

## FTA's Flowers Shines Hope on Funding for Los Angeles County Transit Growth

### COMMITTEE REPORT



*Carolyn Flowers (Senior Advisor for the Federal Transit Administration), Photos © John Livzey, 2017*

On April 15, when WTS-LA held a reception for Carolyn Flowers, a senior advisor for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the 120 attendees heard Metro's former Chief Operating Officer praise Los Angeles County for building a virtual toolbox of public transportation alternatives.

"It is so great to be here with my Metro family," Flowers began her talk at downtown Los Angeles' Jonathan Club. "It's great to see the advances that you've made: subway, light rail, BRT...everything in the toolbox is here."

"Of course, you're not only preparing for the increase of people—another half million people in Los Angeles County by 2045," Flowers said. "Besides population growth, another thing you are planning for is addressing climate change." She also praised transit officials for addressing the need for greater access to transit.

"So what we have seen on the federal transit side is your determination to expand transportation," Flowers said. "We are very happy to be your partner in this growth. We see that you are building a legacy, and we are happy to be part of that."

At the FTA, Flowers assists in leading a staff of more than 500 individuals in the Washington, D.C. office and 10 regional offices throughout the United States.

"I was a budget person with Metro—many of you remember that—so I have to add that, to create transportation, you need a secure funding source," Flowers noted. "And we [the FTA] have to do it in a way that gives state and local leaders the confidence to plan ahead, knowing that the federal government will step up to the plate."





She continued by asking her audience to support President Obama's Grow America Initiative. [The renewed Grow America Act is a six-year bill that would provide \$478b for transportation.]

"If we sustain the funding of Grow America, we would see an increase of \$1.9 billion in funding for California," Flowers noted. "It's really necessary for us to get serious on how we are going to plan for transit. You need to let your legislators know that you want transportation."

Before receiving a presidential appointment as FTA senior advisor in January 2015, Flowers had served as the Chief Executive Officer/Director of Public Transit for the Charlotte Area Transit System since 2009. There she was responsible for countywide bus and rail transit planning and management. As Metro's Chief Operating Officer, she managed bus operations and the Freeway Service Patrol.

Flowers received her MBA in finance and marketing from the UCLA Anderson School of Management. She received her BA in history: political science from UCLA as well.

"I want to support what I see coming out of the ground here," Flowers said in closing. "I know you are working on initiatives on how to support and expand transit. I know it's important to expand transit, but it's also vital to support the systems already here."

This event was chaired by Rebecca Kalauskas of Parsons Brinckerhoff.

