

# LB-ELA CORRIDOR MOBILITY INVESTMENT PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS THE EPET?

The Pilot Equity Planning and Evaluation Tool (EPET) was developed by Metro in 2021 to provide detailed equity guidance for large-scale, multi-year Metro projects. The EPET requires that projects: 1) identify disparities that impact mobility, economic opportunities, and health outcomes, and how related services, programs, and projects are experienced; 2) understand the root causes of those disparities, and 3) develop and implement strategies, projects, programs, and investment priorities in a manner that provides more equitable outcomes. From inception to adoption, the LB-ELA Corridor Investment Plan (Plan) project team, Task Force, and Community Leadership Committee (CLC) used the EPET to guide the outreach approach and process, existing conditions analyses, evaluation methodology, and funding recommendations, as described in detail in this report.

Applying the EPET's concepts of Opportunity Areas,<sup>1</sup> Community Results,<sup>2</sup> and Project Outcomes,<sup>3</sup> this report documents the processes of visioning, data analysis, contextual research, community engagement, and technical evaluation applied to inform an investment plan that advances equitable outcomes in the LB-ELA Corridor ("the Corridor"). Following an introductory section that provides definitions of equity and an overview of the Project and Task Force background, this EPET documentation report follows the structure below:

- I. Connect Community Results to Project Outcomes
- II. Analyze Data
- III. Engage the Community
- IV. Plan for Equitable Outcomes

The EPET's six-part structure includes two subsequent sections that have not been applied at this time, as they relate specifically to the implementation of individual projects and programs. These sections (*Proposal Implementation* and *Evaluate, Communicate, and Stay Accountable*) may be documented by relevant project staff as large-scale proposals in the Investment Plan move toward implementation in the future.

### DEFINING EQUITY

Metro defines equity as "both an outcome and a process to address racial, socioeconomic, and gender disparities, to ensure fair and just access with respect to where you begin and your capacity to improve from that starting point to opportunities, including jobs, housing, education, mobility options, and healthier communities. It is achieved when one's outcomes in life are not predetermined, in a statistical or

---

<sup>1</sup> Opportunity Areas = Key indicators of success including Employment, Housing, Education, Health, Transportation, Community Development, Criminal Justice, Environment, and Safety.

<sup>2</sup> Community Results = The community level condition of well-being we would like to achieve. It lacks disparities based on race, income, ability, or other social demographic.

<sup>3</sup> Project Outcome = A clearly defined future state of being at the program, local, or agency level resulting from the proposed action that ultimately supports the community result.

experiential sense, on their racial, economic, or social identities. It requires community informed and needs based provision, implementation, and impact of services, programs, and policies that reduce and ultimately prevent disparities. Equity means that Metro’s service delivery, project delivery, policymaking, and distribution of resources account for the different histories, challenges, and needs of communities across Los Angeles County; it is what we are striving towards.”

The following definitions of procedural, distributive, restorative, and structural equity have supported focused discussions of equity throughout this planning process. These detailed definitions are not part of Metro’s official definition of equity.

### Detailed Definitions of Equity

<b>Procedural Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Proactive and accessible community engagement that bridges linguistic, technology, and ability gaps to meet communities where they are and enable participatory and representative decision-making processes.</li> <li>&gt; Ongoing systems of accountability and communication to build and maintain trust.</li> </ul>
<b>Distributive Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Allocation of benefits and amenities proportionate to levels of need and historic investment and based on self-identified community priorities rather than 'one-size-fits-all' solutions.</li> <li>&gt; Policies and resource management to ensure benefits reach intended recipients.</li> </ul>
<b>Restorative Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Acknowledgement of, and atonement for historic and ongoing systemic harms resulting from planning practice and policy.</li> <li>&gt; Commensurate actions, resources, and investments dedicated to remediation and prevention of further systemic harms.</li> </ul>
<b>Structural Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Evolution of decision-making bodies to reflect the communities they serve.</li> <li>&gt; Restructuring of organizational systems and hierarchies to empower historically marginalized groups.</li> </ul>

DRAFT

### PROJECT AND TASK FORCE BACKGROUND

The issues Metro intends to address through this Task Force process and Investment Plan are wide-ranging, reflecting the multimodal nature of the investment plan, the geographic scale of the study area, and the depth of context from which the current process emerged. An understanding of the equity issues centered in the Task Force process and Investment Plan relies on an understanding of the past two decades of planning and community advocacy around the I-710 South Corridor, and the last century of racial, economic, and environmental injustice, reinforced by public policy and infrastructure, which continue to impact the Corridor’s surrounding communities today.

The I-710 and its five intersecting freeways (SR-60, I-5, I-105, SR-91, and I-405) reflect the shared legacy of many American freeways, many of which were intentionally routed through Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) neighborhoods, displacing residents, disconnecting communities from economic opportunities, and disproportionately subjecting entire neighborhoods to environmental harms and related health impacts. However, despite enduring the brunt of many planning and policy failures, the LB-ELA Corridor has sustained rich community identities and civic pride, and fostered significant activist movements for civil rights, cultural empowerment, transit justice, and environmental justice. These elements of the LB-ELA community history are discussed in greater detail in Section 3: Engage the Community.

Seeking a solution to an increasingly congested I-710 freeway, which serves as a regionally and nationally significant goods movement and commuter corridor, Metro and Caltrans proposed a widening from 8 to 16 lanes in the early 2000s. As initially proposed, the widening would have displaced over 660 homes along the freeway and worsened pollution in the corridor. A 2009 EPA report estimated

approximately 2,000 premature deaths associated with diesel emissions in the South Coast Air Basin, which includes urban Los Angeles and its surrounding counties.<sup>4</sup> In response to the Metro and Caltrans proposal, the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice (CEHAJ) organized against the plan to advocate for a zero-emissions corridor project, contingent on local hiring and no displacements. Metro and Caltrans then launched an extensive public participation process (the 710 Metro Corridor Study) and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process. In 2012, the Draft EIR was released, to which CEHAJ responded with a proposal for Community Alternative 7 (CA 7). Despite the freeway's historical cost to surrounding communities, acknowledged in a 2018 Metro report,<sup>5</sup> the Metro Board approved its own alternative (5C) that same year, which still included a freeway widening element, incorporating an additional mixed-flow lane in each direction, truck bypass lanes, and reconfigured interchanges. The plan would have displaced an estimated 436 people in 109 homes and 158 businesses.<sup>6</sup>

CEHAJ and other Corridor residents continued to push back against alternative 5C, maintaining their demand for a mandatory zero-emissions policy to reduce pollution. Shortly thereafter, in 2021, the EPA ruled that the project would violate the federal Clean Air Act, stating that public agencies would be required to “develop a program that...will not increase and negatively impact public health”.<sup>7</sup> In September 2021, in response to the EPA ruling and the State of California rescinding support for the project, Metro and Caltrans suspended the planning process for alternative 5C, with an acknowledgement from the Metro Board that communities along the I-710 Corridor have long suffered impacts on health, air quality, mobility, and quality of life due to their proximity to existing freight-focused freeway facilities. In September of 2021, Metro and Caltrans initiated the I-710 South Corridor Task Force (since renamed as the LB-ELA Task Force) to re-evaluate the needs of the corridor and its communities, develop multimodal strategies to meet these needs, identify potential projects and programs based on those strategies, and create a prioritized investment plan to leverage local funding from Measure R<sup>8</sup> and Measure M<sup>9</sup> with goals of improving regional mobility, economic competitiveness, air quality, and the movement of people and goods.

The Task Force comprises approximately 40 community and regional stakeholders from a cross-section of communities, industries, public, business, and labor agencies. All of these individuals are directly impacted by or dependent upon the movement of people and goods through the Corridor. The Task Force is guided by the Community Leadership Committee (CLC), a group of 28 residents representing Corridor communities, whose direct involvement in the decision-making process provides critical insight into the lived experiences and priorities of those directly impacted by the Corridor's infrastructure and industries. Additional Working Groups, including an Equity Working Group, comprise Task Force and Community Leadership Committee members, allowing for topic-focused discussions to inform Task Force actions. The Equity Working Group has been instrumental in Metro's application of the EPET, contributing knowledge and technical expertise based in lived and professional experience, and constructive feedback

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.asce.org/publications-and-news/civil-engineering-source/civil-engineering-magazine/article/2021/10/epa-suspends-california-interstate-710-project>

<sup>5</sup> <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2018-0053/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.asce.org/publications-and-news/civil-engineering-source/civil-engineering-magazine/article/2021/10/epa-suspends-california-interstate-710-project>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.asce.org/publications-and-news/civil-engineering-source/civil-engineering-magazine/article/2021/10/epa-suspends-california-interstate-710-project>

<sup>8</sup> Measure R (2008) - Half-cent LA County sales tax measure to finance new transportation projects and programs, and accelerate those already in the pipeline.

<sup>9</sup> Measure M (2016) –Half-cent LA County sales tax measure to make Measure R permanent and fund additional projects to ease traffic, repair local streets and sidewalks, expand public transportation, earthquake retrofit bridges and subsidize transit fares for students, seniors and persons with disabilities.

on process, project/program proposals, evaluation methods, and considerations for future implementation.

## SECTION 1: CONNECTING COMMUNITY RESULTS TO PROJECT OUTCOMES

### IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF ISSUES

The Metro Board suspended the environmental review of the previous I-710 South Corridor Project's Alternative 5C due to the significant concerns that the proposed project could not meet air quality conformity standards; would create untenable displacement in disadvantaged communities adjacent to the freeway; and would contradict updated local, state, and federal policies related to freeway widening or expansion projects. At the same time, the Metro Board directed the Metro CEO to re-engage impacted communities along the LB-ELA Corridor, convene stakeholders, and develop a multimodal, multipurpose investment strategy for the LB-ELA Corridor that improves regional mobility and air quality while fostering economic vitality, social equity, environmental sustainability, and access to opportunity for LA County residents – especially for those most impacted by, and living or working adjacent to, the Corridor.

Throughout the past two decades of planning work around the I-710 South Corridor, a range of equity issues have been raised by community members, advocacy groups, and regulatory agencies. These issues have been at the forefront of Task Force and CLC processes, informing development of the goals, principles, projects and programs, and evaluation methodologies since the establishment of the Task Force and initiation of the Investment Plan directive. The project team also conducted a review of relevant planning and community documents to identify how past efforts have characterized and attempted to address needs and challenges in the Corridor. An existing conditions data analysis (detailed in Section 2: Analyze Data) further contributed to an understanding that people along the I-710 corridor are overburdened in a number of ways when compared with other parts of the region. Given the high percentage of BIPOC populations in the corridor, these issues reinforce racial inequities and demonstrate how structural racism manifests in urban communities.

Applying the framework of Distributive, Restorative, Procedural, and Structural Equity, the key issues Metro aims to address in this Investment Plan are summarized below:

## Distributive Equity Issues

---

<b>High freeway emissions/ Poor air quality</b>	The I-710 South Corridor accounts for 20% of all particulate emissions in Southern California. <sup>10</sup> The high levels of diesel pollutants affecting communities within a quarter mile of the freeway has earned the name “diesel death zone,” referring to the linkage between diesel pollution and respiratory and cardiovascular health conditions. <sup>11</sup>
<b>Community health burdens</b>	The Corridor’s respiratory and cardiovascular health burdens resulting from freeway emissions and other sources of air pollution are compounded by long-standing disparities in health and access to healthcare. <sup>12</sup> Limited access to safe and comfortable active transportation and outdoor recreational infrastructure, <sup>13</sup> and exposure to heat through a lack of shade and greening <sup>14</sup> also contribute to health burdens in the Corridor.
<b>Unsafe/hostile streets for pedestrians and bicyclists</b>	Streets within the Corridor are generally designed for high volumes of vehicular traffic with limited or poorly maintained active transportation and pedestrian infrastructure. While some jurisdictions have introduced dedicated infrastructure and safer street design in recent years, a cohesive network of safe bike and pedestrian infrastructure is lacking throughout the corridor as a whole. Given high volumes of vehicles entering and exiting the freeway, bike and pedestrian safety is of particular concern surrounding freeway on/off-ramps and overcrossings. <sup>15</sup>
<b>Transit service reliability</b>	Reliable transit service is an issue most directly impacting access to resources and opportunities for the Corridor’s transit-dependent residents and workers. It also contributes to the share of “choice riders” within the Corridor, whose decisions to use transit over a personal vehicle have broader impacts on air quality, congestion, and street safety. <sup>16</sup> Additionally, the distribution of investment across transit services (e.g., Bus, Rail, and Micro transit) has historically prioritized service areas and riders with lower needs over those with higher needs. <sup>17</sup>
<b>Travel times</b>	High levels of congestion along the freeway and significant arterials impact community members’ ability to reach their jobs, schools, and other needs. Vehicle congestion impacts travel times for drivers, bus riders, and goods movement vehicles who all rely on major freeway and arterial routes. Travel times are also an issue for pedestrians and active transportation users in the corridor, who are often forced onto indirect routes given a lack of safe and connected infrastructure.
<b>Lack of green space and shade</b>	The presence or lack of tree canopy and green space is a major equity issue aligned with patterns of racial and economic segregation in the Corridor, with wide-ranging impacts on the urban heat island effect, air quality, stormwater runoff, pedestrian sun exposure, and overall streetscape quality. Lack of publicly accessible green space also limits access to opportunities for outdoor recreation, which impacts community health and quality of life. <sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.agmd.gov/docs/default-source/news-archive/2021/JETSI-aug31-2021.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Nelson, Laura J. “710 Freeway is a ‘diesel death zone’ to neighbors.” *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> [OEHHA CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#)

<sup>13</sup> [SCAG Regional Bikeways Data](#),

<sup>14</sup> [Tree People, LA County Tree Canopy Map](#), [CA Healthy Places Index](#)

<sup>15</sup> [SCAG Regional Bikeways Data](#), [LA County Bikeways Open Data](#), [Transportation Injury Mapping System \(TIMS\), 2017-2019](#)

<sup>16</sup> [LA Metro NextGen Bus Plan](#), [Southeast LA \(SELA\) Transportation Study \(Giuliano et al., 2018\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [How We Got Here: Three Decades of Equity at Metro \(Investing in Place, 2019\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Tree People, LA County Tree Canopy Map](#), [Los Angeles County Park Needs Assessment](#)

## Distributive Equity Issues

---

**Goods movement capacity and impacts** The Corridor plays a nationally significant role in transporting goods to and from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, with expanding demand for freight capacity increasing pressure on existing infrastructure. The I-710 already carries tens of thousands of trucks daily, contributing to air quality, noise, congestion, and other environmental impacts to the surrounding communities.<sup>19</sup>

---

**Disconnected communities** The I-710 reinforces and expands the division between communities on either side of the LA River. Many east/west crossings do not have safe bicycle infrastructure, and some crossings have missing, unpaved, or narrow sidewalks. Other freeways and rail infrastructure in the Corridor also impede connections between neighboring communities. These infrastructural barriers have enduring impacts on access to opportunity and amenities, and many serve as physical reminders of past displacement and dispossession.<sup>20</sup>

---

## Procedural/Restorative/Structural Equity Issues

---

**Historic disinvestment/disenfranchisement** The past century of planning and policy decisions in the Corridor have created and reinforced patterns of segregation and disinvestment. Communities with highest need for investment frequently face greatest obstacles to civic participation and political power, including language barriers, educational opportunities, and time available for involvement.<sup>21</sup>

---

**Lack of trust from previous I-710 project** The previous I-710 Freeway Expansion project was widely perceived as a continuation of harmful 20<sup>th</sup>-century transportation planning practices, prioritizing industry over the health and livelihoods of Corridor residents. Despite emerging from an extensive public engagement and environmental review process, the board-approved Alternative 5C failed to address the needs and concerns of communities who would bear the project's adverse impacts, and eroded trust among many Corridor residents and environmental stakeholders.<sup>22</sup>

---

**Disparities in municipal capacity and resources within LB-ELA Corridor** While the new Investment Plan aims to equitably distribute multimodal investments proportionate to levels of need throughout the Corridor, communities with the highest need will often have the least capacity to scope, plan, and implement projects, even with external funding available.

---

---

<sup>19</sup> [LA Metro, LA County Goods Movement Strategic Plan, 2021](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Dividing Highways: Barrier Effects and Environmental Justice in California \(escholarship.org\)](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Healing LA Neighborhoods: A once-in-a-generation opportunity to create thriving and inclusive communities across Los Angeles | Prevention Institute](#)

<sup>22</sup> [East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, I-710 Corridor](#)

---

## OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The Task Force, CLC, and Working Groups collaborated to envision a future that balances the diverse needs of the Corridor's stakeholders as identified through community input, previous planning efforts, and existing conditions data analysis. Over several months, as described below, these groups thoughtfully composed and refined the Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles as a framework to guide and focus the Investment Plan's proposed actions. The goals established in this process function as opportunity areas in which the Investment Plan's actions are able and intended to have impact.

### **December 2021: Listening Sessions**

- In December 2021, the project team held two LB-ELA Corridor Project Listening Sessions intended to engage members of the Corridor communities in developing a plan and investment strategy centered on local needs. The project team shared information regarding the process for creating a new plan for the Corridor and provided updates on the function and work of the LB-ELA Corridor Task Force. Community members expressed pride in the community outcry that resulted in the halting of the freeway widening project and shared a desire to move forward with a transparent process led by the community. Participants identified community priorities, including reduced traffic and emissions, improved public health and green space, expanded bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and no displacement of homes and businesses as proposed in the original I-710 South Corridor project (Alternative 5C).

### **February – March 2022: Vision and Goals Survey**

- From February to March 2022, Metro administered a Vision and Goals survey, through which the public identified their priorities for potential improvements in the Corridor, selecting up to three of the following: Air Quality, Community Health, Environment, Street Safety for all transportation users, Travel Options, Jobs and Economic Opportunities, and Housing. Over 3,000 stakeholders received the survey, and the 451 responses were made up of 427 members of the public and 24 Task Force members. 53% of respondents selected air quality as one of their top three priorities for improvements in the Corridor, followed by 51% selecting travel options, and 50% selecting street safety for all transportation users.

### **March 2022: Vision and Goals Public Meeting**

- The project team virtually held a Vision and Goals Development public meeting in March of 2022. It was attended by 83 participants, including 11 Task Force members or alternates and 50 members of the public. The meeting included an interactive discussion and poll, in which participants identified their priorities for potential improvements in the Corridor. The top priority areas included Air Quality (selected by 73% of participants as one of their top three areas of concern), Travel Options (50%), and Community Health (50%). Other areas of concern included Street Safety (43%), Environment (40%), Jobs and Economic Opportunity (13%), and Other (13%).
- Participants shared specific recommendations for goals related to the various areas of concern in the interactive discussion. Air Quality recommendations included a requirement that projects meet the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Air Standards and that the Investment Plan support adding more trees and plants along the Corridor to promote clean air and reduce the heat island effect and air pollution. Mobility recommendations included establishing access to high-quality, multimodal mobility options and considering Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Safety recommendations included safer paths for pedestrians and bicyclists and the

incorporation of guidelines prioritizing safety policies. Economy recommendations included the creation of good-paying jobs with local hiring as a priority and support for commercial land uses.

#### **April – September 2022: Development and Approval of Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles**

- **April 2022:** Preliminary Vision and Goals statements were presented to CLC, Task Force, and Equity Working Group for review and discussion. The Equity Working Group made a recommendation to consider elevating Equity as a Guiding Principle.
- **May 2022:** The CLC discussed and provided input on the language of the Vision and Goals. The Task Force voted to approve the proposed Equity Guiding Principle and continued discussing the Vision and Goals. The project team proposed elevating Sustainability as the second Guiding Principle.
- **June 2022:** The CLC and Task Force continued to discuss refinements to the Vision and Goals. The CLC voted to recommend a version of the Vision statement to the Task Force. The Task Force voted to approve the proposed Sustainability Guiding Principle.
- **July 2022:** The Vision statement was formally approved at the July 2022 Task Force meeting, along with the Goals of Air Quality, Mobility, Community, and Environment.
- **August 2022:** The Safety goal and the Opportunity Goal were formally approved at the August 2022 Task Force meeting, with the contingency with that a new Prosperity goal with a regional focus would be developed with input from the CLC. The CLC discussed the proposed Prosperity goal.
- **September 2022:** The Prosperity goal was refined and formally approved at the September 2022 Task Force Meeting. The Metro Board adopted the Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles at its September 2022 meeting as official policy.

DRAFT

## Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles

---

**Vision Statement** An equitable, shared I-710 South Corridor transportation system that provides safe, quality multimodal options for moving people and goods that will foster clean air (zero emissions), healthy and sustainable communities, and economic empowerment for all residents, communities, and users in the corridor.

---

**Equity Guiding Principle** A commitment to: (1) strive to rectify past harms; (2) provide fair and just access to opportunities; and (3) eliminate disparities in project processes, outcomes, and community results. The plan seeks to elevate and engrain the principle of Equity across all goals, objectives, strategies, and actions through a framework of Procedural, Distributive, Structural, and Restorative Equity, and by prioritizing an accessible and representative participation process for communities most impacted by the I-710.

---

**Sustainability Guiding Principle** Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A commitment to sustainability to satisfy and improve basic social, health, and economic needs/conditions, both present and future, and the responsible use and stewardship of the environment, all while maintaining or improving the well-being of the environment on which life depends.

---

**Air Quality Goal** Foster local and regional clean air quality.

---

**Mobility Goal** Improve the mobility of people and goods.

---

**Community Goal** Support thriving communities by enhancing the health and quality of life of residents.

---

**Safety Goal** Make all modes of travel safer.

---

**Opportunity Goal** Increase community access to quality jobs, workforce development, and economic opportunities.

---

**Prosperity Goal** Strengthen LA County's economic competitiveness and increase access to quality jobs, workforce development, and economic opportunities for all communities, with a focus on strengthening the 710 Corridor communities, which have been and continue to be harmed by economic activity and development.

---

**Environment Goal** Enhance the natural and built environment.

---

---

## DESIRED COMMUNITY RESULTS

The Investment Plan and Task Force process are intended to respond to the systemic issues and challenges described above, contributing to the advancement of broader aspirations for the Corridor and the region. The following Community Results summarize the aspirations voiced by the public, Task Force, and CLC members. If successfully aligned with the Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles, the Investment Plan will have a meaningful impact in helping the Corridor reach these desired future states of well-being:

### Desired Community Results

---

Healthy air for all to breathe

---

Improved and healthier transportation options to community resources (jobs, schools, health centers, etc.)

---

Reduced rates of health conditions such as asthma and heart disease, without disparities

---

Safe and comfortable pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections

---

Zero collision-related injuries and deaths

---

A zero-emission goods movement system

---

Economic vitality, including high local employment rates and living wages

---

An equitable workforce transition to support a green economy

---

Residents and businesses protected from displacement

---

Plentiful and accessible green space and shade

---

Communities reconnected by green spaces along the LA River

---

A trusting and balanced long-term partnership between Metro and LB-ELA Communities

---

DRAFT