All Door Boarding to future lines to reduce delays at bus stops and improve customer experience
- Next quarterly report expected in April 2021

