



# A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE



## SELA POLICY AND ADVOCACY AGENDA





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- II. Challenges and Opportunities Facing the SELA Region
- III. The SELA Collaborative's Community-Driven Approach to Creating a Policy & Advocacy Agenda
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# CONTEXT





# WHO IS THE SELA COLLABORATIVE?

The SELA Collaborative envisions an informed, engaged, and empowered SELA community, and aims to strengthen SELA communities, build collective power, and encourage innovation to drive regional systemic change.

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The Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Collaborative is a network of organizations gathered to lead the area of Southeast Los Angeles, a historically under-resourced area of L.A. County, into an era of increased vitality by bringing resources to build a robust infrastructure of local nonprofits; engaging residents in civic life so that they effect positive change in their neighborhoods, cities, and the region; and providing data and research specifically designed to explore the possibilities of this region.

Twelve core organizations make up the SELA Collaborative. These organizations leverage their expertise to support and empower SELA residents, and revitalize the communities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Florence-Firestone, Huntington Park, Lynwood, Maywood, South Gate, Vernon and Walnut Park.

## **SELA Collaborative's twelve core organizations include:**

- » Alliance for a Better Community
- » AltaMed
- » Council of Mexican Federations
- » East Los Angeles College
- » East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
- » Families in Schools
- » First 5 LA
- » Hub Cities
- » Human Services Association
- » Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs at Cal State LA
- » Southeast Community Development Corporation
- » Southeast Rio Vista YMCA







# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE SELA REGION



Southeast Los Angeles<sup>1</sup> is comprised of a series of independent cities and unincorporated areas that have demonstrated a history of **resilience and self-reliance**.<sup>2</sup>

Largely founded as predominantly White blue-collar unionized communities tied to an industrial economy, the region is now mostly home to working-class Latino communities tied to a post-industrial economy.<sup>3</sup> Younger residents are graduating from high school and college at higher rates than their parents,<sup>4</sup> boding well for the region's future stability. In addition, the region is home to large immigrant populations, a high percentage of Latino residents, and diverse industries and business activity that have created more job opportunities.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the region's median unemployment rate has decreased over the last ten years, from 13.4% to 9.4%.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, **the SELA region is a goldmine of cultural and linguistic assets: 90% of families speak a language other than English at home.**<sup>7</sup> Despite these promising assets, significant structural barriers exist that limit the maximization of the region's potential and progress. As the region's population grows, economic, health, education, and social indicators continue to reflect suboptimal child and family well-being.<sup>8</sup>

The data presented on the following pages highlights both the opportunities and challenges of the region, and the importance of harnessing the region's collective power and voice through a policy agenda aimed to achieve lasting change.



# ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The median family income of the SELA region is lower than both L.A. County and California (Fig. 1). In addition, more than a quarter of families in the SELA region live below the poverty line, which is double the percentage of California, and nearly double the percentage of L.A. County (Fig. 1).

Though it has steadily decreased in the last decade, the unemployment rate of the SELA region is also higher than both LA County and California (Fig.1).

**FIGURE 1: SELECT ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SELA, L.A. COUNTY, AND CALIFORNIA<sup>9</sup>**

	SELA	LA COUNTY	CALIFORNIA
Median Family Income	\$40,292	\$68,272	\$76,795
Unemployment Rate	9.4%	7.8%	7.7%
Families living below the poverty line	25.4%	13.1%	11.1%

# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The percentage of SELA residents completing high school has remained consistent over the last decade, going from 23.14% of SELA residents 25 years and over to 23.5% securing a high school degree.<sup>10</sup> The state average follows the same trend, with only a .9% decrease over the last decade.<sup>11</sup> A much smaller median percentage of the SELA population has completed college, though this number has increased over the last decade, from 4.4% to 6.85% of SELA residents attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher.<sup>12</sup> However, educational disparities continue to exist in the region. Just over 82% and 78% of California and L.A. County residents, respectively, have attained a high school degree or higher, compared to a little over 50% of SELA residents (Fig. 2).

The disparity is even wider when it comes to higher education: nearly 7% of SELA residents have attained a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 31.2% and 32.6% of L.A. County and California residents, respectively (Fig. 2). In addition, students in K-12 public schools in SELA are not meeting standards on statewide proficiency exams in English and Math, with 70% of Asian students and 60% of White students performing on grade level in English language arts and mathematics, respectively, and for Latina/o students, only 40% and 30%, respectively.<sup>13</sup>

**FIGURE 2: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF SELA, L.A. COUNTY, AND CALIFORNIA<sup>14</sup>**

	SELA	LA COUNTY	CALIFORNIA
High School Diploma (Population 25 years and over) <sup>15</sup>	23.5%	20.7%	20.6%
High School or Higher (includes some college or associate’s degree and higher)	51.36%	78.2%	82.5%
Bachelor’s or Higher	6.85%	31.2%	32.6%

## CITIZENSHIP AND LANGUAGE

The SELA region has a wealth of cultural and linguistic assets because of its residents with immigrant backgrounds. Over 90% of the region speaks a language other than English at home, compared to 56.6% and 44% of L.A. County and California residents, respectively.

And nearly half of SELA residents are foreign-born (Fig. 3). In addition, an estimated 30% of SELA residents are not U.S. citizens, compared to nearly 17%, and 13.4% of L.A. County and California residents, respectively (Fig. 3).

**FIGURE 3: CITIZENSHIP AND LANGUAGE OF SELA, L.A. COUNTY, AND CALIFORNIA<sup>16</sup>**

	SELA	LA COUNTY	CALIFORNIA
Language Other than English Spoken at Home	90.2%	56.6%	44%
Not a U.S. Citizen	29.8%	16.9%	13.4%
Foreign Born	43%	34.4%	26.98%

## HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Surrounded by large industrial campuses and freeways, the SELA region experiences some of the highest levels of environmental pollution in L.A. County and California. The Long Beach and 5 Freeways, Santa Fe train yards, and dozens of manufacturing and battery recycling plants “release poisons that affect children, soil and water.”<sup>17</sup> The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) developed a pollution burden score using an index ranging from .1 to 10 that measures air quality, drinking water contamination, pesticide use, toxins from facilities, and traffic density. The higher the number, the more the community is burdened by pollution. SELA communities have an average pollution burden score of 7.17 - higher than the L.A. County average of 6.19 and the California average of 5.17 (Fig. 4).

In addition, a recent study of the region showed that airborne lead from recycled car batteries at the Exide plant in Vernon ended up in the baby teeth of children living nearby, and that the communities around the Exide smelter had twice as much lead as that found in a similar urban community in Boston that did a tooth-based research study.<sup>18</sup> Lead exposure in childhood can cause “brain damage, decrease in IQ, stunted growth, and problems with learning and behavior.”<sup>19</sup> Finally, although the region is exposed to more environmental hazards that detrimentally impact the health of its residents, SELA has higher rates of residents who do not have health insurance: 1 in 5 SELA residents do not have health insurance, compared to 1 in 7 L.A. county residents, and 1 in 10 residents across California (Fig. 4).

**FIGURE 4: HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT OF SELA, L.A. COUNTY, AND CALIFORNIA**

	SELA	LA COUNTY	CALIFORNIA
Pollution Burden Score <sup>20</sup>	7.17	6.19	5.17
No Health Insurance <sup>21</sup>	21.1%	13.3%	10.5%



# This policy agenda is a living document that responds to the needs of the SELA community, its challenges, and its opportunities.

It is meant to guide the SELA Collaborative in its advocacy around policy issues that affect residents in the Southeast Los Angeles region, as well as provide policy-makers, decision-makers and community members with key information about policy solutions and systems reforms that support the region. The agenda that follows includes policy recommendations around two initial areas: transportation as well as the 2020 Census. Transportation was chosen by the SELA Collaborative in response to an asset-mapping analysis that took

inventory of the assets of the SELA region,<sup>22</sup> as well as a 2017 summit with over 250 SELA stakeholders.<sup>23</sup> The 2020 Census was chosen because of the knowledge, expertise, and awareness that members of the SELA Collaborative have around its urgency, opportunities, and impact to the SELA region. The SELA Collaborative will continue to explore other policy areas to add to this agenda as it digs deeper into the challenges that confront the region and engages with more SELA community stakeholders.





# THE SELA COLLABORATIVE'S COMMUNITY-DRIVEN APPROACH TO CREATING A POLICY & ADVOCACY AGENDA

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The SELA Collaborative believes that when civil society is strong, communities are strong and political leaders are more accountable to the needs of their constituency.

As such, the SELA Collaborative focuses on civic engagement as one of its strategic priorities, with the goal of promoting the active engagement of SELA residents in civic life so that they create and lead positive change in their neighborhoods, cities, and the region.

The SELA Collaborative centers the community in its policy and advocacy work by creating spaces of listening, learning, and discussion. The Collaborative creates opportunities where the SELA community can come together to develop local solutions to local problems that leverage assets and collective power.





Through summits, Townhalls/Charlas and policy roundtables, elected officials, government agencies, community leaders, and residents together identify key issues of concern and develop policy goals and solutions that address systemic barriers in order to bolster the prosperity of the SELA region. These collective policy goals and solutions form the 2019 SELA Collaborative Policy and Advocacy agenda that reflects the voices of over 600 SELA residents, community leaders, civic leaders, community-based organizations, and elected officials.

Over the last two years, the SELA Collaborative executed a listening tour across the SELA region in order to better understand how civic engagement could be stimulated and supported through community-driven advocacy. The SELA Collaborative focused first on government and accountability, and heard two notable sentiments from SELA residents: they do not fully trust their public officials and institutions, but are interested in opportunities to directly engage with public officials and be heard.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the SELA Collaborative authored this policy and advocacy agenda that is rooted in the voices of the SELA community, and creates a link between their voices and policy-makers. The following policy recommendations provide policy-makers, decision-makers and community members with key recommendations of policy solutions and systems reforms that support the SELA region around two initial, critical, and timely areas chosen by the SELA Collaborative: the **2020 Census** as well as two pressing transportation projects in L.A. County -- the **West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor Project**<sup>25</sup> and the **NextGen Bus Study**.<sup>26</sup>





# A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE: WHAT THE SELA COLLABORATIVE HOPES TO ACHIEVE THROUGH ITS POLICY AND ADVOCACY WORK

The SELA Collaborative has developed the following overarching policy goals that serve as a framework and guide for the SELA Collaborative's policy and advocacy work. They were developed by engaging the SELA community stakeholders through its summits, Townhalls/Charlas, and policy roundtables. Through its policy and advocacy work, the SELA Collaborative seeks to:

These goals help ensure that the SELA Collaborative's policy agenda changes with the dynamic needs of the SELA community, as well as maintains alignment with the SELA Collaborative's mission, vision, and strategic priorities.



**Amplify the voice and identity of the SELA region;**



**Increase access and opportunity in the SELA region;**



**Increase the engagement, capacity and success of SELA residents and non-profits.**







# **POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE 2020 CENSUS & TRANSPORTATION**





# 2020 CENSUS



A complete count of Southeast Los Angeles residents during the 2020 Census is critical to ensuring that SELA communities are represented in our democracy and receive critical services and supports across **education, crime prevention, health care, and transportation.**

Federal officials rely on census data to allocate hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funds to local communities, as well as to determine each state's representation in the House of Representatives.

## \$76 BILLION

is the amount that the State of California alone receives annually in crucial federal funds for schools, crime prevention, health care and transportation using census-derived data.

## The consequences of an undercount are dire:

An undercount of California during the 1990 Census likely cost California **one seat in the U.S. House of Representatives** and at least **\$2 billion** in federal funds.<sup>27</sup> Targeted and coordinated outreach, as well as increased outreach dollars from the state and philanthropic organizations were key to avoiding such an outcome in 2000 and 2010.<sup>28</sup>

## Alarming, SELA communities are at a high-risk of an undercount.

SELA communities are home to large populations of people that are the most frequently undercounted on the Census, including children under 5, youth, immigrants, renters, homeless populations, and those with limited English proficiency.<sup>29</sup>

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### SELA Stats:

**~92%**

of all Census Block Groups in the SELA Collaborative region are considered Hard-to-Count meaning that they have “Very High” and “High” Low Response Scores (LRS).<sup>30</sup>

**2,000+**

students in K-12 schools in the region are also experiencing homelessness.<sup>32</sup>

**30%**

of SELA households do not have an internet connection.<sup>33</sup>

**37.7%**

of families have children 5 or under.

**68.87%**

of families are Latino (significant because Latino children ages 0-5 were amongst the most undercounted groups in the 2010 census, and accounted for a disproportionate share - more than 36% - of the total net undercount for all children under age 5.)<sup>31</sup>



Furthermore, at a 2020 Census Townhall/Charla hosted by the SELA Collaborative in South Gate, SELA residents themselves voiced three overarching barriers to completing the 2020 Census:

1. Fear and distrust of the federal government's use of responses;
2. Lack of access to technology; and
3. Lack of understanding of the importance of the census and how it benefits SELA communities.



# 2020 CENSUS

The SELA Collaborative has identified the following 2020 Census policy recommendations that are rooted in SELA community voice through the participation of residents and stakeholders in a Townhall/Charla<sup>34</sup> and policy roundtable.<sup>35</sup> These recommendations are intended to help policy makers, decision makers, and community members ensure a complete count of the SELA region during the 2020 Census and thereby help our region secure its fair share of federal funding, resources, and political representation.

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## **Cities and unincorporated communities of the SELA region should prioritize 2020 Census outreach efforts.**

Southeast Los Angeles<sup>36</sup> is comprised of a series of independent cities and unincorporated areas. These cities and unincorporated areas should work to secure state Census outreach dollars, dedicate staff and resources, and coordinate with community based organizations to ensure a complete count of their communities.



## **The 2020 Census must not include the addition of a citizenship question.**

At a 2020 Census Townhall hosted by the SELA collaborative, SELA residents listed fear and distrust of the federal government's use of census responses as a leading reason why they would not complete the 2020 Census. The potential addition of a citizenship question on the 2020 Census questionnaire has created an environment of fear and distrust that will likely lead to an undercount of immigrant communities and their families, underrepresentation in Congress, and insufficient federal resources for vulnerable communities. Congress must enact legislation to eliminate the citizenship question; it should not rely on the U.S. Supreme Court or the Department of Commerce to remove the citizenship question from 2020 Census. If the citizenship question remains on the Census 2020 questionnaire, the U.S. Census Bureau must aggressively mitigate the question's negative impact, including allowing respondents to skip the question and still be counted.



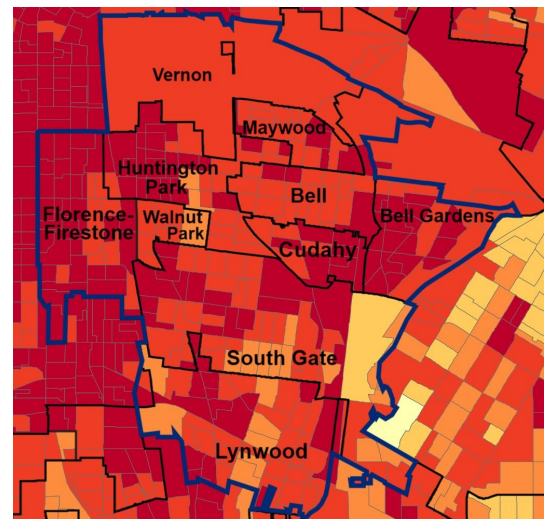
## **Amplify the voice of the SELA region in critical 2020 Census committee discussions.**

There are formal committees that are laying the groundwork for planning and outreach around the 2020 Census, including the L.A. County Complete Count Committee, and the L.A. Regional Census Table (LARCT). The LARCT serves as the stakeholder committee for the L.A. County Complete Count Committee. Government, non-profit, and philanthropic partners make up these committees that promote and facilitate a complete count of hard to count populations in Los Angeles County. Given the demographics of the SELA region, and the high percentage of populations who are at risk of an undercount, the unique interests of the SELA region must be represented and amplified during these important committee discussions.



## **Redistribute state census outreach dollars via regional organizations through grants.**

Regional organizations, like philanthropic foundations, have strong ties to and trust among non-profit community-based organizations and are in the strongest position to redistribute outreach dollars to these smaller entities. In addition, contract-based distribution of dollars used by government entities are often cumbersome for these smaller, community-based organizations. The SELA region has over 400<sup>37</sup> community-based organizations that would be more likely to apply for Census outreach dollars that are distributed by regional organizations with strong ties to the community through grants.



### **Low Response Score (LRS)\***

32.05 - 44.18	Very High
27.09 - 32.04	High
22.26 - 27.08	Medium
16.89 - 22.25	Low
0.00 - 16.88	Very Low

\*Low Response Score (LRS) is a measure created by the U.S. Census Bureau to predict areas that are less likely to respond to the Census. The higher the LRS, the more difficult it is to count that Block Group.



# 2020 CENSUS



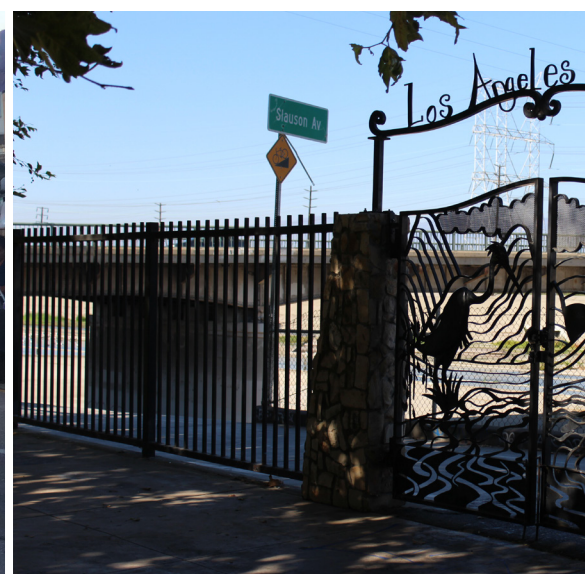
**Invest additional outreach dollars that should be distributed equitably across the state and target communities at risk of an undercount in California, including the SELA region.**

The 2018-2019 state budget allocated slightly over \$90 million to 2020 Census efforts, but only \$30 million is earmarked for community outreach efforts.<sup>38</sup> Governor Newsom has proposed \$54 million in additional dollars, earmarking a total of \$42.95 million for outreach efforts.<sup>39</sup> However, California needs a stronger investment than proposed to execute a comprehensive and coordinated outreach strategy.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the federal government continues to underfund census efforts.<sup>41</sup> As such, census outreach continues to be underfunded. Since the 2020 Census is critical to the State of California and its populations, the state must allocate more funding towards outreach of hard to count populations.



**Hire a sufficient number of enumerators from the SELA region to increase the SELA community's response rate.**

The SELA Region has a high population of immigrant families.<sup>42</sup> Due to the climate of fear created by the President's immigration policies and the potential addition of a citizenship question on the 2020 Census, motivating and convincing SELA residents to participate in the 2020 Census will require robust and coordinated outreach by enumerators who are from the community. Locally recruited and trained enumerators can validate government messages and alleviate anxiety about responding to the questionnaire. If immigrants in SELA, whether documented, undocumented, or of mixed status families, refuse to self-respond to the census questionnaire out of fear, then the region's population count will be highly inaccurate. US Census enumerators who are from the SELA community will be key to avoiding this outcome.





## **Identify trusted messengers of the SELA region to host Census Action Kiosks (CAKs), including SELA schools, faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations.<sup>43</sup>**

The Census Bureau expects to hire 50 percent fewer fieldworkers for nonresponse follow-up in 2020.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, field operations will be substantially reduced in 2020. Furthermore, the 2020 Census is moving to a primarily internet-based system where only a portion of households will receive a paper census, the rest will receive instructions by mail for how to respond online (or by phone). At the SELA Collaborative 2020 Census Townhall/Charla, concerns were raised from community members about individuals' lack of access to technology and concerns about information security. CAKs are thus critical to ensuring a complete count of populations who do not have access to technology to complete the census online or who lack trust in the 2020 Census process. The CAKs should also be located in spaces that have been identified by SELA residents as trusted messengers: schools, faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations.





# TRANSPORTATION



Findings from the SELA Collaborative's transportation summit,<sup>45</sup> research reports,<sup>46</sup> Townhalls/Charlas,<sup>47</sup> and policy roundtables<sup>48</sup> have revealed a critical need to focus on **public transportation** in the SELA region.

Public transit usage in the SELA region is low: only **8%** of SELA residents commute to work using public transportation.<sup>49</sup> This is only slightly higher than the LA County average of **6.3%**,<sup>50</sup> but given the lower median income of the region, not as high as might be expected.<sup>51</sup>



This may indicate that public transit as currently configured does not sufficiently match travel demand of the SELA region. In addition, much of the SELA area still lacks convenient access to rail transit. For example, the Blue, Green and Gold Lines pass through the Southeast, but almost all the stations of these lines are on the periphery, making them harder to access, and limiting the use of rail transit services among SELA residents.







# TRANSPORTATION

The following transportation policy recommendations are rooted in SELA community voice through engagement of residents and stakeholders at various transportation-focused events including a summit, a Townhall/Charla, and two policy roundtables. They are intended to provide policy-makers, decision-makers, as well as community members with key policy solutions and systems reforms that will help increase access to reliable public transportation in the SELA region, as well as ensure SELA residents benefit from jobs and development that surround transportation investment.

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**Transportation projects that affect the SELA region should increase access and opportunity for SELA residents and should address issues of displacement and gentrification.**

At the SELA Collaborative's Transportation Townhall, many residents expressed fears around unaffordable and rising housing costs due to potential development from new transportation projects that will impact the region. In addition, SELA residents most commonly reported access to jobs as the priority in the development of new transportation projects. It is imperative that issues of displacement, gentrification, and affordable housing are discussed and considered in the design and placement of transportation projects. Furthermore, accompanying land use decisions, as well as local tenant protection and affordable housing preservation and production strategies must also be discussed and considered so that SELA residents truly benefit from increased access and opportunity from new transportation projects.

As construction of new transportation projects begin, LA Metro should employ SELA residents for new jobs being brought to the area from its construction, in line with its Construction Careers Policy (CCP) and Project Labor Agreement (PLA) that encourage construction employment and training opportunities to those who reside in economically disadvantaged areas on Metro construction projects.<sup>52</sup>



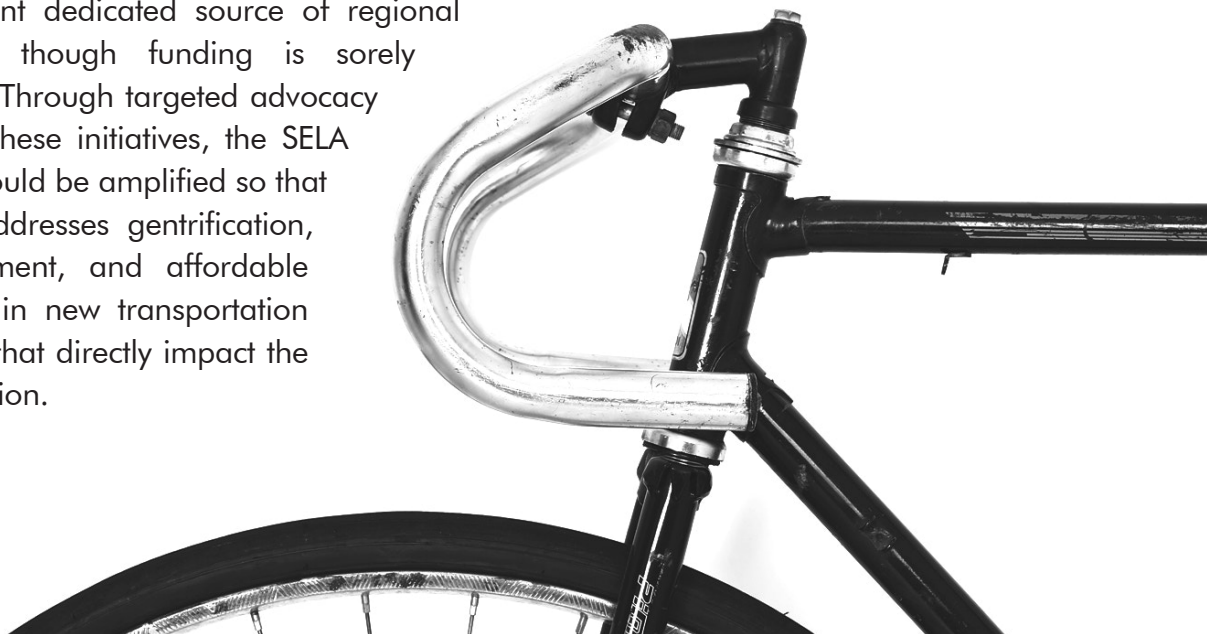
## **Increase access to reliable public transportation in the SELA region through an in-depth analysis of transit supply and demand in the region.**

The last regional travel survey in the SELA region was conducted as part of the 2010-2012 California Household Transportation survey, and regional surveys do not have enough observations for small-area analysis.<sup>53</sup> Metro should conduct a travel survey of the SELA region that would be valuable for understanding travel demand in the SELA region, as well as for informing transit service improvements. Such a survey should be distributed in way that is accessible to the community, including at bus stops and other places where more riders may be reached.



## **Amplify the voice of the SELA region in critical policy discussions that address issues of gentrification, displacement, and affordable housing around Metro's transportation projects.**

Local cities and community partners are critical to shaping Metro's definition of equity such that investments are targeted to high need communities through Metro's "Equity Platform Framework"<sup>54</sup> as well as its Transit Oriented Communities policy. At present, Metro's Equity Initiative exists as a framework, and does not yet have a plan for implementation. And it is not established anywhere in the framework that funding allocation decisions be made based on the equity goals described in this initiative. In addition, Metro's Transit Oriented Communities Policy implementation is not currently supported by a permanent dedicated source of regional funding, though funding is sorely needed. Through targeted advocacy around these initiatives, the SELA voice should be amplified so that Metro addresses gentrification, displacement, and affordable housing in new transportation projects that directly impact the SELA region.





# TRANSPORTATION



## **Increase coordination and engagement among the SELA region around transportation policy concerns.**

At its policy roundtables focused on transportation, the SELA collaborative consistently heard the need for increased coordination among the SELA region on various transportation policy concerns. In L.A. County, the Council of Governments (COGs) COGs have been key players in regional planning processes, receive Measure R<sup>55</sup> funds, and are poised to significantly influence and receive funds from future measures. The COGs share the goal of cooperatively addressing regional priorities and matters of mutual interest and also develop the strategic plan of the subregion with Metro. There should be increased coordination and engagement of SELA residents and community organizations so that the Gateway Cities COG<sup>56</sup> can efficiently and accurately represent the interests of the region on key transportation projects, including the planning of Metro's West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Corridor Project<sup>57</sup> and the NextGen Bus Study.<sup>58</sup>



## **Measure M financial match requirements should not disadvantage smaller cities that have smaller budgets.**

Measure M requires that any municipality applying for a grant be fiscally able to contribute a local 3% financial match.<sup>59</sup> Because of their relatively limited local budgets, many SELA cities cannot afford the local contributions as mandated by Measure M to compete. Measure M should include flexible provisions that allow for alternative ways for small cities to meet the financial match requirement.





## **The NextGen Bus Study should address key barriers that influence the reliability and access of public bus transit in the SELA region.**

The NextGen Bus Study is developing potential bus service concepts to better meet the needs of riders through working groups, stakeholder meetings, and community meetings and webcasts. The study should address barriers that are specific to SELA riders, including transit supply and demand within the SELA region, concerns by SELA residents regarding bus patronage, and arguments for service concepts to specifically target the SELA region.



## **Improve the 612, 611, and 102 bus lines.**

The 612, 611, and 102 bus lines run through Maywood, Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Cudahy, Huntington Park, and South Gate. The 102 line follows a route with an excessive amount of turns as it works its way up to USC, cuts across USC on Exposition Boulevard, then goes south through Crenshaw and ends at LAX. At the SELA Collaborative NexGen Bus Study roundtable, a Metro official stated that the 102 line is an extremely inefficient line and not many people ride it. There existed a Metro Connections Program that created neighborhood shuttles that were supposed to connect some of the larger bus lines in the north and south. This plan did not work as intended, causing additional transfers on the 612 and 611 that can be mitigated. The NextGen Bus Study is not addressing a specific solution for these three bus lines. The Southeast cities should be convened to gather additional data from residents about improving these bus lines and provide such input to Metro.





# CLOSING NOTE

Founded with a vision to create an informed, engaged, and empowered Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) community, the SELA Collaborative set out to create a process that would deliver a policy and advocacy agenda where residents and community stakeholders played a leading role. **After all, who best to identify the solutions to local challenges than the people most impacted by these challenges?**

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Communities in the SELA region are undoubtedly confronting numerous challenges for residents, families, and businesses to thrive. However, these challenges are also opportunities that the Collaborative has sought to address through its mission to strengthen the SELA communities, build collective power, and encourage innovation to drive regional systemic change.

This policy and advocacy agenda has been developed at a promising moment. In addition to skills, influence, and resources, each SELA Collaborative member brings passion and commitment to this work by ensuring the community remains at the forefront of making lasting, positive change through this living document.

This policy and advocacy agenda is a product of the SELA Collaborative's pledge to work together as one body to galvanize communities across city boundaries and ignite the collective power the SELA region possesses and has yet to exert.

The SELA region is indeed a goldmine. It is a critical artery in the movement of goods transported across the country and key to the national economy. The prosperity and vitality of the people living in this region is long overdue and at last, through these efforts, will be forthcoming.

# ENDNOTES

1. The SELA census data in this section are medians of the SELA collaborative's target regions: Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Florence-Firestone, Huntington Park, Lynwood, Maywood, South Gate, Vernon, and Walnut Park.
2. William Fulton, *Suburbs of Extraction*, The Reluctant Metropolis, 2001.
3. Ibid.
4. U.S. Census Bureau, "Educational Attainment," 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; "Educational Attainment," 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, accessed May 2019, [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/guided\\_search.xhtml](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/guided_search.xhtml)
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23. On Thursday, November 9, 2017 the Pat Brown Institute for Public Policy, in partnership with the SELA Collaborative, hosted the 2017 SELA Transportation Summit: Critical Choices Ahead.
24. On Tuesday, May 29, 2018 the Southeast Los Angeles Collaborative hosted a Government Accountability and Civic Engagement Charla Townhall Meeting at Maywood Magnet Center for Enriched Studies High School. Over thirty-five community stakeholders of Southeast Los Angeles (SELA), inclusive of residents, students, philanthropic partners, and local nonprofit organizations attended the Townhall, or “Charla.”
25. The WSAB Transit Corridor Project is a new light rail transit line that would connect downtown Los Angeles to southeast LA County, serving the cities and communities of downtown Los Angeles, unincorporated Florence-Graham community of LA County, Vernon, Huntington Park, Bell, Cudahy, South Gate, Downey, Paramount, Bellflower, Cerritos and Artesia.
26. The NextGen Bus Study is a transportation study currently being undertaken by Metro that will help Metro understand transit market demand in L.A. County, and recommend how best to reimagine the bus system to be more relevant to what people need today.
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34. On July 24, 2018 the Southeast Los Angeles Collaborative hosted a 2020 Census Charla Townhall Meeting at South Gate Girls Club House. Over 100 community SELA stakeholders, including residents, students, public officials, and government agency representatives, attended the Townhall, or “Charla.” The Townhall/Charla was focused on the 2020 Census and included a moderated panel with representatives from the Los Angeles County’s Chief Executive Office, the National Association for Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO); U.S. Census Bureau; and the Human Services Association. After hearing the moderated discussion which focused on sharing information on the importance and implications of a fair and accurate count on the 2020 Census for the SELA region, attendees participated in facilitated breakout groups to provide their feedback and policy recommendations.
35. On August 10, 2018 the Southeast Los Angeles Collaborative hosted a Census policy roundtable discussion at Hub Cities Consortium in Huntington Park. Over 30 community SELA stakeholders attended, including representatives from local elected offices, as well as representatives from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Los Angeles County Complete Count Committee, and the Los Angeles Regional Census Table. Attendees discussed policies, strategies, and opportunities for collaboration to ensure a complete count of SELA communities.
36. The SELA Collaborative’s efforts target the following cities and unincorporated areas: Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Florence-Firestone, Huntington Park, Lynwood, Maywood, South Gate, Vernon, and Walnut Park.
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45. On Thursday, November 9, 2017 the Pat Brown Institute for Public Policy, in partnership with the Southeast Los Angeles Collaborative, hosted the 2017 SELA Transportation Summit: Critical Choices Ahead. Over 250 Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) community stakeholders including public officials, community activists, direct service providers, youth leaders, residents, non-civic leaders and philanthropists, were in attendance.

46. As part of the 2017 Summit of Possibilities for Southeast LA (SELA), the Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs at Cal State LA charged the METRANS Transportation Center with performing a comprehensive analysis of the transportation assets and deficiencies within the communities near the I-710 corridor, termed Southeast Los Angeles (SELA). The resulting report, entitled “Sela Transportation Study,” identified transportation assets and deficiencies and examined them in the larger context of demographic, housing and air quality trends.
47. On Friday, June 29, 2018 the Southeast Los Angeles Collaborative hosted a Transportation Charla Townhall Meeting at the Bell Community Resource Center. Over 100 community stakeholders of Southeast Los Angeles (SELA), including residents, students, public officials, and government agency representatives, attended the Townhall, or “Charla.” The meeting was focused on two urgent transportation topics: 1. West Santa Ana Branch Metro Corridor Project and 2. NextGen Bus Study.
48. The SELA Collaborative hosted two policy roundtables attended by Metro leadership, local elected offices, non-profits, and community leaders focused on pressing transportation projects. The first took place on July 25, 2018 and focused on the West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Transit Corridor Project, over 30 were in attendance. The second took place on August 27, 2018 and was focused on the NextGen Bus Study. Both took place at Hub Cities Consortium in Huntington Park. Attendees has the opportunity to identify policies and advocacy strategies that promoted the interests of SELA residents in the development of the WSAB Transit Corridor Project and the NextGen Bus Study. The WSAB Transit Corridor Project is a new light rail transit line that would connect downtown Los Angeles to southeast LA County, serving the cities and communities of downtown Los Angeles, unincorporated Florence-Graham community of LA County, Vernon, Huntington Park, Bell, Cudahy, South Gate, Downey, Paramount, Bellflower, Cerritos and Artesia. The NextGen Bus Study is a transportation study currently being undertaken by Metro that will help Metro understand transit market demand in L.A. County, and recommend how best to reimagine the bus system to be more relevant to what people need today.
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54. The Equity Initiative has 4 goals: (1) Define and Measure – Metro acknowledges that historically and currently, inequity exists and has been largely defined by race and class – as well as age, gender, disability, and residency. Metro commits to working with historically underserved communities to establish meaningful equity goals; (2) Listen and Learn – Metro establishes forums to engage historically underserved communities, including with community-based organizations. This will include investing in technical capacity for local governments that serve these communities; (3) Focus and Deliver – Metro will incorporate an equity focus in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – Metro will partner to address issues of gentrification/displacement/affordable housing; and (4) Train and Grow – Metro will cultivate top-to-bottom ownership of its equity agenda throughout the agency. Available at: <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2017-0912/>
55. Measure R is a half-cent sales tax for Los Angeles County to finance new transportation projects and programs, and accelerate those already in the pipeline. The tax took effect July 2009. Measure R alone does not fully fund all projects. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, “What is Measure R”, accessed May, 2019, <https://www.metro.net/projects/measurer>.
56. The gateway cities COG’s mission is to improve the quality of life for the two million residents of Southeast Los Angeles County. Targeted initiatives include transportation planning, affordable housing, improving air quality, economic development and other community-enhancing activities.
57. The WSAB Transit Corridor Project is a new light rail transit line that would connect downtown Los Angeles to southeast LA County, serving the cities and communities of downtown Los Angeles, unincorporated Florence-Graham community of LA County, Vernon, Huntington Park, Bell, Cudahy, South Gate, Downey, Paramount, Bellflower, Cerritos and Artesia.
58. The NextGen Bus Study is a transportation study currently being undertaken by Metro that will help Metro understand transit market demand in L.A. County, and recommend how best to reimagine the bus system to be more relevant to what people need today.
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The Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Collaborative is a network of organizations gathered to lead the area of Southeast Los Angeles into an era of increased vitality by bringing resources to build a robust infrastructure of local nonprofits; to inform and engage residents for increased civic participation; and, to provide data and research specifically designed to explore the possibilities of this region.



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