Making the Most of Transit in Los Angeles

Transit Corridors Strategy
Draft Workplan Q1 & Q2, 2013

City of Los Angeles Transit Corridors Cabinet
Office of Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa

January 2013

Department of Building and Safety
Department of City Planning
Bureau of Engineering
Los Angeles Housing Department

Bureau of Sanitation
Bureau of Street Lighting
Bureau of Street Services
Department of Transportation
Dear Friends:

Los Angeles is on the cusp of a new era of mobility. Thanks to the billions of dollars being invested in rail and bus transit as well as bike and pedestrian infrastructure, the Los Angeles of tomorrow will offer Angelenos high quality transportation options beyond the personal automobile. Now is the time for us to collaborate as a city to make sure these investments bring about the greatest benefits in quality of life, cost of living, economic opportunity, decent and safe housing, health, and sustainability for all of us.

The following document represents the priorities that the City of Los Angeles is currently considering to make the most of the city’s growing transit infrastructure. We will depend on your input and insights to make sure we take the right priorities into consideration over the next six months. Please send any comments regarding this workplan to Mayor.TransitCorridors@LACity.org.

Together, we can make the most of transit in Los Angeles. I look forward to hearing from you!

Very Truly Yours,

Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa

Since 2010, CicLAvia has temporarily removed cars from some of LA’s most famous thoroughfares, giving the streets over for people-powered fun.

The proposed Warner Center 2035 plan completely re-imagines a 1970s-era office district, providing for a more walkable, transit-oriented mixed-use “downtown.”
Background

Los Angeles is well-served by a variety of transit options, including Metro’s bus and rail service, LADOT’s community and commuter transit options, and an ever-increasing network of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. These options help Angelenos reduce their transportation costs while making Los Angeles a more sustainable, healthy, and prosperous city.

Metro, a Los Angeles County-wide agency, is currently undertaking an unprecedented investment in transit infrastructure across Los Angeles that will further enhance mobility. Los Angeles is ready to make the most of this investment.

In 2012, Mayor Villaraigosa directed all City departments to work together with Metro to make sure the City directs its resources appropriately around new and existing transit corridors. The Mayor formed a Transit Corridors Cabinet (TCC) of key departments that will work together to foster and incentivize a built environment that encourages transit use, optimizes the benefits of transit for all Angelenos, and focuses development around transit. Los Angeles is ready to become transit-oriented.

What is Transit Orientation?

The City has adopted the following definition of Transit Orientation, taking into account the diverse needs of Los Angeles’s communities and residents:

“Transit Orientation” arises from policies that promote and coordinate planning and implementation activities to create, preserve, and enhance employment, economic development, affordable and workforce housing, and community services along transit. This process will ensure that all stakeholders share in the benefits of growth and revitalization created by transit investment. Transit Orientation is built on a foundation of values related to equity, economy, environment, and engagement. The ultimate goal is to provide communities, including people of all incomes and ethnic backgrounds, access to quality transportation, housing, and economic opportunities while ensuring their participation in the community development process.

What does the Transit Corridors Cabinet do?

The Transit Corridors Cabinet works across City departments and with all stakeholders to identify and implement policies and procedures that will lead to a Los Angeles that maximizes the benefits of its transit infrastructure, for the benefit of all Angelenos.

The Cabinet is the central entity for all City efforts, initiatives, and procedures that focus City resources on transit corridors and promote Transit Orientation. The Cabinet will serve as the consolidated point of contact for outreach and communication with Los Angeles’s diverse stakeholder groups regarding issues related to Transit Orientation.

The Cabinet will establish and oversee an ongoing Transit Corridors strategy, including a prioritized schedule of City efforts. The Cabinet will regularly re-evaluate this strategy and provide publicly-available reporting on the City’s progress and its current priorities. The following pages outline the Cabinet’s draft priorities for the 1st and 2nd Quarter of 2013.
Workplan Summary

The outline below represents the strategic priorities that The Transit Corridors Cabinet proposes to focus on during the first two quarters of 2013.

I. Foster a Shared Vision
   • Establish a shared vision of a transit-oriented Los Angeles based around transit corridors, and prioritize transit in City policies

II. Build a Foundation
   • Enhance communication, collaboration, efficiency, and accountability for all stakeholders within transit corridors, and find new funding sources for City efforts

III. Get to Work
   • Create complete streets and foster active transportation
   • Create and preserve affordable housing near transit
   • Encourage vibrant, job-dense, mixed-use districts near transit and incentivize development that supports a more transit-oriented city
   • Implement and support bike and car share programs
   • Implement innovative programs to reduce automobile congestion
   • Reform automobile parking policies and practices
   • Work with the State to streamline the CEQA environmental review process.
   • Enact policies and programs to ensure all Angelenos benefit from transit orientation

The recently-completed Phase A of the MacArthur Park Apartments placed 90 family-sized affordable units directly above a Metro Subway stop.

Architects: Torti Gallas in collaboration with Roschen Van Cleve

Landscaping and a new bikeway were coordinated with the extension of the Metro Orange Line, making the transitway an even greater community amenity.
The Cabinet proposes to focus on the following action items during the first two quarters of 2013. These include action items that have been identified as “short term” (significant progress can be made within this timeframe) and “long term” (evaluative or exploratory progress can be made).

## I. Foster a Shared Vision: Consensus

Los Angeles cannot become a truly transit-oriented city until City leaders, public servants, and members of the public share a vision of what transit orientation means, how important it is for Los Angeles to make the most of its transportation infrastructure, and how a Los Angeles that is oriented to transit benefits all Angelenos.

- **Establish a shared vision of a transit-oriented Los Angeles based around transit corridors, and prioritize transit in City policies**

  **Short Term:**
  - Articulate a clear, publicly-accepted vision of what a transit-oriented Los Angeles will be and how we will get there.
  - Adopt a corridor-wide perspective when undertaking all transit orientation efforts.
  - Initiate a process to map and define Los Angeles's transit corridors.

## II. Build a Foundation: Logistics

For the City to work effectively and efficiently toward a transit oriented Los Angeles, it is critical that City departments unite around clear policies, adopt common transit orientation priorities, and attain new funding sources to enhance transit orientation initiatives. The City must also establish a consistent dialogue with the city’s diverse communities and stakeholders.

- **Prioritize transit orientation as a holistic citywide policy**

  **Short Term:**
  - Develop a priority list for station area and transit corridor land use plans, including both existing and future stations.
  - Identify opportunities across policy initiatives where resources and efforts can be leveraged and/or coordinated to provide multiple benefits and reduced costs.
  - Target HOME and CDBG funding for efforts within transit corridors.
  - All departments will incorporate transit proximity as criteria for City-administered subsidies and grant funding.

  **Long Term:**
  - Adopt a “Transit First” policy.
  - Focus on transit and multi-modal access when pursuing development agreements.
  - Prioritize infrastructure improvements in transit corridors over other areas.
• **Enhance communication, collaboration, efficiency and accountability for stakeholders within transit corridors**

Short Term:
- Appoint a Transit Corridors Coordinator empowered to facilitate coordination among City departments and between the City and relevant public agencies.
- Develop a City procedure with Metro to coordinate and consult with City departments early in the planning process for new stations.
- Report progress on transit corridor initiatives and provide evidence of impact that will be published in a publicly-available quarterly report.
- Develop targeted procedures within transit corridors for the delivery of basic City services that improve mobility and transit efficiency.

Long Term:
- Encourage Metro to consider joint development and adjacent development opportunities early in the station design process.

• **Pursue new funding sources for transit orientation efforts**

Short Term:
- Continue to pursue funding from the Metro Call for Projects to implement public improvements near transit stations and along transit corridors.
- Secure resources for the completion of New Community / Station Area Plans and accompanying overlay ordinances within transit-rich neighborhoods.
- Encourage Metro to provide additional planning resources to address additional transit corridors.
- Develop infrastructure assessments for targeted station areas or transit corridors, with a plan for funding infrastructure projects in these areas.

**III. Get to Work: Policy Initiatives**

The following policy initiatives represent the key approaches and objectives that the Cabinet proposes to focus on during the first two quarters of 2013. “Short term” items are those action items where the Cabinet intends to make significant progress over this period, and “long term” items are action items where the Cabinet intends to make evaluative and exploratory progress.

- **Create “complete streets” that accommodate all modes of travel, including pedestrians and bicyclists**

Short Term:
- Expand the use of preferential routing to calm traffic and incentivize pedestrian and bicyclist travel.
- Develop street classifications and engineering standards specific to transit corridors.
- Adopt a toolkit of traffic-calming techniques that prioritize pedestrian mobility and use.

Continued on Next page
- Adopt citywide, context-responsive goals for streetscape plans and prioritize implementation in areas with high transit use.
- Encourage Metro to install transit wayfinding signage and institute enhanced technology awareness initiatives to build awareness of transit and increase ridership.
- Integrate water quality enhancements and green solutions into transit projects.

Long Term:
- Match any new road improvements, foot-for-foot, with new bike lanes and bus lanes.
- Develop a transit access mandate policy for new development.

• Create and preserve affordable housing near transit to maintain low transportation costs for those most dependent on transit

Short Term:
- Identify affordable housing within transit corridors that is at risk of losing affordability restrictions and promote the preservation of affordable units.
- Develop targets for an optimal percentage of affordable housing within different transit corridor and station area typologies.
- Focus the allocation of affordable housing subsidies to transit station areas and transit corridors.

Long Term:
- Develop a City policy and strategic plan to ensure publicly-owned properties sold within transit corridors are targeted to transit-oriented projects including affordable housing.
- Develop a City policy that would provide affordable housing developers a preferential opportunity to participate in transit-oriented affordable housing developments.
- Work with a broad coalition to support the revalidation of mandatory and/or voluntary zoning ordinances that promote the development of new affordable housing.
- Evaluate the viability of a City tax to support short-term loans to nonprofits and other entities to purchase properties or buildings for long-term affordable housing near transit and within transit corridors.
- Assess and evaluate a broad mix of incentives and other tools to address shortcomings in the housing mix within transit corridors.

• Encourage vibrant, job-dense, mixed-use areas near transit and incentivize development that supports a more transit-oriented city

Short Term:
- Incorporate urban design guidelines formulated with community input into land use plans for transit corridors.
- Pursue pilot form-based development standards (that allow for a diversity of uses) within targeted, high-priority station area and transit corridor plans.
- Improve development services for projects within transit corridors by establishing a transit corridors case manager.
- Encourage real estate development within transit corridors through innovative/effective incentives, and evaluate best practices in other cities.
• **Implement and support bike and car share programs**

  **Short Term:**
  - Implement a citywide bike share program.
  - Adopt a coordinated system for accommodating bike and car share facilities on City and Metro-owned land.

• **Implement innovative programs to reduce automobile congestion**

  **Long Term:**
  - Explore the potential for cordon-based congestion pricing.
  - Explore the potential for real-time electronic road pricing during peak hours.

• **Reform automobile parking policies and practices to improve parking availability and reduce unnecessary burdens on development**

  **Short Term:**
  - Modify parking requirements enumerated in zoning and other City policies to allow for and encourage shared parking, and develop an implementation plan for district-based shared-use parking that addresses liability, security, and institutional barriers for private building owners to share parking.
  - Reduce minimum/maximum on-site parking ratios within appropriate transit corridors as part of zoning revisions, and allow for alternate mode parking as an offset.

  **Long Term:**
  - Work with a broad coalition to promote the passage of a State policy and legislation focused on infill parking requirements.

• **Work with the State to streamline the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental review process for public and private projects**

  **Long Term:**
  - Work jointly with Metro to urge State leaders to adopt streamlined City CEQA review process for projects in station areas and within transit corridors.
  - Develop performance metrics to measure vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions as part of a CEQA clearance review process.
  - Establish standard findings recognizing the positive environmental impacts of developments in station areas and within transit corridors to streamline approval.
• **Enact policies and programs to ensure all Angelenos benefit from Transit Orientation**

**Short Term:**

**Long Term:**
- Pursue methods to capture value in strong markets and re-distribute that value within transit corridors, including State legislation to allow tax increment zones within transit corridors.

The policies and tasks presented in this draft document represent citywide policy interests that make up an evolving strategy for Transit Orientation in Los Angeles; Location-specific actions such as the development of land use plans will continue to be undertaken with community involvement and attention to unique neighborhood contexts.

Please send all comments, questions and suggestions to: Mayor.TransitCorridors@LACity.org

Photo Courtesy of: Torti Gallas and Partners, Inc.