THE OPPORTUNITY

In 2008 voters passed Measure R, a half-cent sales tax that is funding the build-out of 12 new rail lines in LA County and 60 new stations, virtually doubling the size of the transit system and more than doubling the number of stations. With low-interest loans and bonds from the federal government it may be possible to build all lines in ten years, meantime creating at least 160,000 jobs. The new lines and stations will significantly enhance the connectivity of the system and activate the real estate market around many stations. This provides enormous opportunity to improve station area neighborhoods by building more homes for people with a range of incomes, and by making it easier to walk, bike and take transit to housing and jobs, fresh food markets, parks, schools and other destinations.

This development will help achieve many public objectives, including:

- Ensuring high transit ridership and minimizing traffic;
- Providing more people with housing and transportation choices that are more affordable;
- Creating walkable neighborhoods that provide for healthier lifestyles;
- Improving access to jobs;
- Providing for more compact development that preserves open space and lowers infrastructure costs for taxpayers and energy costs for residents;
- Enhancing the environmental and economic sustainability of growth and development.

THE CHALLENGE

We could miss this once-in-a-generation opportunity to make living in Los Angeles more sustainable and affordable if we aren’t prepared. Land and property values will increase in many neighborhoods as new lines and stations are sited, which means that many of the lower-income people who live in these places could get pushed out. Moreover, there should be strategies in place to capture some of this value — which is created by the public investment in transit — for public benefits including homes that are affordable, funding for bike and pedestrian improvements, and public plazas and parks.

WHO WE ARE

We are a collaborative of organizations committed to equitable TOD — transit-oriented development that prioritizes investments in the production and preservation of affordable homes, protects the social fabric of neighborhoods, and allows residents to walk, bike and take transit to shops and services. We have roots in LA County communities, and long-term relationships with government agencies, elected officials, community-based organizations and others involved in issues ranging from public health to transit to environmental issues to local and regional planning.
LA THRIVES:
Transit, Housing, Resources and Investment For a Vibrant Economy

WE ARE:
• Enterprise Community Partners, a national non-profit that is the leading provider of development capital and expertise to create decent, affordable homes and rebuild communities;
• The Low Income Investment Fund, a community development financial institution (CDFI) that provides innovative capital solutions to support healthy families and communities by investing in projects that have high social value;
• Reconnecting America, a national nonprofit with expertise in transit and transit-oriented development;
• Move LA, the local nonprofit business-labor-environmental coalition that sponsored Measure R and that works on local, regional and state TOD policy;
• The Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing, a regional membership organization of nonprofit community developers;
• The California Community Foundation, one of the largest community foundations in the U.S. and a community advocate that has invested in local and regional community-based and nongovernmental organizations committed to transformative change.
• The Liberty Hill Foundation, which advances movements for social change through a strategic combination of grants, leadership training and alliance building.

OUR AGENDA
We will leverage our local and national relationships, resources and knowledge to get government agencies, community based organizations and the residents of transit-served communities “on the same page” about Measure R opportunities. We will regularly convene stakeholders around a big and open table with the goal of deepening our collective understanding of local needs as well as the opportunities and challenges around implementing equitable TOD in particular neighborhoods. A longer-range goal is to create a regional equity network that increases the capacity of community-based organizations and residents, especially in low-income and disadvantaged communities, to engage in planning around transit and TOD.

OUR WORK WILL FOCUS ON advocacy, education and community engagement, finding new financing resources and tools for housing that is affordable to low-income households, and investigating opportunities for land assembly and land banking. We will convene discussions and initiate partnerships and projects based on our understanding of the importance of smart planning, building and investing with the goal of meeting the needs of all people living and working in LA County. With this as our goal we will:
• Leverage the transit investment to reduce the combined cost of housing and transportation;
• Grow public support for housing that is within reach of a broader segment of LA County’s population;
• Engage LA County’s broad and deep network of community-based organizations in planning for new lines and stations;
• Build the capacity of local groups to engage and to safeguard vulnerable populations;
• Enhance sustainability through environmental design, new materials and technology;
• Target public funding and private capital to investments in housing and other infrastructure that meets the needs of all residents and workers and makes living easier and less expensive.