



September 21, 2022

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, California 90012-2952  
*Via email to BoardClerk@metro.net*

**Re: Support for land banking at LA Metro**

Dear Metro Board of Directors:

The Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles (ACT-LA) is an LA County-wide coalition of 42 community-focused organizations that strives to create just, equitable, and sustainable transportation systems and neighborhoods, placing the interests of low income communities and communities of color first as we create a more sustainable region. ACT-LA members advocate for the preservation and creation of healthy, affordable housing options for working class families and people who routinely ride public transit in LA. Many of ACT-LA's community members are among the 62% of Metro's ridership earning less than \$20,000 a year.<sup>1</sup> For these residents and families, historical unjust policies have undercut the provision of both affordable housing and dependable public transit, which are both necessities of living in LA.

ACT-LA appreciates Directors Solis, Najarian, Kuehl, and Mitchell for recently introducing Metro's land bank motion ([Motion 49 in June 2022<sup>2</sup>](#)) to improve affordable housing access for low-income transit riders. This motion calls on Metro staff to pilot a land bank that would be a major public benefit for LA County residents for generations to come.

ACT-LA supports Metro's effort to secure public land for affordable housing along transit as the Board of Supervisors is poised to do with public land along the LA River. This motion is an important opportunity to implement [Metro's Transit-Oriented Communities \(TOC\) policy<sup>3</sup>](#), which the Board adopted in 2018. In the TOC Policy, Metro recognized the major impacts - both positive and negative - its Measure M investments continue to have on communities and committed to pursue multiple strategies to decrease displacement and maximize affordable housing along its transit routes. Land banking along transit can enable a strategic partnership

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<sup>1</sup> Metro 2019 Onboard Customer Satisfaction Survey; and LA Times: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-09-12/amid-blistering-heat-bus-riders-wait-in-search-of-shade>

<sup>2</sup> <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2022-0422/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/s/i1s1e84axj0xaih/2018-Transit-Oriented-Communities-Policy.pdf?dl=0>

between Metro and city leaders to develop affordable housing in ways that both advance local land use priorities and bolster transit ridership.

Land banking can strengthen governments collective leverage to deliver affordable housing solutions and protect the common good. It is also an important strategy to confront widespread land speculation by companies in the private sector that actively and routinely buy and hold onto land along public infrastructure investments, including public transit projects. When private companies buy and hold onto land along public infrastructure projects, they deny both governments and nonprofits the opportunity to maximize the positive, collective impact of public investments in transit, parks, affordable housing, and other infrastructure. Nonprofit affordable housing developers have the mission and expertise to build affordable housing for people earning little to no income. With land banking, nonprofit affordable housing developers can work in tandem with governments, including LA Metro, to ensure everyone in LA benefits from the public's investment in the LA transit system.

The land banking pilot and program created by Metro's land bank motion (Motion 49) catalyzes equitable land development that preserves affordable housing, produces affordable housing next to transit, and prevents resident (and transit rider) displacement. LA County needs regional solutions including land banks to meaningfully address our region's lack of affordable housing, a vexing issue widely felt by residents in every city and neighborhood throughout the LA region.

We urge Metro's Board of Directors to support land banking at Metro and also to ensure that Metro staff's forthcoming land bank proposal accounts for the goals in [Metro's TOC Implementation Plan](#)<sup>4</sup>, previously adopted in June 2021.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Community Transit - Los Angeles

CC:

- Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins

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<sup>4</sup> <https://media.metro.net/2020/Metro-TOC-Implementation-Plan-Final.pdf>