METROLINK

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ITEM ID:	**2023-201-0**
TRANSMITTAL DATE:	**June 2, 2023**
MEETING DATE:	**June 9, 2023**
TO:	**Executive Committee**
FROM:	**Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer**
SUBJECT:	**Station Connectivity Enhancement Plan**

Issue

This report presents information on the recent study report prepared by Metrolink and the consulting firm, Mott MacDonald, examined connectivity barriers linked to getting to and from Metrolink stations and strategies developed for addressing those barriers. Member agencies and Metrolink riders also participated in the development of the report.

Recommendation

Receive and file.

Strategic Commitment

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitment of:

- **Advance Key Regional Goals:** We will grow the role of regional rail in addressing climate change, air quality, and other pressing issues by advancing toward zero emissions, making rail a compelling alternative to single-occupant automobiles and advancing equity-focused opportunities for all communities throughout Southern California.

Background

The Metrolink Station Connectivity Enhancement Plan is funded by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to identify and propose recommendations to remove barriers to accessing Metrolink stations through integrated strategies and pilot projects. The plan also

included consultation and coordination with Metrolink's member agencies and local jurisdictions that are the primary owners of the stations that the agency services.

This study is an outcome and extension of Metrolink's Strategic Business Plan and its Accessibility and Affordability Study, completed in 2021. By improving first/last mile connections between stations and passengers' origins and destinations, Metrolink aims to increase system ridership, support connections to current and future development around station areas, and work towards a multi-modal future for Southern California.

Discussion

To develop connectivity barrier removal recommendations (tool kits/capital projects), we need to better understand existing access conditions at the 62 Metrolink stations (excluding new Arrow Service stations). During the project, the Consultant completed a combination of field and desktop surveys, GIS data analysis, and a review of internal Metrolink station information. The assessment focused on a half-mile radius surrounding each station and the station itself, looking at physical and design conditions that may support or hinder access via modes other than single-occupancy vehicles. The analysis also informed the creation of station typologies, which can serve as a guide and critical link between service planning, design, and funding strategy efforts to enhance connectivity to stations and mobility for the region. More efficient improvement delivery systems can be realized by identifying improvements and focusing policy and funding efforts on a station-type basis (rather than by individual stations). The station typologies were developed in collaboration between the technical team members and Metrolink staff and cross-checked with the passenger survey insights.

The Station Connectivity Toolkit supports the implementation of this plan's recommendations by providing transit agencies, local jurisdictions, stakeholders, and community groups with a clear framework from which to implement improvements.

The toolkit builds upon the station typologies approach by identifying tools that are applicable to each station typology, and that are divided into five categories:

- Pedestrian Tools - geared toward enhancing pedestrian safety and access to the station with safe, accessible crosswalks, pedestrian access paths, curb ramps, and street crossing features.
- Comfort and Convenience Tools - geared toward enhancing the customer experience with amenities that can help combat climate change, keep customers informed of arrivals/departures, and provide comfort while waiting for trains.
- Wheel Tools - geared toward enhancing the station access experience for customers who arrive via bicycles or other human-powered means.
- Transit/Micromobility Tools - geared toward enhancing station access for customers who arrive via local transit systems or by micromobility vehicles.
- Auto-Oriented Tools - geared toward enhancing station access for customers who arrive at the station by being dropped off in a vehicle, in their own vehicle, or via rideshare services.

Each toolkit tool includes design considerations relevant to Metrolink stations, a description of the difficulty level for implementation, and relative descriptions of implementation and maintenance costs. The toolkit also identifies how different groups of stakeholders can use the toolkit to collaborate and implement station area improvements.

A list of pilot projects is developed to demonstrate the tool kit application. Pilot projects are

defined as physical or programmatic projects that will support connectivity and accessibility at one or more stations and are intended to serve as a model or example from which lessons can be learned and built upon in future deployments as they are implemented across the system. The pilot projects for this plan include conceptual designs and cost estimates that build upon the effort previously described and were developed based on four primary principles:

- Replicability - The pilot projects were designed with replicability in mind. Once the toolkit, standards, and policies/procedures are established and implemented, they can also be implemented at other stations without starting from scratch.
- Equity - Pilot projects selected for implementation will be located at or adjacent to stations located in communities where there are more significant numbers of residents with lower incomes or areas that are SB 535-designated Disadvantaged Communities. The portfolio also includes youth- and senior-focused pilot projects that could serve two key demographics that tend to have lower access to a vehicle or who may not be able to drive.
- Improved Customer Experience - To attract new riders, retain existing riders, and better serve Metrolink customers, the pilot projects aim to enhance the customer experience by making transit more comfortable and convenient.
- Experimentation and Innovation - The pilot projects portfolio is designed to respond to a shifting mobility landscape, in which experimentation and innovation - particularly using technology - can extend public transit's reach, usefulness, and flexibility. These projects are particularly suitable to pilot project deployment and the pursuit of grant funding.

Next Steps

With the economy slowly recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, along with the change in the dynamics of the commuter market, Metrolink must modify its business model. Metrolink needs to expand its clientele beyond the traditional office worker in the post-pandemic era. This study provides tool kits (capital projects) recommendations to improve access to Metrolink stations and make Metrolink an attractive alternative to driving. Metrolink aims to work with partners to prioritize investments and provide guidance on the management and maintenance of stations to improve the usefulness and reach of transit. Metrolink stations are typically owned by the jurisdiction or transit agency where they are located. Based on this unique relationship, station owners can work with their stakeholders and local community groups to identify and implement any tools presented in the Station Connectivity Toolkit.

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Approved by:	Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

Attachment(s)

Attachment A - Station Connectivity Enhancement Plan
Presentation - Station Connectivity Enhancement Plan