



# 2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan

**INVESTING**  
*in* **PLACE**

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## Mission

Investing in Place advocates for safer and more complete communities. We do this by aligning public investments and policy goals to create walkable, bikeable streets and sidewalks with access to high-quality transit for people of all resources and abilities.

## Vision

Investing in Place imagines a Greater Los Angeles where we have bridged the gap between policy thinkers and on-the-ground community leaders. Where we achieve outcomes through public policies and investments that reduce social inequities. Where we improve public health and achieve environmental goals — especially for our most vulnerable populations. **As a region, we recognize that equity is not a special interest, but in everybody's interest.**

## Our Equity Frame

Los Angeles County has tremendous disparities in wealth, health outcomes, and access to education, jobs, and services. Race, income inequality, and environmental justice are complicated issues, but public investment — and our transportation network — plays an essential role in addressing them. We follow USC Program for Regional and Environmental Equity’s definition of social equity as:

- A. Equitable access
- B. Shared distribution of the benefits and burdens
- C. Partnership in the planning process that results in shared decision-making and more equitable outcomes for disadvantaged communities, while also strengthening the entire region.

## Theory of Change

We achieve our mission and vision through a combination of:

### **Research & Ground Truthing**

We work to develop a data-driven, needs-based framework for public infrastructure investments that improves social equity, public health, and environmental sustainability. Our research efforts are collaborative and developed in partnership with affected communities to ensure that outcomes address issues that local stakeholders care about.

### **Advocacy**

Our advocacy is grounded in research and with support from community partners. We advocate for public investments that help create healthier, more equitable, and environmentally sound communities for all residents,

regardless of age, income, or ability. We work with decision-makers and local partners to craft policies that achieve these goals.

### **Partnerships & Collaboration**

We convene diverse constituencies of community members, non-profit partners, business leaders, funders, public agency staff, elected officials, and regional thought leaders to develop a data-driven, needs-based framework for public infrastructure investments. By working with diverse partners, our aim is to improve social equity, enhance public health, and achieve environmental goals. We champion community members playing a critical role in shaping their own communities.

### **Capacity Building**

We believe in building capacity in Los Angeles County by working with diverse partners to improve the portfolio of public investments that support health, equity, and environmental sustainability. We focus on building informed and inclusive dialogue by ensuring that new voices are brought to the table and by bringing grassroots activists and grassroots leaders together.

# Goals

## **GOAL 1: QUANTIFY THE NEED**

Demonstrate the need for more equitable public infrastructure investments by developing a metric-based framework.

## **GOAL 2: SHIFT DECISION-MAKING**

Implement a decision-making process in Los Angeles County that is supported by data, responsive to demonstrated needs, grounded in authentic public participation, and focused on measurable outcomes.

## **GOAL 3: NURTURE LEADERSHIP**

Empower underrepresented groups and leaders by building partner capacity, fostering leadership, and convening representatives from diverse communities and sectors.

## **GOAL 4: EXPAND INFLUENCE**

Work with partners, decision-makers, and diverse communities to build a movement, make connections, demonstrate leadership, and effect change.

## **GOAL 5: GROW CAPACITY**

Build Investing in Place into a strong and sustainable organization capable of achieving its mission and scaling up to state- and nation-wide issues.





## **GOAL 1:**

### **QUANTIFY THE NEED**

Demonstrate the need for more equitable public infrastructure investments by developing a metric-based framework.

#### **Strategy 1.1**

Work with researchers, community-based groups, public agency staff, and policymakers to identify key metrics and data points to frame the issue.

#### **Overview of Issue**

Historically, transportation investment decisions have been based largely on political expediency. Where data is used to justify financing decisions, the inputs are often outdated, unreliable, or based on incomplete information. To begin shifting the transportation finance decision-making process, Investing in Place works with partners to identify key metrics and data points that make the case for social equity in transportation

policies and investments. This tool will help articulate clear goals and can be deployed to help decision-makers base transportation investments on need and identify desired outcomes. Many cities in Los Angeles County lack staff capacity to do this work.

### Outcomes by 2018:

- Secure research partner. Establish a working group to identify relevant metrics, data and devise a methodology to accurately capture new and existing data.
- Draft and vet the regional transportation equity policy recommendations with partners to ensure it articulates and achieves the needs of communities.

### Key Activities:

- Complete a regional transportation equity plan that identifies baseline conditions for different communities in Los Angeles County, makes a data-backed case for prioritized investments in underserved communities, and sets long-term transportation investment goals for the region.





## GOAL 2: SHIFT DECISION-MAKING

Implement a decision-making process in Los Angeles County that is supported by data, responsive to demonstrated needs, grounded in authentic public participation, and focused on measurable outcomes.

### Strategy 2.1

Work with community partners, public agency staff and decision-makers to make a well-supported case for increased investments in underserved communities and for the benefit of underrepresented populations.

### Overview of Issue

Los Angeles County is undergoing a transformation wherein residents have the potential to have more multi-modal options to get around. We're developing infrastructure and changing the way our cities focus on transportation to allow more people to make trips on foot, by bike, car share, or transit. Likewise, local, county, and state governments

are increasingly recognizing that strategic investments in low-income communities is important to bridge the divide between the rich and poor. As these transformations take place, it makes sense to align our transportation investments accordingly. Revenue from a decades-long sales tax must be invested in a manner that is responsive and informed by these realities. We must invest in a more multi-modal transportation network of the future, and it must not continue to exacerbate the systemic inequities that characterize our streets today. To make the most of scarce public resources, we must shift the decision-making process to ensure that it is informed and responsive to demonstrated needs, focused on quantifiable outcomes, and informed by local leadership from impacted communities.

### Outcomes by 2018:

- Social equity goals will be embedded in the countywide long range transportation plan to prioritize investments in underserved communities.
- Funding for active transportation improvements in Los Angeles County will be significantly increased (current recommendation is 10% of all Los Angeles County funding for safe routes to school, first/last mile to transit, sidewalks, crosswalks and bicycle lanes) with a strategic investment plan prioritizing low-income and communities of color.
- Metro will have stable and healthy funding for bus and rail operations, high frequency quality transit, and low transit fares to maintain and grow transit ridership, particularly in low-income and communities of color, seniors, and youth.

- The City of Los Angeles will maximize the ADA Willits settlement by leveraging grants and other funding to create safe, complete, and green sidewalk infrastructure and accelerate these investments in the next 15 years.
- Strengthen a constituency of engaged and connected leaders across Los Angeles County that serve member based organizations in low-income and communities of color regarding public policy and public finance decisions related to land use and transportation.
- Ensure representation from low-income and communities of color on Metro committees (i.e. Technical Advisory Committee) and Councils of Governments.
- Support targeted technical assistance from Metro for low-income and communities of color to ensure successful grant applications in the Call for Projects, California Active Transportation Program, cap-and-trade program and other funding opportunities.

### Key Activities:

- Organize and convene partners to make a clear, concise, and data-backed case for increasing investments to address the needs of underserved communities.
- Develop and present recommendations for defining social equity in transportation policies and investments for the Metro Board of Directors.

- Advocate for increased funding for improved sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle lanes first and last mile interventions, complete street design, safe routes to schools, and increased investments in underserved communities.
- Support the expansion of express lanes and other transportation pricing strategies.
- Advocate for increased funding to improve transportation and transit services that are used disproportionately by low- and very low-income populations.
- Convene City of Los Angeles partners to develop a framework on the City's sidewalks and paths of travel that maximizes benefits while improving accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Attend a variety of partner meetings across Los Angeles County to support campaigns in low-income communities of color and build relationships with leaders to ensure leadership from impacted communities is a part of the shifting decision making process.
- Recruit from Investing in Place's diverse partnerships to populate working groups so that unique and often overlooked viewpoints are accounted for.



## **GOAL 3:** **NURTURE LEADERSHIP**

Empower underrepresented groups and leaders by building partner capacity, fostering leadership, and convening representatives from diverse communities and sectors.

### **Strategy 3.1**

Deploy Investing in Place's broad partnership network to foster collaboration, surface new ideas, and raise the voices of emerging leaders in this space.

### **Overview of Issue**

Historically, underserved populations, low-income communities, and community-based organizations have not had a strong voice in the transportation finance decision-making process. Yet, many of our best transportation outcomes are the result of robust and meaningful collaborations between local residents, community-based groups,

interdisciplinary experts, policy-makers, local governments, and regional transportation entities. To ensure that proposed transportation investments gain popular support, to surface new ideas, and to make certain that our public dollars are being spent wisely, it is critical to building an interdisciplinary, diverse, and multifaceted engagement process to respond to the complex needs of our unique region. This requires a special emphasis on recruiting, supporting, and nurturing talent from populations, neighborhoods, and communities that have not traditionally had a seat at the table.

### Outcomes by 2018:

- Investing in Place will expand to ensure geographic and demographic perspectives in policy efforts and convenings.
- By 2018, partner with membership organizations to train a constituency of engaged and connected leaders across Los Angeles in low-income and communities of color regarding public policy and public finance decisions related to land use and transportation.
- Investing in Place will work with partners to form issue area-specific working groups that feature interdisciplinary collaborations to devise specific recommendations for pending key transportation and land use decisions — particularly ones tied to potential significant investment of public funds (for example, the Active Transportation group may feature public agency staff, pedestrian advocates, bicycle advocates, an expert on the American with Disabilities Act, representatives from the senior community, public health representatives, members of moderate or low-income communities, and/or environmentalists).



### Key Activities:

- Investing in Place will continue to convene groups to share ideas and discuss best practices.
- Develop issue-area working groups charged with crafting specific policy recommendations for the potential 2016 Los Angeles County Transportation sales tax, Metro's update to the long range transportation plan, implementing dedicated bus lanes, the City of Los Angeles sidewalk policy and other emerging and relevant issues.
- Continue to host convenings to share knowledge amongst partners, surface best practices, and offer opportunities for feedback.



## **GOAL 4: EXPAND INFLUENCE**

Work with partners, decision-makers, and diverse communities to build a movement, make connections, demonstrate leadership, and effect change.

### **Strategy 4.1**

Expand Investing in Place's influence by cultivating and mobilizing a base of informed support for equitable policy.

### **Overview of Issue**

Investing in Place is emerging as a leading voice for social equity in Southern California transportation policies and investments, as a result of its strong research foundation and network of supportive partners. To accomplish significant policy wins, Investing in Place must nurture this base of support through constant relationship-building, communication, new research, and organization.

### Outcomes by 2018:

- Deepen relationships with key policy influencers, agency staff, community based organizations and thought leaders.
- Maintain an active online presence via blog, social media, and newsletter to attract a regular following.
- Produce and publish policy research & analysis four times a year (includes policy briefs, research papers, and significant public comment letters to public agencies).
- Engage local media for coverage of issues and efforts.

### Key Activities:

- Conduct quarterly convenings.
- Conduct working group meetings, and focused small group efforts based on need and opportunity.
- Publish bi-weekly email newsletter updates.
- Identify opportunities to mobilize network and community leaders to influence and engage with decision-makers.
- Support existing community based organizations efforts and build in opportunities to listen to community leaders to inform and ground Investing in Place research and policy strategy efforts.

- Post minimum two blog posts per week.
- Develop social media strategy and grow audience on social media channels.
- Produce research products approximately quarterly.
- Grow email list, while ensuring open rate of minimum 35%.



## GOAL 5: GROW CAPACITY

Build Investing in Place into a strong and sustainable organization capable of achieving its mission and scaling up to state- and nation-wide issues.

### Strategy 5.1

Grow Investing in Place's financial and human resources through strategic organizational development and prudent fiscal management.

### Overview of Issue

As a new nonprofit (a project of Community Partners), Investing in Place must pay significant attention to its own growth and sustainability as an organization. Investing in Place should be a good place to work with reasonable job security and ongoing professional development opportunities. Raising new funding is important, but it is equally important that it be the right funding that is a good match for the organization's current needs and trajectory. Staff will likely spend as much time ensuring that

Investing in Place is a financially sound organization as they do focusing on the work they want to do.

### Outcomes by 2018:

- By 2017, raise an annual budget to support four staff:
  - Executive Director
  - Deputy Director
  - Senior Associate
  - Research and Communications Associate
- Diversify funding sources to include foundations, donations, and fee-for-service.
- Raise 15% of revenue from unrestricted donations.
- Raise 15% of revenue from individual donations.

### Key Activities:

- Seek appropriate foundation support and cultivate funder relationships.
- Conduct at least one fundraising drive per year for individual donors.
- Pursue appropriate opportunities for contract work.
- When resources are available, hire qualified staff for communications, organizing, and policy research.



# Organizational History and Structure

## History

Created in January 2015, Investing in Place evolved from the successful Los Angeles County Active Transportation Collaborative (“Collaborative”), led by Jessica Meaney, now Founder and Managing Director of Investing in Place. The Collaborative was active from 2012 through 2014 as a project of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition. The Collaborative set ambitious policy goals for regional agencies and local jurisdictions to improve policies and increase investments in walking, bicycling, and safe routes to school. Investing in Place was founded to expand the Collaborative’s policy focus in order to impact Metro’s Long Range Transportation Plan update and potential 2016 transportation sales tax measure and to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity to influence transportation investments in support of public health, social equity and environmental benefits. Investing in Place is a fiscally sponsored project of Community Partners.

## Organizational Structure

Investing in Place is guided by Staff and the Advisory Board, key leadership partners, working groups and the larger open network.

## Advisory Board

Investing in Place has an 11-person advisory board, with leaders from various disciplines and areas of Los Angeles County, to guide Investing in Place’s direction to be strategic, implementable and sustainable. The Advisory Board meets monthly to discuss these issues, as well as existing

policy work and fundraising strategy. Board members also contribute time to coordinating and supporting Investing in Place countywide partner convenings on a regular basis.

## **Partners**

Our community-based partners include, but are not limited to:

AARP, Advisory Board Member: Stephanie Ramirez

Advancement Project

Alliance for Community Transit – Los Angeles

Bike San Gabriel Valley

City of Los Angeles – Great Streets Program, Advisory Board & Member: Naomi Iwasaki

Day One, Advisory Board Member: David Diaz

ELP Advisors, Advisory Board Member: Richard France

Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition

Los Angeles Walks, Advisory Board Member: Alexis Lantz

LURN, Advisory & Board Members: Luis Gutierrez & Rudy Espinoza

Transform, Advisory Board Member: Ryan Wiggins

Multicultural Communities for Mobility

Pacoima Beautiful, Advisory Board Member: Max Podemski

Prevention Institute

Physicians for Social Responsibility – LA

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Streetsblog Los Angeles

T.R.U.S.T. South L.A.



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