



**ITEM ID:** 2025-167-0

**TRANSMITTAL DATE:** April 4, 2025

**MEETING DATE:** April 11, 2025

**TO:** Executive Committee

**FROM:** Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

**SUBJECT:** Metrolink Strategic Business Plan (SBP) Progress Report

### **Issue**

The 2021 Board-adopted Metrolink Strategic Business Plan (SBP) included a Short-Range Transit Plan articulating a number of goals for the agency to strive towards in the 2020-2025 timeframe. Nearing the end of this short-term timeframe, the Authority has assessed its progress towards meeting those goals. The SBP Progress Report highlights the Authority's progress in meeting the short-term goals.

### **Recommendation**

Receive and file.

### **Strategic Commitment**

This report aligns with the following Strategic Business Plan Commitment of:

- **Modernizing Business Practices:** The Strategic Business Plan Progress Report highlights the Authority's progress towards achieving its short-term goals and identifies areas for improvement and continued focus as the Authority develops a new strategic plan.

### **Background**

In January 2021, the Authority's Board of Directors adopted the Metrolink Strategic Business Plan (SBP) to articulate its value to the Southern California region and chart a course towards a stronger future. The SBP lays the foundation for Metrolink's transformation into a more

connected, efficient, and essential regional passenger rail service provider. The SBP outlines Metrolink's Mission and Vision and includes a framework for strategic actions for the agency for three distinct time periods: 2021-2025 (short-term), 2026-2030 (mid-term), and 2031- 2050 (long-term).

Preparation of the SBP began in early 2020, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic when ridership projections were optimistic. However, like most other transit agencies in America, Metrolink's outlook took a sharp turn in March 2020 when Stay-at-Home Orders forced a pivot to accommodate changing trends and realities. Although ridership dropped by as much as 91% at the peak of the Pandemic, there remained a core cohort of riders – essential workers, including first responders and healthcare providers, who were on the frontline of the Pandemic. Analysis of Pandemic trends highlight the multiple layers of Metrolink's market and helped clarify that Metrolink's mission needed to be extended beyond serving just commuter markets.

The SBP outlined a framework for survival and recovery through the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond. Furthermore, it provides guidance for Metrolink's continued evolution in response to emerging challenges and opportunities, which is reflected in the short, mid-, and long-term goals. The SBP set forth actionable and quantifiable goals classified according to five commitments:

- Safety is Foundational
- Customers are Our Business
- Connecting and Leveraging Partnerships
- Modernizing Business Practices
- Advancing Key Regional Goals

## **Discussion**

Five years have passed since the development of the SBP, offering an opportune time to assess progress against the short-term goals included in the SBP and to evaluate whether Metrolink is achieving its broad strategy of developing into a more comprehensive regional rail system. The SBP Progress Report highlights Metrolink's progress in meeting the short-term goals set within the original Strategic Business Plan. Each initiative is assessed as to whether it is:

- Completed
- Completed & Ongoing
- In Progress
- Attempted

Overall, progress in accomplishing the set of goals developed in 2020 was successful, and Metrolink continues to build on that momentum. Of the 25 short-term goals, 18 were Completed, or are Completed & Ongoing. Progress is still underway for another six goals, and one was attempted, though not accomplished. Notable accomplishments include:

- Launched Arrow service in San Bernardino County;
- Introduced flexible fare policies including Student Adventure Pass;
- Updated Metrolink Rehabilitation Plan and developed State of Good Repair Program; and
- Launched 'Metrolink Reimagined' schedule update

Initiatives and goals that involved a considerable transformation over time generally required ongoing work. Therefore, there are several goals the Authority has made demonstrable achievements towards, but work will continue to be ongoing.

This Progress Report will help identify which goals need to be retained in an updated strategic plan. Furthermore, the SBP Progress Report will help identify how the Authority should evolve its strategic direction to reflect the current realities, challenges, and opportunities moving forward.

The Progress Report is included as an addendum to the re-branded Strategic Business Plan (starting on page 99), which is attached to this report.

### **Next Steps**

The Authority will initiate the development of new Strategic Business Plan in Fiscal Year 2026, which reflects the goals and priorities for Metrolink in the post-Pandemic environment.

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Approved by:                      Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

### **Attachment(s)**

[Attachment A - Metrolink Strategic Plan Presentation - SBP Progress Report](#)