



The Los Angeles Metro Board
c/o Philip Washington, CEO
1 Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Disability & Senior Communities & New Investments

Dear LA Metro Board Members,

In May 2015, Metro released a draft of its 2016-2019 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (the Plan) for Los Angeles County that “seeks to provide current information about the mobility needs and gaps of four Los Angeles County populations: older adults and persons with disabilities...persons of low income and military veterans are included as other groups with specialized mobility concerns and needs”. The Plan outlines five goals and 37 strategies by which to address the identified mobility needs and gaps. We, the undersigned, support these goals and strategies and we urge you to incorporate them into the Long Range Transportation Plan and ultimately support them with the necessary level of funding for full implementation.

Prior to the release of the Coordinated Plan, Move LA and approximately 150 disability advocates concerned about transportation, met on several occasions to generate a list of priority issues, policies and processes that reinforce recommendations in the Plan. In the LRTP and in an inclusive transit ballot measure, we have the opportunity to not only acknowledge and develop strategies as outlined in the Coordinated Plan, which are essential to providing accessible transportation for members of the disability and senior communities, but to fund them.

The lack of accessible and affordable transportation is a large issue facing many people in LA County today. Transit users who have disabilities can find travel around the county especially challenging.

- As our large population of ‘baby boomers’ ages, a growing number of seniors in our communities face similar obstacles to their mobility as they become less physically, cognitively or mentally robust and incur disabilities, including those impacting their hearing and vision or balance problems
- In LA County, approximately one-third of adults over the age of sixty have one or more disabilities and many may require the use of canes, walkers & wheelchairs

- According to national research, adults with disabilities are twice as likely as those without disabilities to have inadequate transportation.
- Impediments include a lack of information about public transportation options including fixed rail transit opportunities.
- Many of these transit users rely on Access Services and other forms of paratransit; however, some could use fixed route public transportation options if they were more affordable, accessible and reliable in meeting their needs.

The meetings between Move LA and disability advocates identified four objectives that can result in valuable resources being used more effectively throughout the system.

1. Access and other paratransit and specialized transportation services:
 - a. Fund reliable, timely Access and para-transit systems that span both local and county-wide destinations: including more vehicles, more drivers, and better training for drivers, reservationists, and dispatchers about consumer needs;
 - b. Improve communication between para-transit and public transit to make transfers between the systems easier and more effective;
 - c. Fund Volunteer Driver Programs to allow more transportation options.
 - d. Encourage more coordination and resource sharing among human service organizations and transportation entities.
2. Accessibility on Fixed Route Transit:
 - a. Keep fares low and allow for subsidized transit for lower income people;
 - b. Improve and expand ‘first mile/last mile’ options such as wheelchair accessible shuttles, taxis, and other ride-sharing opportunities;
 - c. Ensure physical accessibility to public transit (i.e. install curb cuts, keep sidewalks in good repair and streets clear of obstructions);
 - d. Build and maintain fully accessible, functioning rail stations and bus stops (including where possible: seating & 3-sided shelters, elevators to platforms, clean and accessible restrooms, etc)
 - e. Integrate all transportation modes (Metro buses and rail, city buses, Access and other paratransit) to ease coordination of travel from both the sidewalk to bus and from county to county.
 - f. Adapt the use of a Metro bus app to all people to see real-time bus transit. This will decrease the need for long wait times and help people to plan for bus connections.
3. Enhanced Safety and Security:
 - a. Expand the numbers of trained and visible staff providing security on buses and rail;
 - b. Provide more staff on buses and rail to be helpful to people with disabilities;
 - c. Increase safety precautions and ensure accessibility during the construction of rail lines and other roadway repairs and improvements;
 - d. Increase awareness and options of how to avoid conflict in shared space with wheelchairs, bicycles, strollers, etc.
4. Education:
 - a. Increase mobility management services and improve outreach to seniors and people with disabilities to educate them about the public transportation services that are available and how to use them;

- b. Increase governmental and public awareness about the needs of people with disabilities and their mobility challenges and obstacles;
- c. Improve training of transit employees to increase their awareness of the needs of those with disabilities (including training to deploy onboard ramps when requested, to allow additional time for seniors and those with disabilities to board and exit buses, providing a safe place to stand or sit, etc.).
- d. Increase information about the Metro “On the Move Riders Club”, taking buses to senior centers or training at Metro to teach seniors to board a bus & step down from the bus. Remove their anxiety to use public transportation. Provide all informational and educational materials in alternate formats for riders (Braille, audio, plain language, pictures, etc.)

Our organizations work with many of the approximately 1.3 million residents who have a disability in Los Angeles County. This statistic does not include their friends and families nor the large numbers of seniors who share many of concerns outlined in this letter. Combined, people with disabilities and their broader networks represent a significant percentage of the population of LA County.

We look forward to working with Metro as you develop the Long Range Transportation Plan as well as the funding ballot measure for 2016. Seeing our concerns addressed in the measure will make our community strong advocates in a campaign to win. We plan to be a critical part of this campaign. Our votes could be the margin of victory in November 2016. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Denny Zane, Executive Director
Move LA

Alan Toy, Executive Director
Westside Center for Independent Living

Jim Baker, Executive Director
Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living

Dolores Nason, Executive Director
Disabled Resource Center, Inc.

Norma Vescovo, CEO
The Independent Living Center of Southern California

Larry Grable, Executive Director
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