

## Project Highlight

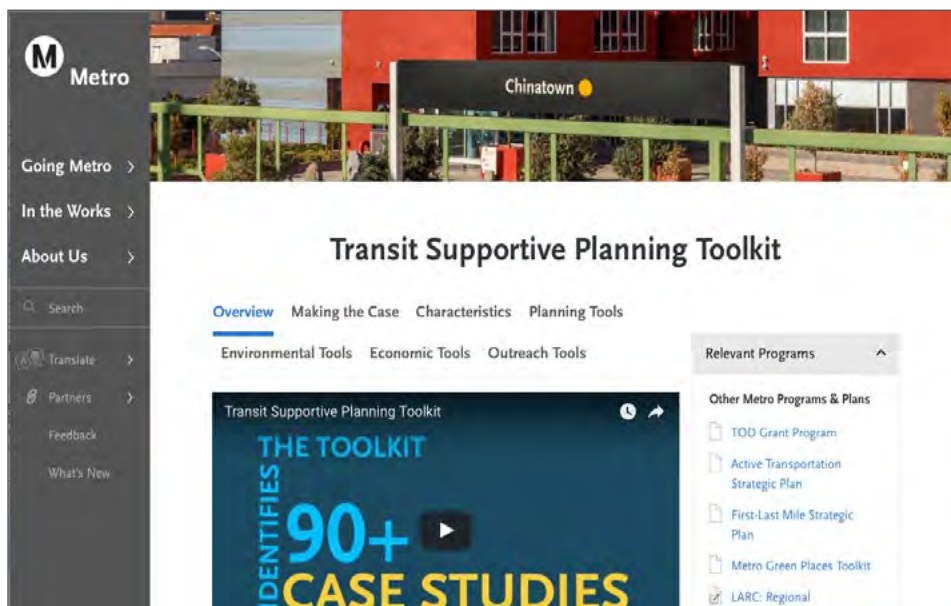


# Transit Supportive Planning Toolkit for Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County, one of the Country’s largest and most populous counties, is experiencing a transformational expansion of the public transportation system. In 2008, LA County voters approved Measure R, a half-cent sales tax increase, and then in 2016, they approved Measure M to extend that tax in perpetuity to fund the expansion of the public transportation system as well as connecting to multimodal networks. This unprecedented expansion of the public transportation system is being led by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), the transportation planner, designer, builder and operator for a service area that covers 1,433 square miles and 88 local jurisdictions in LA County.

Metro firmly recognizes the critical relationship between a successful public transportation system and comprehensive community planning. As such, Metro administers a grant program that funds local jurisdictions to develop and adopt transit-supportive regulatory documents. To further the regional advancement of holistic, comprehensive transit supportive plans, Metro secured a grant from the Strategic Growth Council to develop the *Transit Supportive Planning Toolkit* (the Toolkit).

Grounded in research, the *Toolkit*, is a comprehensive resource with LA County-relevant best practices, case studies, and over 50 tools that that LA County communities can utilize to advance equitable, sustainable, transit-supportive planning in LA County.



*A glimpse of the toolkit's accessible online format shows a wealth of case studies, recommendations and examples, all available in one place.*

## The Project

Knowing that successful transit networks are reliant on land use and urban planning patterns that support transit ridership, Metro identified a need to support local governments in LA County with the development of transit-supportive regulatory documents and policies. Ten characteristics that support the creation of Transit-Supportive Places were defined by research. The 10 characteristics should be used together to achieve development patterns and transportation systems that create livable places while increasing transit ridership and reducing greenhouse gases emissions. With these goals in mind, Metro began the *Transit Supportive Planning Toolkit* in 2014.

The online *Toolkit* serves as a comprehensive research-based resource for government staff, bringing together a wide range of research, tools and case studies in one accessible location. The *Toolkit* will help to leverage Metro's multi-billion dollar investment in transit, while supporting local government efforts to comply with State direction regarding greenhouse gas reduction.

The *Toolkit* includes a wide range of policy and regulatory tools that have been successfully implemented throughout Southern California and across the State to promote Transit-Oriented Communities. It is geared towards local governments, advocates and developers in Metro's service area and contains a number of policy and regulatory tools, research on the characteristics of transit-supportive places, and analytical models to evaluate the benefits of Transit-Oriented Development, among other topics. The following information is in the *Toolkit*:

- **Characteristics of Transit Supportive Places Characteristics:** A description of the 10 key elements of transit-supportive places with research describing the benefits of each (see page 60 for an illustration of the 10 elements). The characteristics describe how neighborhood design, roadways, pedestrian facilities, business districts, and other factors can collectively can increase transit ridership.
- **Policy and Planning Tools:** Specific policy, planning and regulatory tools spanning Land Use and Planning, Transportation and Parking, Urban Design, and Affordable Housing. Tools include samples of policy documents like specific plans, zoning codes, and general plans that cities and counties can refer to for best practices and ideas to adapt to their own communities.
- **Environmental Analysis Tools:** A description and link to online analytical tools that help communities understand the benefits of transit-supportive places. The *Toolkit* explains the differences between different environmental and health planning analytical tools that are available to local governments and are frequently used to quantify the environmental benefits of policy decisions.



## Locally-Driven Solutions

- Creating an online Toolkit provides a central and convenient location for resources that local governments can use to advance transit supportive planning in LA County.
- Coordinating with other regional initiatives, like the Los Angeles Regional Collaborative sustainability work, to help leverage the impact of the project.
- Engaging with local government staff who will be using the toolkit on a day-to-day basis in order to design an interface and content that best meets the needs of *Toolkit* users.

The toolkit illustrates how transit supportive planning concepts can be applied across the region based on community size. As illustrated at right, all planning concepts are marked with a “size,” so that cities can immediately identify which policies would best fit their city.  
Source: LA Metro



- Economic Benefits:** A description of the economic benefits of transit-supportive places as well as information regarding a variety of funding and financing options available for local governments to support transit-supportive community development.
- Outreach and Communication Best Practices:** Methods for engaging the community in the decision-making process in a way that supports transit. The *Toolkit* includes examples from other communities who have engaged residents and decision makers in innovative ways.

agencies with strategies to better adapt to climate change and respond to State mandates regarding greenhouse gas emissions and sustainability, such as Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375. Funding for both programs is provided by the Sustainable Communities Program from the Strategic Growth Council. The *Transit Supportive Planning Toolkit* is a critical component of the Framework since it addresses integration of transportation and land use, some of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

### Local/Regional Connection

The *Transit Supportive Planning Toolkit* and website is part of a larger effort called *A Greater LA: The Framework for Regional Climate Action and Sustainability*, currently under development by the Los Angeles Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability. This framework will provide local

### Agency Collaboration for Action

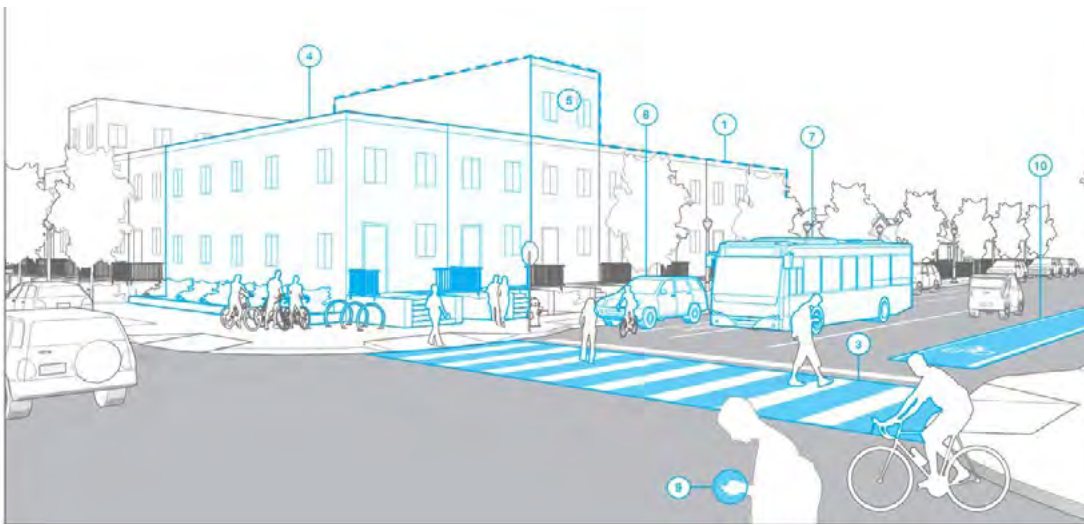
An important component of online *Toolkit* development has been the ongoing coordination with staff in the cities that comprise Los Angeles County and the County itself. Additionally, Metro administers the Transit-Oriented Development Planning Grant Program, a competitive grant program that focuses on encouraging the adoption of transit supportive regulatory documents. The Transit-Oriented Development Planning Grant Program is available to Los Angeles County jurisdictions.



### Effective Community Engagement

LA Metro engaged agency stakeholders in an iterative development process for *Toolkit* elements. Metro staff conducted a series of Advisory Forums early in the process to identify the specific needs of future *Toolkit* users. Through the Advisory Forums, Metro staff learned that local government staff had a particular

The toolkit highlights ten key characteristics of transit-supportive communities. These include (1) compact design, (2) complete neighborhoods, (3) street & network connectivity, (4) site and parking layout & building design, (5) affordable housing, (6) business retention & expansion, (7) transit prioritization, (8) parking management, (9) transportation demand management, and (10) pedestrian & bicycle circulation. Source: LA Metro



**"SMALL"**  
1,000-3,000 people/sq. mi



**"LARGE"**  
10,000-25,000 people / sq.mi.

At left, above a schematic depicts these concepts in a small city. Below, transit-oriented development is applied to a larger city. The toolkit explores how key transit-oriented development concepts on the opposing page (numbered 1-10) can be implemented depending on a city's size and resources. Source: LA Metro

interest in specific tools, local case studies, specific funding opportunities, and flexible applications adaptable to a variety of communities. By taking draft materials to stakeholders to work through in a workshop setting, LA metro staff received valuable input. By working with the users of the final product, Metro staff was able to design a superior and more useful product. Upon completing the draft Toolkit, Metro held a soft launch with potential users that helped inform the final product.

### For More Information

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## Sustainable Benefits for California

Use of the *Transit Supportive Planning Toolkit* will help to advance many of California's sustainability objectives, particularly in the areas of:

- Economic Prosperity
- Energy efficiency and conservation
- Equity
- Infill and compact development
- Reduced automobile usage and fuel consumption
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Revitalized urban and community centers