



# Vermont Transit Corridor

*SB922 PUBLIC MEETING*

*REIMAGINE VERMONT AVENUE*

DECEMBER 2024



# Welcome!

*We're excited to embark on this journey together and create a transit corridor that serves the needs of our communities for generations to come.*



**Metro**

# Code of Conduct

## During this meeting, please:

- ✓ Respect the format of the meeting presentation and open house
- ✓ Turn off cell phones
- ✓ Maintain a conversational tone
- ✓ Treat fellow attendees, community members, agency representatives, and Metro staff with respect
- ✓ Public comments collected will not be formally addressed during the meeting. All comments will be reviewed and considered
- ✓ We invite you to ask questions during the Open House



# Agenda

- > Project Overview
- > Project Updates
- > Senate Bill 922 Environmental Process and Findings
- > Next Steps
- > Open House



# Project Background & Overview

# Project Background

- > Measure M Project - \$425M (2025\$) with opening date by 2028
- > Approximately 12.4 miles from Sunset Bl to 120<sup>th</sup> St with 36,000 daily boardings (busiest bus corridor in system)
- > September 2022: Metro Board directed staff to advance the Vermont Transit Corridor including:
  - Near-term improvements (being led by Operations with anticipated opening date Spring 2025)
  - Medium-term BRT
  - Long-term rail (to be delivered if funding becomes available)
- > October 2023 – Kicked off planning and environmental study & second phase of CBO partnership program



## **BRT ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY**



**WINTER**

- Engagement begins
- CBO engagements
- Equity conversations



## **CEQA SB 922 EXEMPTION STUDIES & CONCEPTUAL DESIGN**



**SPRING/FALL/WINTER**

- CBO engagements
- CBO support for community listening sessions



## **FILING OF SB 922 EXEMPTION**



**EARLY 2025**

- Metro Board Approval of Proposed BRT Project



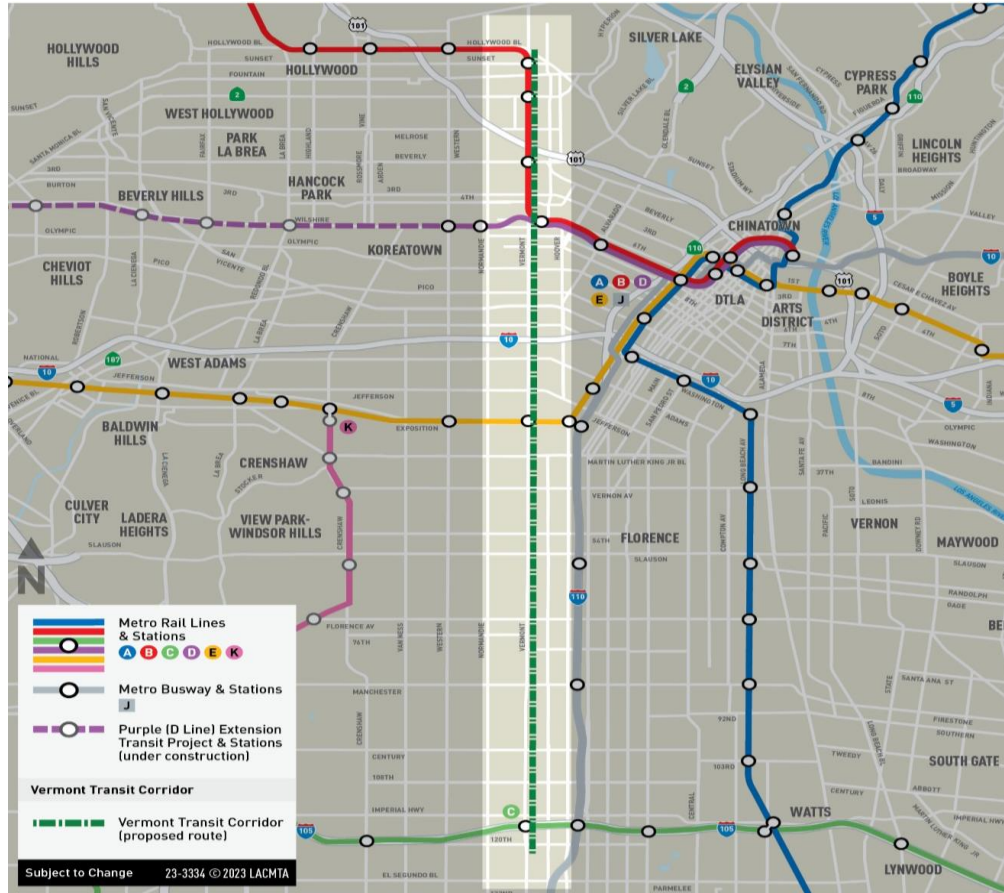
NEPA Clearance to follow in early Summer 2025

# Corridor Overview

Extends approximately 12.4 miles from Sunset Blvd. to 120th St.

Busiest bus corridor in LA County with 36,000 daily boardings.

Connects to 4 Metro rail lines and several other bus lines for improved regional mobility.



Serves many key activity centers including several health, educational and cultural institutions.

Heavily congested with varying ROW widths (55 ft to 160 ft curb-to-curb). Segments most congested have the highest ridership.

Densely populated, diverse and highly transit dependent corridor.



# Purpose & Need for Project

- > **Growing Travel Market:** High level of transit trips on corridor projected to grow over time; transit use is higher than County average
- > **Deteriorating Traffic Conditions:** Constrained right-of-way along segments of corridor results in increased operating conflicts, inefficient movement of people, decreased safety
- > **Degrading Transit Reliability:** Transit travel times, service quality and reliability are significantly impacted by traffic congestion all day; causes unreliable travel times and decreases rider confidence in service
- > **Increasing Transit Dependency:** Corridor has disproportionately high proportion of transit-dependent riders; entire corridor is within EFCs resulting in disparate outcomes for those with highest need (communities along corridor more likely to depend on transit for their mobility needs)
- > **Poor Safety and Customer Experience Conditions:** Poor conditions around transit stops or discourage riders; facilities often absent, in poor condition or in disrepair contributing to unsafe or uncomfortable waiting conditions and negative experiences or interactions

# Community Outreach Update

# Corridor-wide Engagement

As of November, the Vermont Transit Corridor Project engaged **21,174 people\***.



**Workshops**



**Community Meetings**



**Briefings**



**Canvasses**



**Community Events**

# Community Engagement Activities



# Key Themes from Workshops/Community Meetings

Based on the feedback Metro received from the public, here are some key themes:

- **Parking:** Residents concerned about loss of parking spaces due to bus lanes; **94% of parking will be maintained with project**
- **Business Impact:** Business owners worried about reduced access due to lane reductions/parking loss; **cars allowed in bus lanes to access parking, businesses, and make right-turns**
- **Community Impact:** Fear that project will negatively impact the community's character; **project will help enhance and maintain the community's character**
- **Safety/Security:** Concerns about safety/security; **project will provide enhanced station lighting & other potential safety features (emergency call buttons, cameras), improved and shorter crosswalks for enhanced pedestrian safety**
- **Traffic Flow:** Worry that lane reduction will worsen traffic congestion; **bus lanes will encourage mode shift onto transit, some traffic will divert onto other major streets as people adjust their travel patterns**



# Project Updates

# Update on BRT Project

- **Side-Running BRT:** After further analysis and all the feedback received, Metro is moving forward with an end-to-end side-running BRT (converts right most travel lane to full-time bus only)
- **Parking Matters:** Side-running BRT maintains most parking.
- **Key advantage:** side-running lanes/stations can be used by local buses (Metro/DASH) resulting in more amenities to more transit riders
- **More Benefits:** Overall, the benefits of side-running BRT outweigh the benefits of center/median-running BRT

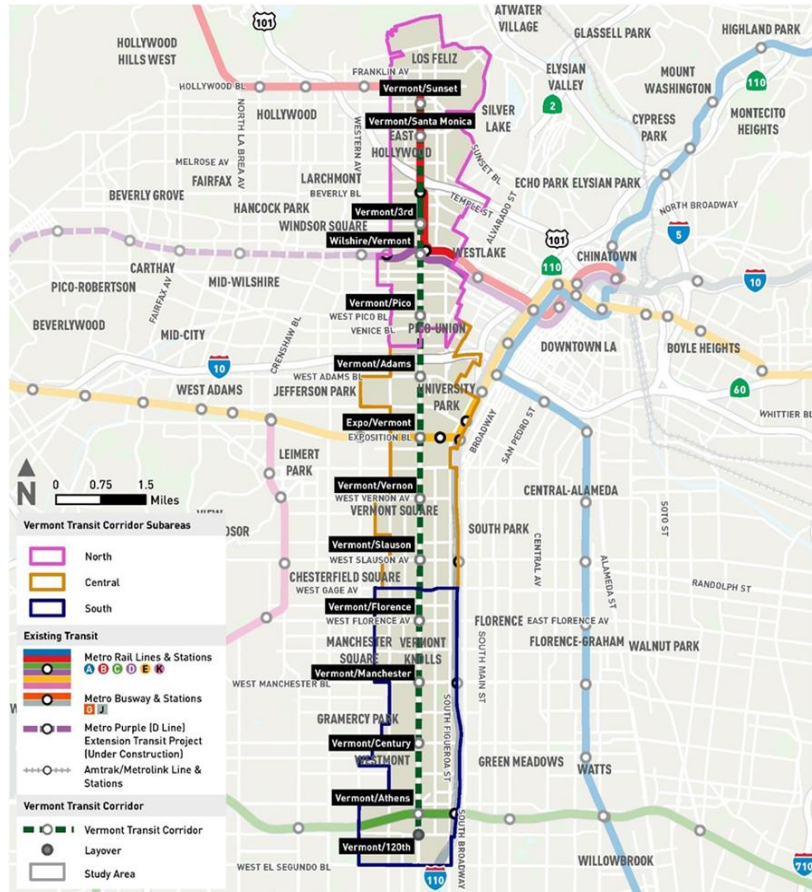


Side Running BRT – north of Gage



Side Running BRT – south of Gage

# Key BRT Elements

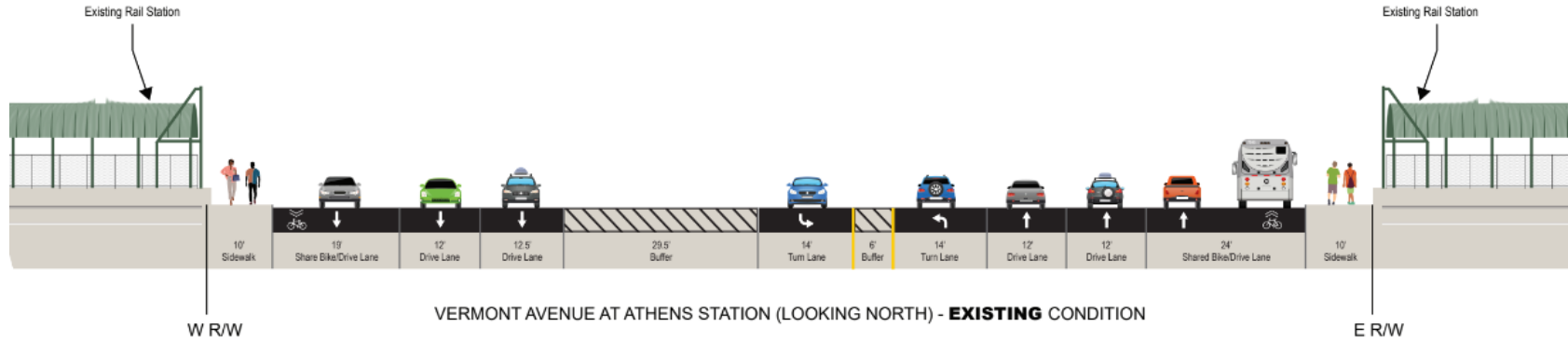


- > Converts travel lane next to curbside parking to bus-only lane
- > Includes 12.4 miles of all-day dedicated side-running bus lanes
- > 26 enhanced stations at 13 station locations with enhanced shelters and several passenger amenities including enhanced lighting for improved safety and security
- > Other improvements include enhanced crosswalks for higher visibility and improved safety for pedestrians
- > Bus bulbs at stations extend pedestrian area and shorten crossings for improved safety
- > Restriping and/or pavement repair
- > Other potential safety/security improvements could include emergency call buttons, security cameras

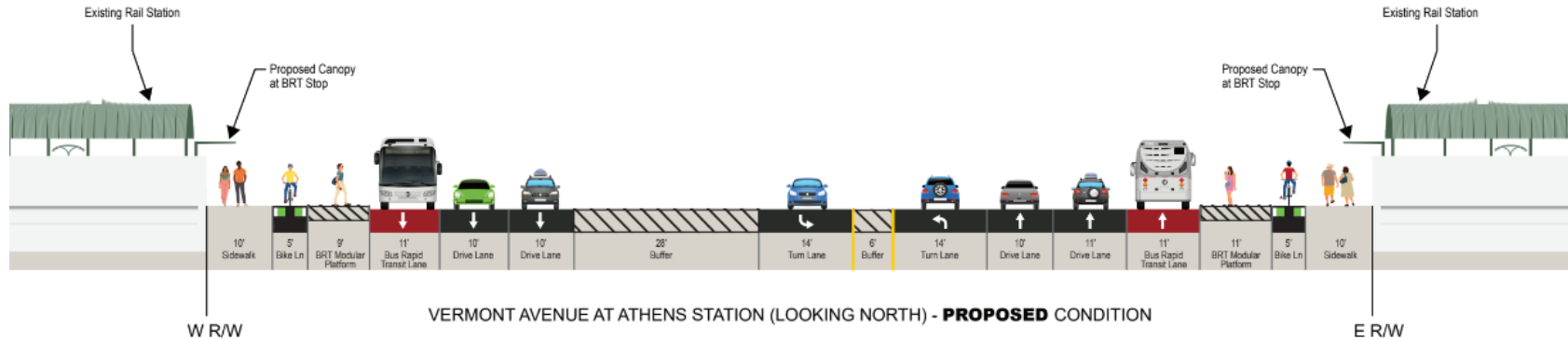


# Roadway Cross Section: 3 Lanes

## Existing – 2 Auto Lanes + 1 Auto / Bus Lane

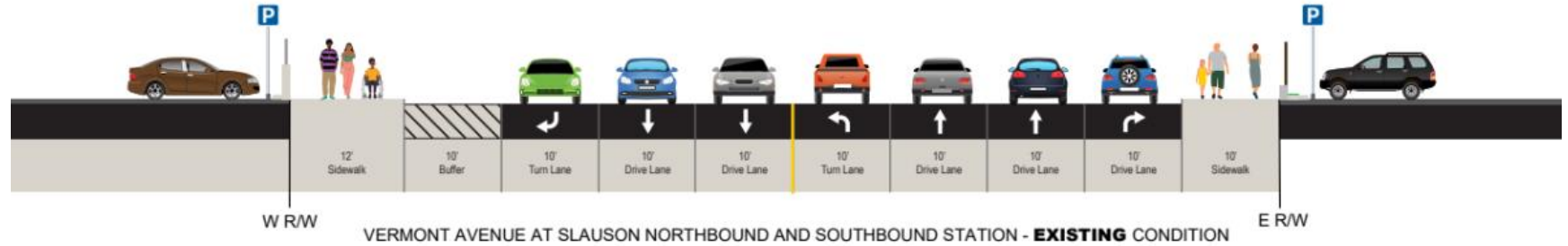


## Future with Project – 2 Auto Lanes + 1 Dedicated Bus Lane

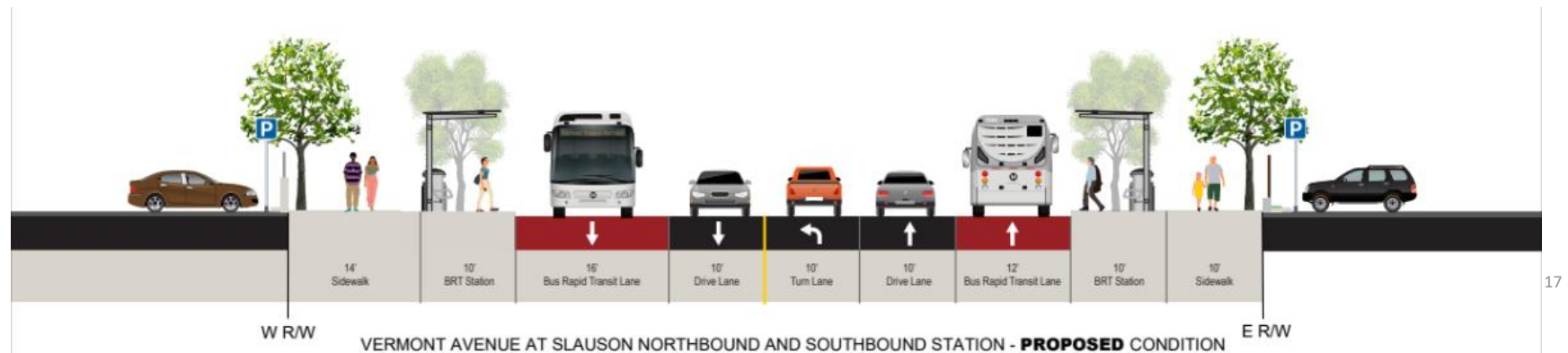


# Roadway Cross Section: 2 Lanes

## Existing – 1 Auto Lane + 1 Auto / Bus Lane



## Future with Project – 1 Auto Lane + 1 Dedicated Bus Lane



# Transit Improvements



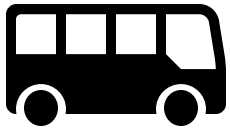
**66,200**

Daily Trips  
(BRT + Line 204)



**24%**

Reduction in  
Travel Time



**12,420**

New Daily Riders  
(Metro System)

Travel Without Project – 70 Min

Travel With Project – 53 Min



**13,670 Hrs**

Total Daily Travel  
Time Savings  
(All Travelers)

**The Project reduces travel time by  
17 minutes on the full route**

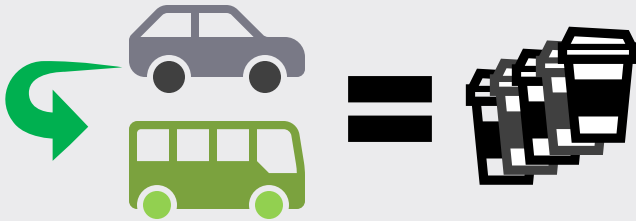


# User Benefits



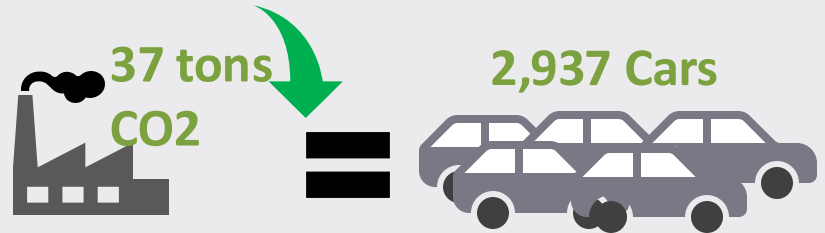
## User Cost Savings

A rider can save about **\$30** for every **10** trips taken by transit instead of a car - **equivalent to a free week of coffee.**



## Health Benefits

- **85,000** daily vehicle miles traveled reduced
- Removes **37** metric tons of CO2 daily or approximately **2,937** cars from the road daily
- Results in improved air quality for a healthier environment



# Existing Conditions – 3<sup>rd</sup> Street



# Enhanced Station Experience – 3<sup>rd</sup> Street



Safety and security features on canopy

Station signage and next bus information

Integrated lighting and shade canopy

Widened sidewalk for bus riders



# Roadway Capacity

A dedicated BRT lane can move 5 to 6 times the number of people per hour than an auto lane.



PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES  
600–1,600/HR



MIXED TRAFFIC WITH FREQUENT BUSES  
1,000–2,800/HR



DEDICATED BUS LANES  
4,000–8,000/HR



**Dedicated BRT Lanes Increase Roadway Capacity**



# Average Travel Time (in minutes) on Vermont Ave Athens Station to Gage Ave

■ No Project (2045)      ■ Project (2045)



Auto



Local 204



Rapid 754



BRT



# Average Travel Time (in minutes) on Vermont Ave Gage Ave to Wilshire Blvd

■ No Project (2045)      ■ Project (2045)



Auto



Local 204



Rapid 754



BRT



# Average Travel Time (in minutes) on Vermont Ave Wilshire Blvd to Sunset Blvd

No Project (2045)

Project (2045)



Auto



14



18.0



Local 204



21.5



21.5



Rapid 754



14

N/A



BRT

N/A



13



# Traffic Diversion



- > Traffic modeling showed approximately 40% of auto traffic on Vermont Ave would divert to other streets due to the travel lane conversion
  - 25% auto trips divert to Hoover St and Normandie Ave (parallel arterials).
  - 15% auto trips divert to parallel arterial streets east of Hoover and west of Normandie, outside the study area.



- > Traffic volumes on Hoover St and Normandie Ave generally have capacity for the diverted traffic
  - Traffic volumes increase for these streets by 5% - 20% compared to the No Project condition
  - Only 2 out of the 30 intersections evaluated on these streets would see an increase in delay

- > Traffic volumes on Vermont Ave result in only an average of 2 seconds of additional delay at intersections



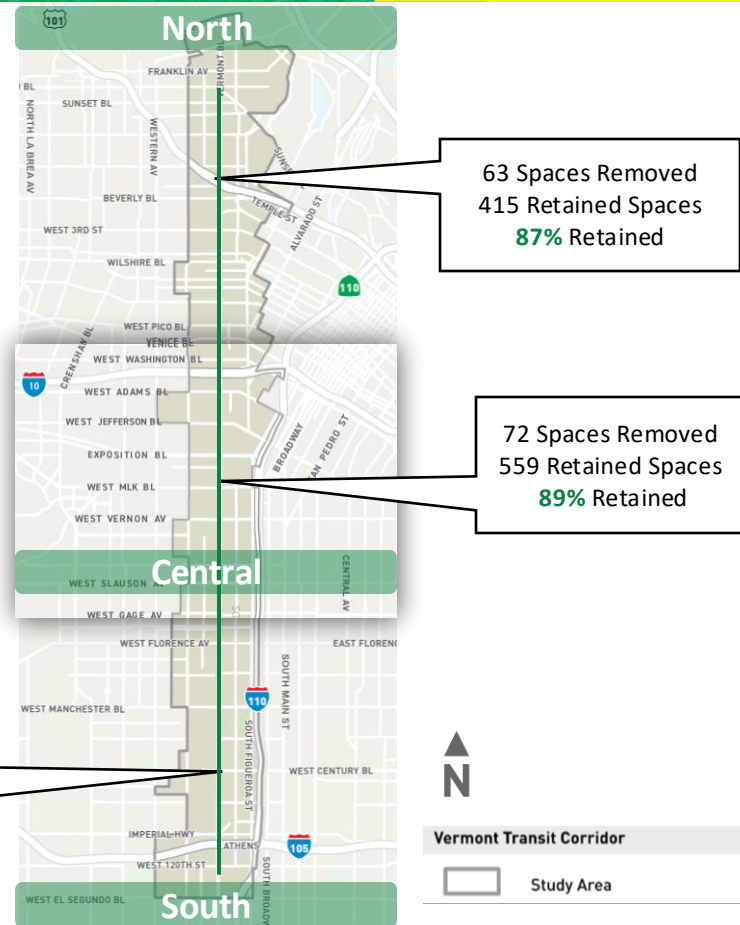
- > Also expect up to a 4-5% mode shift from single-occupancy vehicles to BBT

# Parking Analysis

The recommended alternative preserves **94%** of on-street parking on Vermont Corridor.

## On-Street Parking Spaces

	Existing	Removed	Remaining	Remaining %
North	478	63	415	87%
Central	631	72	559	89%
South	1157	11	1146	99%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2266</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>94%</b>



# Corridor Simulation – South Subarea



Segment 1  
87th St to 83rd St  
Northbound



# Corridor Simulation – Central Subarea



Segment 4  
Dana St to Washington Blvd  
Northbound



# Corridor Simulation – North Subarea



Segment 6  
4th St to 1st St  
Northbound



# Environmental Process Senate Bill 922 Exemption



Metro

# Senate Bill 922 Process

## Streamlined Process

Exempts sustainable transportation projects from an in-depth California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process.



## Required Studies

Three studies prepared:

- > Racial Equity
- > Residential Displacement
- > Business Case Study



## Public Meetings

- > Present SB 922 studies to the public
- > Continued outreach during Project construction phase



## Community Input

Comments from public meetings are received for Metro Board consideration



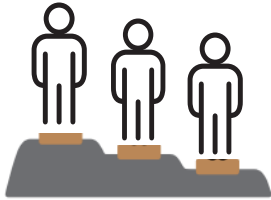
## Final Steps

If approved by the Metro Board, a CEQA Notice of Exemption is filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

# Racial Equity Analysis

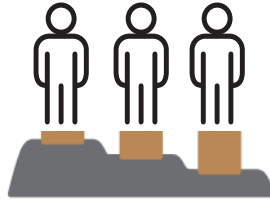
- > **Purpose:** Identify racial equity impacts and communities that will benefit from or be burdened by the Project. Develop strategies to address existing racial inequities in the Project Area.

*Equality is not the same as equity, and ultimately we're striving for justice.*



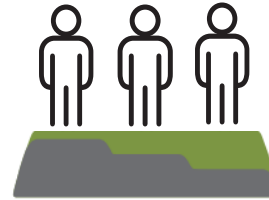
## EQUALITY

Equality of service to both communities **does not account for underlying historic inequities.**



## EQUITY

Equitable investments consider existing disparities and can **reduce disparities between communities.**



## JUSTICE

We strive for justice by **removing underlying barriers** and improving access to opportunities for everyone.

# Vermont Corridor Compared to LA County/City



Identify as Black,  
Indigenous, and People  
of Color (BIPOC)

Vermont Corridor

89%

LA County

75%

City of Los Angeles

72%



Low-income  
households  
*Income is <\$60,000*

56%

37%

41%



Do not have  
access to a car

20%

9%

12%



Renter-Occupied  
households

82%

64%

82%

**The Vermont Corridor has inequities related to race, housing, and mobility.**

# Findings and Role of the Project in Advancing Equity in the Vermont Corridor

The Project would provide equitable improvements and opportunities throughout the Vermont Corridor to help alleviate the existing inequities.



## Improve Transit Performance

- Reduce headways and travel times



## Enhance Customer Experience

- New BRT Stations
- Passenger amenities
- Safety amenities at stations
- Clear signage



## Invest in Community

- Engage stakeholders, CBOs, and local community
- Improve mobility and connectivity
- Integrate public art at stations



## Develop Cost-Effective Project within Desired Timeline

- Pursue funding opportunities
- Consider multimodal station improvements
- Align project with BRT-to-rail plans

# Residential Displacement Analysis: Purpose and Findings

- > **Purpose:** Examine the Project's potential for residential displacement and efforts to address potential risk for residential displacement
- > **Findings:**
  - **Project will not have any permanent physical acquisitions**
    - Project is within the public right-of-way
  - **Project may indirectly contribute to the changing residential market**
    - Better transit connectivity in the Vermont Corridor may indirectly spur new opportunities and interest for housing development.
- > **Metro is a transit agency and does not have jurisdiction over land use or other community development**

# Addressing the Potential for Indirect Residential Displacement

Strategies are focused on coordination and partnerships with public agencies, private developers, and community.



## Coordination Efforts

- Coordination with City of LA, LA County, and public agencies
- Encourage land use plans and policies that minimize residential displacement



## Partnerships for Housing Opportunities

- Potential opportunities on public land to support housing



## Joint Development Opportunities

- Not typical for BRT Projects
- Metro-owned parcels along Vermont Corridor could be developed to serve BRT users

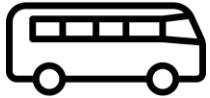
# Business Case Analysis

- > **Purpose:** Evaluate the Project's benefits, feasibility, costs, and impacts of the investment.
- > **Analysis:**
  - **Strategic Case** – How would the Project help Metro meet long-range goals?
  - **Economic Case** – What are the costs, benefits, and societal impacts?
  - **Financial Case** – What are the long-term financial impacts?
  - **Delivery and Operations Case** – How would the Project be built and executed?

# Business Case Findings

## > Strategic Case:

- Vermont Corridor is currently the busiest north-south travel corridor in the entire Metro bus system, with about 36,000 daily boardings.
- The Project supports the Long-Range Goals in Metro's 2020 *Long Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP)



Improve the frequency, speed and reliability of the bus and rail transit networks.



Enhance station areas.



Enhance customer service.



Optimize sustainable and resilient operations and maintenance of fleet (buses) and facilities (bus shelters).

# Business Case Findings

## > Economic and Financial Case:

- For every **dollar** Metro spends, the community gains **\$5.40** in benefits.

## > Delivery and Operations Case:

- Construction would bring 1,000 jobs for the duration of construction per year. Additional O&M spending would create about 260 jobs per year.



Increased Road  
Safety



New Facility  
Amenities



Transit Travel  
Time Savings



Employment  
Opportunities



\$5.40 in Benefits  
for Every  
Dollar Spent



Cleaner Air

## SB 922 Next Steps

- > Collect and review public comments received at the public meetings
- > Summarize comments and reports for consideration and Metro Board action
- > File CEQA Notice of Exemption
- > Ongoing community engagement during next phases of final design and construction



# Upcoming Meetings

Meeting	Date/Time	Location/Address
Community Meeting #1 Central Subarea	Saturday, December 7, 2024 10:00 AM-11:30 AM	Masjid Umar Ibn Al-Khattab 1025 Exposition Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90007
Community Meeting #2 South Subarea	Monday, December 9, 2024 6:00 PM-7:30 PM	Crenshaw Christian Center 7901 S Vermont Ave Los Angeles, CA 90044
Community Meeting #3 Virtual	Wednesday, December 11, 2024 12:00 PM-1:00 PM	Zoom Webinar
Community Meeting #4 North Subarea	Wednesday, December 11, 2024 6:00 PM-7:30 PM	Los Angeles City College 700 N. Heliotrope Drive Los Angeles
Community Meeting #5 Virtual	Monday, December 16, 2024 6:00 PM-7:30 PM	Zoom Webinar



# Stay Connected To This Project



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