



Why Measure M can be a Game-Changer

By: Jessica Meaney, Executive Director at Investing in Place

www.investinginplace.org

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Dear friends, allies, and colleagues,

I love working with Investing in Place because I get to work with you all towards improving people's lives and future generations in LA County. I won't mince words: I ultimately believe that our public budgets are moral documents (Martin Luther King, Jr. said the same) and, frankly, we don't spend enough to undo historical wrongs and correct underinvestment in low-income communities and communities of color. **But Measure M, in my mind, is a game-changer that would transform our transportation system for decades to come, and here's why...**

We've pored over every project and every dollar in the measure. We're convinced this measure respects our county's diverse communities and their aspirations for a safer and more accessible, sustainable, and equitable transportation system. I'm not saying Measure M — or any transportation investment — is the end all be all for equitable communities, but it certainly is a catalyst. After tracking Metro's development of the proposed ballot measure for years, Investing in Place is proud to endorse Measure M. Below are the key outcomes that enabled us to make that decision:

Outcome #1: Creating Safe, Walkable Communities

Relatively less expensive projects — like first and last mile improvements, sidewalks, and complete streets — are the glue that holds the rest of the transportation system together. In Measure M, walking and biking have dedicated funding *and* are integrated into all other projects as part of a cohesive system. The days of dropping projects into communities are over. Metro is planning for better connections and access for all.

Outcome #2: Keeping Buses, Trains, and Infrastructure in Good Shape

As we think about access to jobs and housing, we think about *reliability*. This is especially important for low-income families that are affected by bus and train delays more than others: if a shift worker is a few minutes late, they could lose their job. If the system is unreliable, they need to pay more of their paycheck for a more expensive transportation option (e.g. a car). Similarly, the condition of our infrastructure (hello, sidewalks!) affects seniors, youth in strollers, and individuals with disabilities. Maintaining what we're building is important for everyone — but it matters most for our most vulnerable residents.

Outcome #3: Investing in More and Better Bus and Rail Operations

At Investing in Place, we care about transit operations: transit is only useful when the bus or train is there when you need it. Frequency, span, and reliability are what matter for quality service. Bus service has been flat or declining for the past 8 years. If you care about bus service, Measure M provides the resources to have a serious conversation about increasing bus revenue service hours. What that service looks like matters, too. Transit will be even better (and cheaper to operate) when 40 people on a bus or 200 on a train have priority over one or two in a car. For us, this is a simple issue of fairness. Investing in Place wants to see investments in high-ridership corridors with more frequent, all-day service — the original vision for the MetroRapid that has been somewhat watered down. Measure M includes dedicated money for Bus Rapid Transit improvements, which would build the physical



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infrastructure to support improved operations. These are real operational and infrastructure improvements to our heavily used bus network.

Outcome #4: Investing in Local Street and Sidewalk Repairs

It is no longer sufficient for transportation projects to have a singular focus on mobility. The public right-of-way is a significant asset that must be managed to achieve multiple objectives. Local return gives cities more resources to address placemaking, stormwater, complete streets, urban greening, sidewalk repair, crosswalk upgrades, bicycle lanes, and more. Local return is an opportunity, not a guarantee, and community members need to engage collaboratively with local elected officials to set priorities for this funding (and Investing in Place will help!). Measure M brings resources to the table to help local conversations about planning our streets holistically.

Outcome #5: Investing in Better Connectivity Across The County

Measure M will expand opportunity through fast, reliable transit to new areas. Projects from Measure M can provide better access to job-rich areas for under-resourced neighborhoods. For example: the Sepulveda Pass and East San Fernando Valley Corridor connects Pacoima to the Westside; the San Fernando Valley-San Gabriel Valley corridor puts job-rich Glendale and Burbank on the network; the Santa Ana Branch and Gold Line Eastside connect low-income cities in Southeast LA County to downtown LA and industrial zones; the Crenshaw Northern Extension means South LA residents can get to job-rich areas in Mid-City and Hollywood.

Outcome #6: Affordable Fares for Older Adults, Students, and Individuals with Disabilities

Metro has recently revamped their reduced fare programs for college students, and is looking at improvements to other fare subsidy programs. To make these programs work and serve more people, they need more funding and Measure M would provide it. It's not just about fare discounts — this is about increasing access to education, helping older adults who want to age in their community, and providing a valuable service for individuals with disabilities to get around.

Outcome #7: Maintain Flexibility and Oversight on Program Funding

Measure M provides us the resources to build, operate, and maintain an ambitious transportation system — but we need to stay at the table to hold Metro accountable on delivering for our communities. Measure M has a built-in oversight committee and flexibility to adjust program funding in response to future needs and opportunities.

Through November 8th, we'll be rolling out more details on why we support Measure M. We invite you to join us in working to pass this measure. As always, we welcome your feedback, reactions, and ideas for working together to ensure our public investments strengthen all our communities.

Sincerely,

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