"Our County Transportation and People" Public & Private Sector Workshop Summary

Workshop Overview

UCLA convened public and private sector leaders across Los Angeles County to provide input on the transportation system in L.A. County and their intersections with land use, housing, climate adaptation, and other cross-cutting sustainability topics. The "Transportation and People" workshop, held on September 26, 2018 at Metro Headquarters, convened over 70 attendees representing 54 public agencies, private sector entities, and transportation providers.

Stakeholders participated throughout the three and a half-hour workshop in various breakout sessions that allowed them to refine, rewrite, and prioritize Transportation-related goals and strategies. These goals and strategies will drive the Our County plan.

Workshop Proceedings

The L.A. County Chief Sustainability Office began the workshop by providing an overview of the Our County plan development process. Stephanie Wiggins, the Deputy Chief Executive Office at Metro, welcomed participants to Metro Headquarters and shared the agency's own regional planning measures. UCLA followed with a presentation covering key background information, data, and regional findings related to transportation infrastructure, regional mobility, transit accessibility, countywide transportation planning efforts, and emerging technology and companies. Stakeholders in the room all received an accompanying briefing document outlining the information in UCLA's presentation. (The stakeholders received this document ahead of time to review and UCLA also provided copies at the workshop).

After the group presentations, workshop participants met in breakout groups to provide feedback on general Transportation goals that were included in the briefing and framed the discussion. Participants selected goals that aligned with their professional and personal experience, using one-on-one conversations to spur the group's wider discussion and reworking of the goals. Facilitators took notes on butcher paper in addition to recording detailed notes in a typed document.

The second breakout session featured a series of prompts evoking cross-cutting sustainability themes. Participants developed a list of transportation-related sustainability strategies based on the various prompts. The participants shared these results in a report back to the entire audience of attendees.

The final breakout session had each attendee from the public sector pair off with an attendee from the private sector. The public-private pair developed a concept for a Transportation-focused public-private partnership opportunity relating to one of the prompts. The L.A. County Chief Sustainability Office delivered closing remarks and to wrap-up the workshop and stakeholders completed a feedback survey.

Our County

This summary report is a compilation and synthesis of nearly 600 comments that the Stakeholder Engagement Team was able to capture through butcher paper notes, typed transcription, and written note cards, as well as written feedback received after the workshop.

Key Takeaways

- Stakeholders expressed concern that the goals and strategies should more clearly support **reducing the amount of time, distance, and emissions caused by the overwhelming use of private vehicles**. Though stakeholders had differing opinions on the degree to which low occupancy vehicles should be supported in the region, nearly all agreed that L.A. County should incorporate language into the plan that specifically calls for decreasing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and better prioritizing public transportation on existing roadways and through new infrastructure.

- During the strategies discussion, stakeholders focused on the **relationship between transportation and public health**, recognizing that public health is a key area where L.A. County has direct control. Participants linked a wide range of transportation issues to public health, including pedestrian and bicyclist safety; air quality; accessibility to health and education services; and supportive services for vulnerable transit riders. However, stakeholders had much less feedback to offer when prompted to address the corresponding goal ("Improve transportation-related health and safety outcomes"). The goal language may benefit from explicitly wording key issues that "health and safety outcomes" encompass.

- Participants want to see L.A. County increase its focus on **the role that transportation can play to boost the regional economy and create workforce development opportunities**. Stakeholders shared a variety of strategies about how the County can achieve this. Many discussed incentivizing housing and jobs along existing transportation corridors. Others felt that the transportation industry at large should bring more jobs to local communities through local hire and equitable project labor agreements.

- Some comments stakeholders shared - particularly stakeholders in the electric vehicle industry - suggested that the **workshop discussion on vehicle electrification did not match the current emphasis and complexity of the issue** in the region. Despite the fact that there was a prompt focused on the nexus between energy and transportation, stakeholders did not develop many strategies around vehicle electrification. Relatedly, many felt that the goal of decarbonization of freight corridors was actually a strategy to reduce energy consumption, air pollution and carbon emissions overall.

- Public and private sector stakeholders agreed on the need for **robust public engagement** when it comes to transportation projects, programs, and policies. Though several comments were made about better involving communities in the planning process, the majority of feedback focused on public education and mobility literacy. The message is that stakeholders want to see programs that educate residents about transportation options and make it easier for them to adopt new behaviors around transportation use.

Draft Goals Feedback

Stakeholders responded with lots of feedback regarding the goals and the way they were organized. Of all of the goals, stakeholders prioritized improving transportation-related health and safety outcomes and improving transportation system reliability, accessibility, user experience, and resiliency to support high-quality mobility options.

Stakeholders had strong feelings regarding the specific language of each goal. Some felt that goals such as F were too broad, while others argued that Goal F is critical to making all the other goals possible. Many participants felt that Goals D & E could be combined, as well as Goals A & B.

Goal A: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and equitable access to jobs and economic opportunity

Participants noted that this goal does, and needs to, focus on community benefits rather than environmental impacts. Stakeholders noted the need to bring "community building" towards the front of the sentence, and to change the language accordingly. Participants noted that the goal should not only focus on commutes because people travel for many other reasons, including education, family care, errands, and daily destinations. The growth in flexible work habits provides reasons for not centering this discussion only on commuting.

The impacts on specific communities were raised. For example, Lancaster residents commit an enormous percentage of their household income to transit costs, sometimes making commutes of up to three hours. This leads to limited time with family and other quality of life impacts that ties in with Goal B. The South Bay, which lacks both significant public transit and high-density housing, wanted more focus on vehicle miles traveled, cleaner vehicles, and vehicle sharing. These concerns should be added into the goal to ensure that it does not focus only on fixed-route transit.

Participants also noted that the goal should be targeted more at underserved or disenfranchised communities. A suggestion was made that the goal should be split in half - one goal would be about enhancing lives through mobility and equity; the second would be about equitable access to jobs and economic opportunity.

Goal B: Improve transportation system reliability, accessibility, user experience, and resiliency to support high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling

Many participants agreed with the importance of Goals A and B, and felt they are linked, noting the strong relationship between transportation systems and quality of life. Stakeholders noted that Goal B must precede goal A, because, by achieving goal B, the region will be more able to reach goal A.

Many questioned singling out less time commuting rather than better user experiences and reduced impact on the environment. It was argued that the goal should focus on access to destinations rather than time travelled because walkable neighborhoods are not simply about transit time. A train could take longer than driving, but is sometimes preferable for greater convenience and lower costs and/or stress. Because many residents do not know how the transportation system works or are unwilling to change without persuasive evidence, there is a need for more awareness.

Other suggestions provided were: (1) the term "high quality" should be simplified to "quality;" (2) a definition of "transportation system" is needed; (3) resiliency should be pulled out of the goal and put into a separate one; (4) because "spend less time travelling" could be interpreted to support expansion of highways, "more streamlined;" (5) explicitly add carbon emissions to the goal; (6) add "dignity" to the goal, and (7) capture the affordability aspect of transportation.

Goal C: Improve transportation-related health and safety outcomes

Stakeholders suggested adding language such as "reduce injuries and fatalities" to make the goal clearer. Others suggested adding terms of equity and economic disparity, because those are both key aspects of traffic fatalities. Several stakeholders approved of C as an important goal, especially because the young and the elderly disproportionately bear the brunt of safety issues. However, they also said the goal needs to make those distributional aspects of safety risk more explicit. The goal needs to consider the health of the region as a whole, and the role transportation plays within that region.

Other suggestions for the goal language included (1) removing the word "outcomes" from the goal (2) including public health impacts; (3) more aggressive phrasing that suggests public transportation will improve health and well-being; and (4) adding "and pedestrian realms" to add consideration of crosswalks, jaywalking, and illegal crossing.

Goal D: Decarbonize freight corridors

Participants generally agreed that Goal D should be folded into Goal E because D is extremely specific and is a good strategy for achieving E. Additionally, the goal, to stand on its own, would need to include more than just freight corridors. For example, Metrolink still uses clean diesel and could also be decarbonized, so the goal should include all transportation corridors and modes. Overall, it was suggested that the goal should broaden to accentuate goods movement in a better, efficient, healthier way. L.A. County needs to consider how to incentivize freight industries to ensure electric trucks and alternative modes are made more readily available, so that these industries can become better actors.

Stakeholders suggested that, in regards to decarbonization, it is important to look at whether carbon is tailpipe or overall emissions. Policy makers will need to look at what kinds of infrastructure they want to promote.

Goal E: Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions by transportation sector

Participants suggested that the term "reduce energy consumption" should instead be a strategy. Additionally, it was mentioned that E could serve as an overarching goal rather than one of several goals because of its importance. On the language of the goal, a suggestion was made to use "greenhouse gas emissions" instead of carbon emissions.

Goal F: Amplify regional efforts to achieve a sustainable transportation system

Some stakeholders argued that Goal F is needed to make it all the other goals achievable. Some felt that financing and regional land use need to be incorporated into this goal, as they are both critical to achieve this goal.

One participant said the goal would be clearer if the term "governance" were included. Another noted that streamlining decision making should be included, and a third wanted to bring "funding" into the goal. Others suggested (1) using the term "resilient" instead of "sustainable," and (2) changing the language to specify interagency collaboration for sustainable transportation systems.

Suggestions were offered that this goal should incorporate an educational aspect, and that the goal language itself should add the words "amplify regional education efforts" because of the need to keep the network of people at the workshop interacting with each other and with public.

Other Goals and Related Feedback

Other goal related feedback was more general and is listed below:

- The goals should be more limited and high-level. Similarly, the language in goals needs to be less specific (i.e. pathways to opportunity as opposed to jobs).
- The plan needs goal language that focuses on increasing public transit usage.
- Goals should better stress reducing dependence on single occupancy vehicles.
- Goals need to explicitly mention land use to address poor and inefficient land use methods. Similarly the goals fail to address natural resource conservation and habitat and the reduction of environmental impacts of the transportation system.
- Goals is needed that ensures transportation methods do not disrupt natural resource conservation and habitats.
- The goals should focus more explicitly on how to develop effective first mile-last mile strategies.
- If goals for other topics like water and energy include numbers and indicators, they are needed here as well. For example, the goal on safety should say "zero fatalities" or be moving towards a target, such as X reduction by x year.
- The goals could have greater emphasis on multi-modality.

Recommended Strategies

To improve L.A. County's transportation sustainability practices, stakeholders suggested several specific strategies for achieving progress towards sustainability goals focused around several aspirational prompts. Stakeholders expressed interest in several key major cross-cutting themes throughout, including public health & well-being, funding & financing, resilient infrastructure, and housing.

Many of the proposed strategies focused around policies and programs that encourage workforce development, housing policies, personal health and safety, and community engagement, and public/private partnerships.

Priority Strategies

Participants shared which strategies they believe L.A. County should prioritize most in the *Our County* plan. These are in no particular order:

- Create policies and programs to ensure transportation investment does not lead to displacement
- Eliminate minimum parking requirements
- Provide free transit passes to encourage use and to not penalize those who cannot afford it with heavy fines
- Ensure all transportation investments made by L.A. County are zero-emissions projects
- Support bus rapid transit and bus-only rapid lanes
- Ensure the inclusion of robust community engagement in project development
- Incentivize housing near transit
- Make sure biking/pedestrian infrastructure includes shade to allow people to use it comfortably
- Need for active planning of infrastructure that can be resilient in the face of disasters
- Ensure strategies and financial incentives are aligned
- Prioritize projects in historically underserved communities

Many other strategy ideas were discussed and agreed upon by many participants. Below is a selection of relevant strategies categorized by each cross-cutting topic area discussed in the breakout session.

Public Health & Wellbeing	- Focus policies and programs on making it safer to walk and bike - Focus transportation planning on connecting communities with vital resources like food markets, medical services, etc. - Provide transit and roadway priority for buses, like through bus-dedicated lanes to increase speed and improve customer experience - Consider the health consequences of sitting in traffic when funding mobility projects that move people through communities - Curb develop of infrastructure in "sensitive" places that will be endangered in 30-40 years due to climate change - Prioritize infill development - Create "no drive zones" in particularly high-density walkable areas
Racial Justice	- Connect historically underserved communities to opportunities - Create more infrastructure beyond typical transportation implementations - think of green path, artwork, etc. - Ensure strong project labor agreements - Go beyond merely transporting people in disadvantaged communities to instead use transportation as a means to bring jobs to the community themselves - Reach adults through their children – integrate programming into schools in disenfranchised communities to teach how to appreciate transit - Plan for resilient infrastructure in the face of disasters, understanding that frontline communities will experience the worst impacts - Prioritize investments for communities of color and low-income communities that are impacted with GHGs and emissions - Ensure the inclusion of robust community engagement in project development - Remove burdensome fine amounts for people who cannot afford to pay for transportation fares. Offer free passes for those who need it rather than punish people for not being able to pay - Reclaim spaces that have been used to segregate communities in disadvantaged spaces - Promote a future where highways no longer to bisect, cross, and threaten communities of color

Economy & Workforce Development	- Support programs and focus County's own employment on bringing work closer to people's homes - Encourage employers to support telecommuting - Support organizations/actors like CBOs and regional collaboratives that act as links between local companies in order to create an economy that aligns with a positive environmental future - Provide free or more affordable transportation for education - Connect communities to schools, community colleges, and universities - Ensure a mechanism for legacy businesses so they are not displaced - Prepare for the loss of jobs whether by automation, outsourcing, ending dependence on fossil fuels, etc. - Support alternative ways to get students to school safely - Commit to local hiring and job training on County-funded projects - Encourage mixed use development close to transportation hubs

Funding & Financing	- Find opportunities to pool resources - Allow for more flexibility in terms of funding, such as fewer restrictions on the way its spent and allocated - Let electric vehicles and renewable energy projects have first place in funding and financing. Prioritize low carbon methods - Increase transparency in budget and goals of L.A. County. - Build on flexibility and trust: try pilot project and be honest about how failure happened - Facilitate cross agency collaboration to increase project impact - Allow more funding to be spent on community engagement, especially with respect to disadvantaged communities - Support user-based fees to address supply and demand - Capture value in a way that supports broader objectives: - There is already a tremendous amount of fees per unit, such as park fees and linkage fees. - Create a neighborhood pass program, where communities commit to bulk purchase of passes at a greatly discounted rate - Ensure strategies and financial incentives are aligned - Identify projects that are "ripe" for public/private partnerships - Private bikeshare/scooter-share infrastructure should be taxed to fund public infrastructure

Housing	• Ensure housing is where the jobs are where appropriate
	• Use policies and incentives to increase affordable, low income housing that is responsive to community-level needs.
	• Enact zoning policies that encourage density
	• Create policies and programs to ensure transportation investment does not lead to displacement
	• Relax regulatory obligations for developers building affordable housing
	• Eliminate minimum parking requirements.
	• Allowing electric vehicle charging to count as a parking space
	• Addressing potential impacts from reducing metered parking
	• Need to synchronize parking-related revenue with aspects of housing development
	• Consider flexible curb use to increase curb space productivity
	• Given the extent of the housing prices, create options for the "missing middle" - those who earn too much to qualify for low-income housing yet still cannot afford home in core areas
	• Create more renter protections, particularly focused along emerging transit corridors
	• Ensure housing is built with wall insulation for noise and filtration as to not have negative impacts from adjacent transportation and freight
Energy	• Ensure all transportation investments made by L.A. County are zero-emissions projects
	• Invest in charging infrastructure that works for shared use
	• Tie electric buses to energy storage
Waste	• Draw on existing efforts to reduce vehicle and freight-related pollution, particularly in EJ communities
Landscapes and Ecosystems	• Integrate green space and open space in current and future transportation infrastructure
	• Make sure biking/pedestrian infrastructure includes shade to allow people to use it comfortably

Resilient Infrastructure	• Consider the impacts of urban heat island and its impact on transit
	• Consider climate impacts when building new infrastructure (i.e. risks of sea level rise, extreme heat); ensure shade along bike paths and at bus stops
	• Support less infrastructure-intensive projects to minimize cost of production and maintenance
	• Prioritize vulnerable infrastructure
	• Support economically resilient projects as well, such as charging infrastructure
	• Support projects that encourage multi-use of highways
	• Retrofit existing infrastructure to make it resilient
	• Plan for shocks and stresses on the economy

Additional Strategies

- Support bus rapid transit system implementation and increase bus-only lanes.

- Place more attention on programs that create behavioral change to break the automobile addiction

- Legislate shared mobility

- Educate residents by drawing on examples from other contexts (i.e. bicycle super highways in Copenhagen)

- Collaborate with cities or health districts to liaison with citizens to educate them.

- Improve quality of life during commutes themselves and increase the user experience on public transit.

- Remove the barriers to implementing shared mobility. Allow transportation systems to be a hub for many mobility options.

- Focus programs and policies on the gap between first and last mile options

Opportunities for Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

The following are some ideas for initiatives that public and private sector stakeholders expressed interest in collaborating on:

- Partner with hospitals and health care providers to provide special transit access to health care facilities with subsidized fares for senior/disabled riders

- Target large employers to collaborate to subsidize public transit networks in order to improve employment

- Repurpose defunct transit vehicles in park(s) -specifically Taylor Yard- for kids to play/referencing its historical use

- Create a program to convert underutilized parking lots to open/green space (public agency can provide tax credits to private landlords to fund/incentivize transition)

- Work with recyclers to use recycled materials for transportation infrastructure

- Capitalize on excess parking supply (resulting from shared autonomous fleets) to create co-working spaces to incubate small businesses near transit lines.

- Support workforce development in clean transportation; for example, skilled workforce on electric bus maintenance + development by partnering with local colleges and utilities

- Re-skill late career professionals for Green Economy jobs with workforce development funds

- Create a public-private forum for coordination and discussion at the County level on advanced transportation infrastructure needs (such as electric vehicle charging, autonomous vehicle needs, etc.)

- Enact a policy incentive for private sector developers to create public spaces at their properties along transit corridors

Comparative Assessment

Comparing the feedback from the Public & Private Sector Workshop to the summary report from the concurrent Nonprofit Sector Workshop reveals many overlaps, as well as a few key differences in stakeholder input.

In comparison to the Nonprofit Workshop, feedback from participants at the Public & Private Sector Workshop featured:

- Greater emphasis on a multi-modal approach to solve the first-last mile challenge, with focused conversations on encouraging innovation and improvements around biking, walking, rideshare, e-scooters, carshare, and other emerging applications

- Focus on where and how funding and financing should be prioritized, such as prioritizing funding for zero-emissions projects and taxation strategies.

- Interest in changing zoning and permitting as a means to balance the regulation and availability of local facilities without worsening disparities on communities

- Discussion on the link between freight / the goods movement industry and carbon emissions

- Concern for climate change impacts on the energy sector and the need to create energy systems that are better equipped to absorb shocks and stresses

In comparison to the Public & Private Sector Workshop, feedback from participants at the **Nonprofit Sector workshop** featured:

- Concern over freight corridors and strong interest in freight corridor electrification, particularly mentioning the 710 corridor

- More focus on not just building affordable housing, but enacting policies like rent control and "right to return" in order to preserve existing communities along transit corridors

- A desire to improve design of public transit fleet to better accommodate smaller mobility equipment such as bicycles and scooters

- Discussion around diversifying stakeholder engagement processes – beyond merely more of it – through activities such as resident mapping activities, participatory budgeting, etc

Feedback at **both workshops** featured many similarities, including:

- The need for affordable housing, jobs, and transportation to be planned and incentivized in alignment with each other to spur more job opportunities around existing communities as well as along existing transit corridors

- Emphasis on local hire, and the hiring of people from frontline communities, to meet economy goals

- Extensive discussion around the various ways the transportation sector both supports and harms public health, with systemwide electrification at the forefront of how to solve key public health challenges that result from poor air quality

- A core belief that robust, inclusive stakeholder engagement is at the center of all transportation planning processes