



[METRO LOS ANGELES](#)

Metro looks to accelerate 28 transportation projects in time for the 2028 Olympics

Sounds great, but it won't be easy

BY [MATT TINOCO](#) OCT 6, 2017, 9:05AM PDT



Photo by David McNew/Getty Images

[Metro](#) officials are trying to figure out how to speed up more than two dozen transportation projects. If they succeed, Los Angeles will boast a comprehensive transit system sooner than anticipated—but it won't be easy.

Their work comes at the request of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, who announced a new "28 by 28" initiative at the last meeting of the Metro Board of Directors. The goal is to hasten 28 projects in anticipation of the [2028 Olympics](#).

"We should all be racing to accelerate as many projects in as many places as we can," he told Metro's board, which he chairs.

But since announcing the initiative one week ago, few key details—including specific projects and how much more quickly they could be completed—have been released.

It's not clear yet if the 28 projects will be in addition to those [already planned to be completed](#) by the time LA hosts the Olympic games.

Details are fuzzy, because the transit agency is still puzzling through *how* individual projects could be sped up.

By the end of October, staffers are expected to make recommendations for how to evaluate Measure M-funded projects that could potentially be fast-tracked. Their suggestions might include looking at whether funding is available and whether environmental clearances are needed.

Metro's board is expected to vote on the recommendations in November.

The agency is in the midst of a [massive transit buildout](#), thanks in large part to [Measure M](#), a voter-approved permanent sales tax hike expected to generate \$860 million every year, all of it dedicated to transportation.

Measure M was sold to voters with [a specific construction timeline](#) for more than 90 projects around Los Angeles County, including the [East San Fernando Valley Corridor](#), the Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor, and a northern extension of the [Crenshaw Line](#) to Hollywood.

Speeding up these or other projects would require deviating from the Measure M timeline. That's not the only provision in the ballot measure dictating how the projects should be built, so staffers will have to suss out where they might be in violation.

They have other big questions to consider, too. What happens, if, for example, a lawsuit ties up one project and puts it on hold for, say, several years of environmental review? Could Metro use the Measure M funds earmarked for the delayed project to finish a different one more quickly? Right now, Metro doesn't have a firm answer.

Measure M includes the legal requirement that expediting one project cannot come with the cost of slowing down another.

"Any acceleration policy I want to make sure maintains the integrity of the expenditure plan we have, and the trust that's been put in us by the voters of Los Angeles County," Garcetti said.

At the same time, Metro is already working to quicken some projects, before the new framework is even completed. Thanks to work by Metro's Office of Extraordinary Innovation, Metro CEO Phil Washington has also announced that the agency is "aggressively moving to accelerate signature components of the Measure M program" by partnering "with the private sector on three major Measure M projects."

The three projects are: the [Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor](#), the [West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor](#) from Union Station to Artesia, and an expansion of Metro's freeway toll lanes dubbed "[ExpressLanes](#)."

Under the Measure M expenditure plan, the [Sepulveda Pass project](#) is scheduled to open in approximately 2033, and the West Santa Ana project in approximately 2041. The ExpressLanes expansion comes in a few different phases between 2029 and 2046.

Washington's announcement means we should expect opening dates sooner, assuming Metro can pull the acceleration off successfully.

County Supervisor Janice Hahn has predicted that a public private partnership on the West Santa Ana line [could accelerate the project's completion](#) by up to 15 years.