Identification and Evaluation of Projects

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Project: I-105 ExpressLanes Segment 1 Equity Assessment
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Introduction

The generation of net toll revenues from the future I-105 ExpressLanes Segment 1 project offers a unique opportunity to fund multimodal projects for a more sustainable transportation system along the I-105. Using an equity lens and input from community-based organizations (CBOs), Metro is conducting nan Equity Assessment to identify and evaluate potential projects. This Equity Assessment consisted of a multistep technical process that consisted of establishing evaluation criteria, project identification, and scoring to recommend the most beneficial and equitable projects for future net toll revenue funding. This memo describes the process.

Goals and Evaluation Criteria

At the heart of the process was alignment with Metro's Net Toll Revenue Grant Program's mission to increase mobility and person throughput through a series of integrated strategies. This started with reviewing the goals for Metro's most recent round of Net Toll Revenue Grants as a starting point. The existing goals of the Net Toll Revenue Reinvestment Grant Program are the following: connect people and places, create community value, and conserve resources.

With input from CBOs and an equity perspective, the goals for the Study were expanded and evaluation criteria were established for each goal. The evaluation criteria are either quantitative or qualitative in nature and measure how well each project performs in achieving the stated goal. Table 1 lists the goals and evaluation criteria used for the Equity Assessment.

Table 1. Goals and Evaluation Criteria

GOAL	EVALUATION CRITERIA
1. Connect People and Places	1.1 Improve and encourage transit, walking, and biking/rolling 1.2 Improve transportation access and connectivity 1.3 Reduce congestion by increasing people throughput 1.4 Make all modes of travel safer
2. Create Community Value	2.1 Provide access for economic opportunities 2.2 Align with community input, including local plans and policies 2.3 Enhance the quality of life (e.g., Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles, no displacement)

GOAL	EVALUATION CRITERIA
	2.4 Adopt innovative technology, practice, or strategy
3. Conserve Resources	3.1 Foster local and regional environmental quality 3.2 Reduce GHG emissions 3.3 Leverage matching funds
4. Prioritize Equity Focus Communities	4.1 Minimize disruption during construction 4.2 Provide long-term benefits to EFCs
5. Cost-Effectiveness	5.1 Effectiveness in relationship to the total project cost and consideration of life-cycle costs

Project Identification

With the goals and evaluation criteria set, the project team set out to identify potential projects for each of the three project categories (transit, active transportation, and roadway) listed in the Metro Net Toll Revenue Grant Program.

The project team reviewed regional and local planning documents to compare existing jurisdictional goals and policies and identify previously proposed active transportation, transit, and roadway improvements along the project corridor. Table 2 outlines the existing plans and studies gathered for this effort.

Table 2. Existing Plans and Studies

Plan Name	Publishing Year	Publishing Agency	Link
I-105 Corridor Sustainability Study	2019	SCAG	https://scag.ca.gov/post/i-105-corridor-sustainability-study
Metro I-105 ExpressLanes Project Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment	2021	Caltrans and LA Metro	https://www.metro.net/projects/i105-expresslanes/
Metro I-105 ExpressLanes Project Report	2021	Caltrans and LA Metro	https://www.metro.net/projects/i105-expresslanes/
Metro I-105 ExpressLanes Project Concept of Operations	2020	Caltrans and LA Metro	https://www.metro.net/projects/i105-expresslanes/
Metro ExpressLanes Demonstration Project Low Income Impact Analysis	2010	LA Metro	https://libraryarchives.metro.net/dpgtl/congestionpricing/2010-ExpressLanes-low-income-draft-final-report.pdf
Metro Active Transportation Strategic Plan	2017	LA Metro	https://www.metro.net/projects/i105-expresslanes/
Vision Zero Los Angeles County: A Plan for Safer Roadways	2019	LACPW	https://pw.lacounty.gov/visionzero/
Vision Zero for Los Angeles	2015	LADOT	https://ladotlivablestreets.org/programs/vision-zero
City of Inglewood Active Transportation and Safe Routes to School Plan	2022	City of Inglewood	https://www.cityofinglewood.org/835/Active-Transportation-Plan
Inglewood First/Last Mile Plan	2019	LA Metro	https://www.metro.net/about/first-last/

Plan Name	Publishing Year	Publishing Agency	Link
Florence-Firestone Community Pedestrian Plan	2023	LACPW	http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/place/stepbystep/florencefirestone.htm
Willowbrook/West Rancho Dominguez Community Pedestrian Plan	2023	LACPW	http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/place/stepbystep/willowbrook.htm
Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific Plan for West Athens – Westmont	2019	LACPW	https://planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/connect-southwest-la-specific-plan/
I-105 Integrated Corridor Management Project	2022	LA Metro	https://construction-network.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/0628-LA-Metro-SM-ITS.pdf
South Bay COG Mobility Matrix	2015	LA Metro	https://libraryarchives.metro.net/dpgtl/studies/2015-subregional-mobility-matrix-south-bay-cities-v5.pdf

Using guidance from Metro's EPET, the following two-step process was used to identify projects and equity opportunities for evaluation.

Step 1: Identify universe of projects.

- Gather, analyze, and develop the universe of potential projects informed by the following:
- CBO engagement and agency input
- Feedback from Metro departments and local jurisdictions
- Walk audits
- Public surveys
- Previous studies and plans
- Socioeconomic and land use data
- Existing transportation system analysis

The purpose of this step is to develop a high number of project ideas based on technical analysis and community input.

Step 2: Address equity questions

Address each of the following questions to determine whether the identified project is an equity opportunity:

- What areas of opportunity or concern can the project improve?
- What disparities are being addressed?
- Who is most likely to benefit from the proposed project?

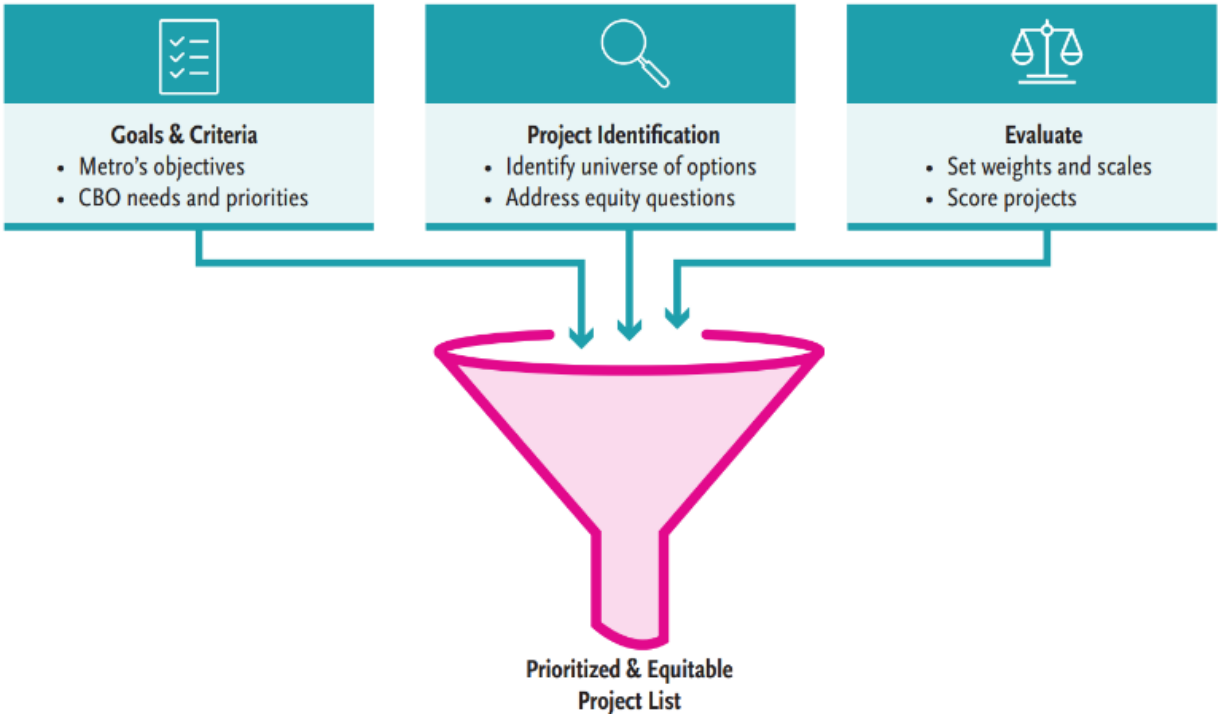
This step serves as an initial screening by considering whether the project is a good and equitable idea.

Project List

The initial project list of approximately 150 projects is presented in the attached project list. The projects included in the list vary in development because some are specific and more advanced while others are new ideas that will need further study.

The initial project list includes project information such as a detailed description, jurisdiction, cost, duration, funding status, lead agency, origin, percent located with an EFC, and responses to the three equity questions previously described.

Figure 1. Prioritization Process

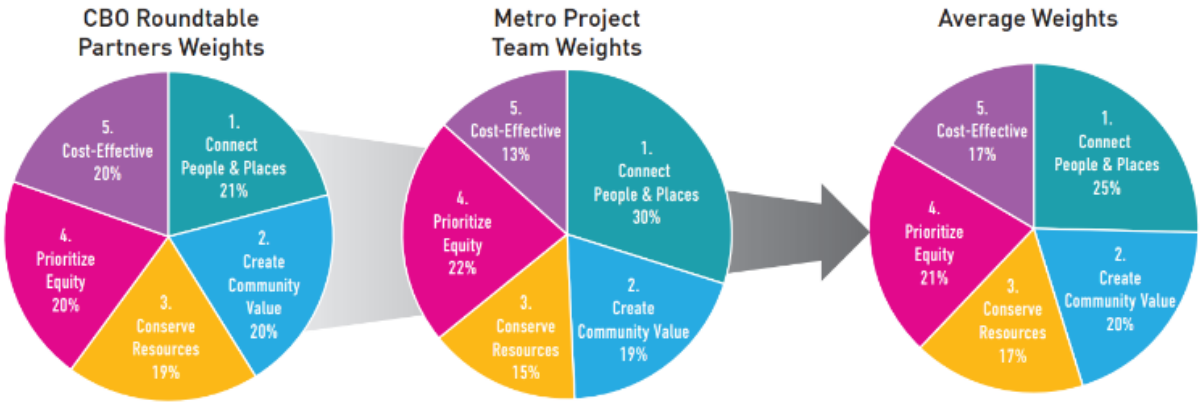


Weighting

With 5 different goals and 14 evaluation criteria, there are several factors to consider when scoring the project list. For this reason, weights were assigned to each goal and evaluation criteria. Weighting is a method to determine what is most important and creates a structured approach for evaluating. Weighting helps to reflect Metro's priorities and community values.

Workshops on weighting were held separately with Metro's project team and the CBO Roundtable partners. The workshops asked participants to prioritize the evaluation criteria based on what is most important to them. For transparency, the results are summarized on Figure 2 and demonstrate strong alignment between Metro and the CBO partners on importance and priorities.

Figure 2. Results of Weighting Exercise to Score Project List



Measurement Scales

Scoring measurement scales were developed for each of the metrics to define how they would be applied to assess the potential performance of each project in addressing that metric. Each rubric was developed by an experienced technical professional with knowledge of evaluation methods and tools. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation criteria were used, depending on the criterion's nature and the data available to assess each of metric. Qualitative assessments were measured on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best outcome or highest benefit.

Figure 3. Scoring Scales

Table 3. Scoring Definitions

Evaluation Criteria	1 – No Benefit	3 – Medium Benefit	5 – Very High Benefit
1. Connect People & Places			
1.1 Improve and encourage transit, walking, and biking	No transit, walking, or biking improvements	Includes some transit, walking, or biking enhancements	Includes notable transit or walking and biking mobility enhancements, or multiple elements
1.2 Improve transportation access and connectivity	No connections	Includes one notable connection to Metro rail or BRT and bikeway	Includes 3 or more notable connections to Metro or BRT and bikeway
1.3 Reduce congestion by increasing people throughput	No congestion relief	Modest improvement to congestion relief and people throughput	Notable improvement to congestion relief and people throughput

Evaluation Criteria	1 – No Benefit	3 – Medium Benefit	5 – Very High Benefit
1.4 Make all modes of travel safer	No notable traffic safety countermeasures	Some traffic safety countermeasures	Notable traffic safety countermeasures
2. Create Community Value			
2.1 Provide access for economic opportunities	25th percentile (or less) of jobs within 1/2-mile radius	50th percentile of jobs within 1/2-mile radius	75th percentile (or more) of jobs within 1/2-mile radius
2.2 Align with community input including local plans and policies	No notable local support: any effects would be broadly dispersed	CBOs have voiced modest support for the project type, or the project has been identified in a local plan or policy	CBOs have voiced notable support for the project and the project has been identified in a local plan or policy
2.3 Enhance the quality of life	1 point if the project includes a CPTED principle or lighting; 1 point for non-displacement; 1 point if the project reduces noise pollution; 1 point if project includes beautification scope; 1 point if project reduces travel time		
2.4 Adopt innovative technology, practice, or strategy	No notable innovation	Technology, practice, or strategy has been implemented only at a limited scale within the past five years within Los Angeles County	Technology, practice, or strategy is an innovation within Los Angeles County
3. Conserve Resources			
3.1 Foster local and regional environmental quality (e.g., clean air, urban cooling, tree canopy)	1 point if the project includes cool paving; 1 point if the project address clean air; 1 point if the project improves tree canopy cover; 1 point if the project includes green infrastructure for stormwater; 1 point if the project provides new shade opportunities		
3.2 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., VMT, energy use, mode shift)	No reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; (-1) = measurable increase in greenhouse gas emissions	Modest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions like other projects within the I-105 corridor	Notable reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that is likely in the top 10 of all new projects in the I-105 corridor
3.3 Leverage matching funds	No matching funds available and no potential for securing matching funds	50% of project cost is secured or has high likelihood of securing funding	75% or more of project cost is secured
4. Prioritize Metro Equity Focus Communities			
4.1 Minimize disruption during construction	Scores Low on Two-part scale: 1) Number of disadvantaged persons within appropriate buffer of project, calculated using Metro's EFC data X 2) Community is impacted during construction (0 points)	Scores Medium on Two-part scale: 1) Number of disadvantaged persons within appropriate buffer of project, calculated using Metro's EFC X 2) Disruption during construction is minor (2 points)	Scores High on Two-part scale: 1) Number of disadvantaged persons within appropriate buffer of project, calculated using Metro's EFC X 2) Relatively small impacts during construction (4 points)

Evaluation Criteria	1 – No Benefit	3 – Medium Benefit	5 – Very High Benefit
4.2 Provide long-term benefits to EFCs	EFC population within 1/2-mile times one point for each of the following 8 benefits: Improves mobility, improves air quality, reduces traffic congestion, improves access to affordable housing, Improves access to open space options, Provides "healthy" food access, Provides quality infrastructure, Provides job creation/ workforce development		
5. Cost-Effectiveness			
5.0 Minimize long-term life cycle cost (implement, operate, and maintain)	1 = $20M or more; 2 = $15-19.9M; 3 = $10-14.9M; 4 = $5-9.9M; 5 = <$5M		

Scoring

Scoring for quantitative criteria was done using data (for example, number of jobs within a one-mile radius of the project) and normalized to fairly compare projects. The scoring for qualitative metrics was done based on professional expertise by subject matter experts, literature on expected benefits and potential adverse impacts related to project types, and stated features of the project or program based on available information. The scoring was done based on Table 3 – Scoring Definitions.

Prioritization and Tiering

The last step was prioritizing the projects and categorizing them into different tiers based on value. The value is based on the weights and scores, which allowed the project team and CBO partners to see a ranking of the projects. Thresholds were set based on the value scores to identify similar high-, medium-, or low-performing projects. Thresholds were set to draw distinctions between projects where there is a statistically significant variation and were not set to draw differentiation between very similar results. Recommendations from the results of prioritization and tiering are presented in the next chapter.

In total, approximately 37% of the projects are prioritized as high, 33% are medium, and 30% are low. The characteristics of high-scoring projects include study area-wide or corridor projects, projects near Metro rail/BRT stations, projects within high EFC populations, projects focused on sustainable mobility options. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the numbers and percentages of each tier by mode.

Table 4: Breakdown of Tiers by Mode

Tier	Active Transportation	Roadway	Transit
High	28 (34%)	8 (36%)	19 (43%)
Medium	24 (29%)	9 (41%)	16 (36%)
Low	30 (37%)	5 (23%)	9 (20%)
TOTAL =	82	22	44