

Equity and Mobility Study Summary Sheet

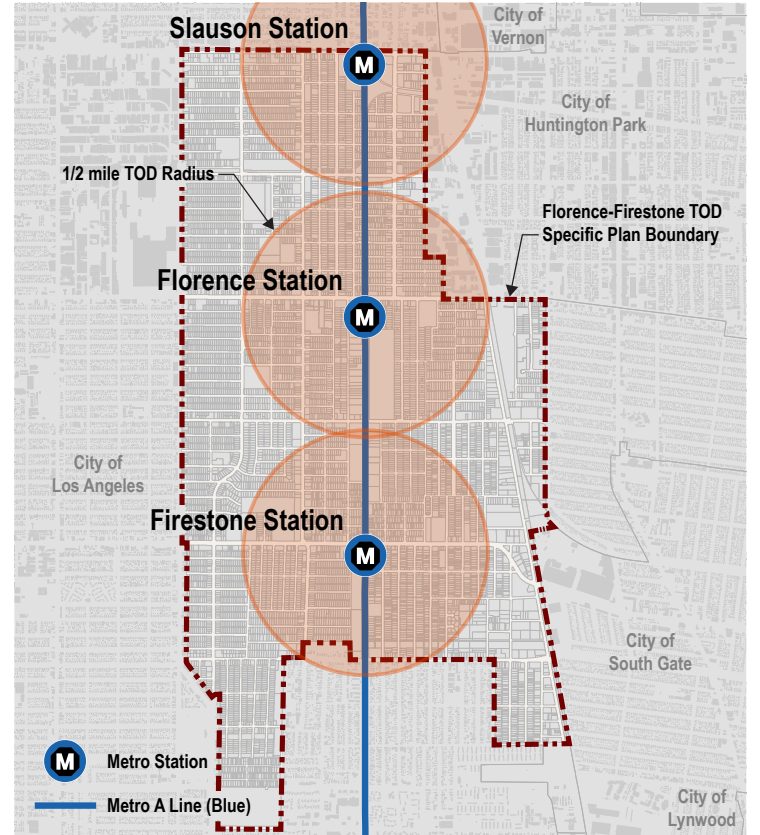


Project Description

The Florence-Firestone Transit-Oriented District Specific Plan (FFTOD Specific Plan) project will focus on providing increased access to transit stations, promote active transportation for daily needs (walking and biking to your destinations), increasing housing options in the community, and support a mix of uses to encourage transit-oriented development. The FFTOD Specific Plan will address land use, zoning, and mobility improvements that support housing density and employment in proximity to the three Metro stations in the community: the Slauson, Florence, and Firestone Metro A Line (Blue) Stations. The project will implement the Transit Oriented District Program of the Los Angeles County 2035 General Plan.

Equity and Mobility Study

The Equity and Mobility Study combined conventional assessment of transportation conditions with an evaluation of equity conditions related to demographics, land use characteristics, and socioeconomic conditions, because these elements are all closely interrelated. The level of investment in transportation infrastructure and services is often a direct reflection of a community's socio-economic and demographic status. Transportation and land use outcomes often reflect equitable or inequitable planning processes. This study provides a series of findings and recommendations regarding equity and mobility for the community that will be expanded upon and be incorporated into the FFTOD Specific Plan.



Equity Goals

Equity is achieved when everyone has access to the resources and opportunities they need to improve the quality of their lives. The following Equity Framework, as defined in the OurCounty Countywide Sustainability Plan, is being used for the FFTOD Specific Plan:

Procedural Equity:

Processes include representative, inclusive, accessible, and authentic engagement to develop or implement programs and policies.

Distributional Equity:

Programs and policies result in fair distribution of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community and prioritize benefits to those communities with highest need.

Structural Equity:

Decision-makers are accountable to the public; decisions are made that recognize the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics and structures that have routinely benefited privileged groups and resulted in chronic, cumulative disadvantage for subordinated groups.

Transgenerational Equity:

Decisions consider generational impacts and avoid consequences that unfairly burden future generations.

Drawing from the goals documented in the Florence-Firestone Community Plan and the OurCounty Countywide Sustainability Plan, the following goals shall be considered for the FFTOD Specific Plan:

GOAL 1

Florence-Firestone is a resilient and healthy environment where community members thrive in place.

GOAL 2

Buildings and infrastructure support human health and resilience.

GOAL 3

Equitable and sustainable land use and development are achieved without displacement.

GOAL 4

Inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance facilitates participation in planning efforts, especially by communities that have historically lacked access to decision-making power.

GOAL 5

A commitment to achieve Florence-Firestone goals through creative, equitable, and coordinated funding and partnerships.

These goals emphasize access to opportunity, health, and decision-making power through the implementation of the FFTOD Specific Plan. Mobility and land use planning policies and strategies will be developed to support the realization of these goals in the FFTOD Specific Plan area.

Existing Countywide Policies to Support Equity Goals

The following existing and proposed programs in Los Angeles County, introduced between 2015 and 2020, provide valuable protections, resources, and frameworks that will complement recommendations for equity in this plan.

Equitable Development Work Program (December 2015)

Eviction Defense and Prevention Services in Los Angeles County (September 2019)

Los Angeles County Rent Stabilization Ordinance (April 2020)

Los Angeles County Green Zones Program (Draft Ordinance currently under review)

FLORENCE-FIRESTONE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN (FFTOD)

Equity and Mobility Study Summary Sheet (continued)

Equity Best Practices

Findings

- Transit-oriented development (TOD) can harm communities unless there are accompanying policies that offer access to decision-making power, renter and homeowner protections, funding, and programmatic opportunities for those facing the burdens of existing racial, social, economic, and environmental inequities.
- The 'digital divide' is especially pronounced in low income communities of color. Community engagement and civic participation should consider these limitations.
- Displacement is not always physically defined; erosion of social networks and community resources, prohibitive housing costs, and exclusionary leasing are also examples of displacement.
- Successful TOD requires long-term collaborative relationships with and project leadership from existing community organizations and leaders.
- Racial equity must be explicitly embedded in planning goals and given sufficient funding and resources.
- Special consideration of workforce displacement is necessary when introducing land use changes in formerly industrial areas.

Recommendations

- Ensure that current protections such as Eviction Defense and Prevention Services, rent stabilization, and the Green Zone Program are widely known to residents.
- Engage residents, workers, small businesses owners, and community leaders to supplement census data with oral histories and personal experiences.
- Establish long-term planning partnerships with community organizations that are intended to last beyond the outreach stage of a specific planning process. Identify groups with experience in land acquisition and development that share and advocate for community interests.
- Establish workforce development program for individuals working in industrial sectors that may decline with land use changes and/or shifts to industrial segments.
- Pursue policies around equity actions that can provide resources, such as infrastructure and internet access, to implement and scale existing County programs.

Displacement Risk Assessment

Findings

- Low-median household income coupled with a high percentage of renter households indicates an elevated vulnerability to displacement within a half-mile radius of the Metro stations.
- Changes in employment status or fluctuation in hours of stable employment experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic may and exacerbate the housing burden on all households and especially on low-income households, increasing vulnerability to displacement.
- Larger household sizes and a high proportion of Hispanic/Latinx and other non-white populations compared to the County indicates a higher than average risk of displacement based on structural racism and household wealth.
- Census data from 2010 and 2017 do not indicate major demographic or socioeconomic changes in Florence-Firestone.
- Very few businesses in the study area are registered in the County's business preference programs that offer priority to disadvantaged business enterprises in contracting bids.
- In Florence-Firestone there are relatively few designated-affordable multifamily developments compared to other nearby Metro transit station areas.
- Many of the existing or proposed designated-affordable multifamily developments are targeted to families or special needs populations such as veterans and formerly homeless individuals, likely due to requirements from funding sources.

Recommendations

- Through community engagement, identify key locations that have the most vulnerability to displacement, explore TOD-appropriate densities and building forms to support County goals, and identify where and what type of infill development is desired by the community, to encourage development while protecting and preserving the assets that the community would like to retain.
- Through the development of policies, programs, and implementation strategies in the FFTOD Specific Plan, identify strategies and funding streams to support anti-displacement protections.
- Proactively identify potentially eligible businesses in the FFTOD Specific Plan Area to spread awareness of the business preference programs, and offer registration assistance where needed. Also consider a registration program for non-contracting CBEs (Minority- and Woman-owned or Disadvantaged small businesses) in sectors such as retail, dining, and neighborhood services.
- Robust affordability policies and funding mechanisms for new multifamily developments will be critical to successfully serve existing residents, mitigate displacement, and ease overcrowding within the area's legacy housing stock.

Transportation and Mobility

Findings

- Four major arterials are responsible for the movement of most vehicles, trucks, buses, people on foot, and people on bike: Slauson Avenue, Florence Avenue, Firestone Boulevard, and Compton Avenue.
- Roads in Florence-Firestone experience high speeds and lack sufficient dedicated infrastructure for people on foot and on bike, though some marked crosswalks and marked bicycle lanes exist.
- Some streets have degraded pavement quality.
- Pedestrian connections across major arterials, and across the Metro A (Blue) Line itself, are limited. A lack of crosswalks may create unsafe conditions for people traveling on foot by encouraging riskier choices like crossing at locations without marked crosswalks or signals.
- Bus service is present throughout the major corridors, but wait times between buses are long, particularly in off-peak periods during the middle of the day, at night, and on the weekends. Improvements recommended in Metro's draft NextGen Study do not offer a major improvement in headways for most bus lines that serve the Study Area.
- Compared to LA County, Florence-Firestone has higher rates of households that lack access to a vehicle, and lower rates of automobile use for certain types of trips. These trends may be the result of socio-economic conditions such as lower household income.
- Slauson Avenue, Florence Avenue, Firestone Boulevard, and Compton Avenue show "hotspot" collision patterns. Compton Avenue also shows the greatest difference between posted speeds and observed speeds, indicating an opportunity for traffic calming along this corridor.
- Many of these issues and observations have been documented in existing plans and project, such as the Metro Blue Line First/Last Mile Plan, the Metro Rail to River Corridor Project, and the Vision Zero County of Los Angeles Action Plan.

Recommendations

- Prioritize transportation and mobility policies, projects, and programs that have already been well-documented in prior studies but have not yet been implemented.
- Through community engagement, seek input on preferences for traveling by car, by bus, by rail, by foot, or by bike for different types of trips, if factors like safety and cost were not a factor, in order to prioritize projects, policies, and programs that will enhance transportation and mobility within the FFTOD Specific Plan Area.
- Through community engagement and in alignment with the FFTOD Specific Plan land use scenarios that will be developed and considered, determine appropriate levels of parking that are necessary to support the existing community, new development, and compliment future investments in multi-modal transportation improvements.
- Identify opportunities to align with and support implementation of other County initiatives such as the Vision Zero Los Angeles County Action Plan and Safe Routes to School projects. Work with adjacent jurisdictions and with Metro to identify bus service and operations improvements that could enhance access to the Metro A (Blue) Line and encourage additional transit use.