

## Lucy Olmos Delgadillo: The Road Best Traveled



*Lucy Olmos Delgadillo (Metro transportation planning manager), Photos by John Livzey, 2017*

When working for one of the largest transportation organizations in the world, one that operates bus, light rail, heavy rail, and bus rapid transit, few expect to be seconded to highways. But that's exactly what happened to Metro transportation planning manager Lucy Olmos Delgadillo.

"We get this question a lot: why is Metro doing highways when we have Caltrans, the owner and operator of California highways? In 2008 and 2016, voters approved a half-cent sales tax (Measure R and M) that included a list of highway projects, for which Metro is responsible to deliver. So, that's how Metro got into the business of highway project delivery. We work on everything from feasibility studies to project design, with Caltrans as a partner in all of our highway projects."

And work she does. Here's a sample of some of the projects she's currently working on.

"I'm managing three design packages for sound walls all along the I-710 Corridor, from the City of Long Beach all the way to the SR-60. They're currently in the design phase. I also recently completed a project study report on the SR-91/I-710 Interchange; that one should be moving on to environmental, but we're going to break down that large study area into smaller projects, so that they can be implemented faster. We refer to them as *early action projects*. I'm also working on a couple of early action projects on the I-605. One is the I-605 Beverly Interchange Improvement Project, an interchange reconfiguration project."



Early action projects are critical to Metro and Ms. Delgadillo's work. She explains.

"On the I-605 Corridor Improvement Project, for example, we have an environmental document whose study area is from the I-105 all the way to the I-10. Within that large corridor—which could take up to five-years to clear an environmental document—we try to look at projects that can be accelerated through a smaller environmental document process, one that has maybe a one- to two-year window to complete it,

and that will provide benefits for that area sooner. With limited resources, it's a much faster approach to deliver projects and provide benefits for the communities earlier."

Ms. Delgadillo credits Metro for providing both support and a steep learning curve. She also believes that WTS will continue to play a critical role in her career.

"I focused on high-speed rail and regional rail for my master's degree. And I still have interest there for the future. But I started my career at Metro in the Highway Program close to 7 years ago, and I'm still enjoying highways and learning so much. So, that's been great.

"I was working at OCTA as an intern and getting my M.A. at the University of California, Irvine, when I first got exposed to WTS through the Orange County chapter's monthly luncheons. When I started working in LA County, I wanted to continue to be involved in WTS. I love the mission and what it stands for, so I joined WTS-LA. But I'm still a member of WTS OC, and on their Scholarship Committee. I review the scholarship applications that come through the chapter. I feel great loyalty to the Orange County chapter, too. In 2009, I won a scholarship from that chapter. So, ever since, it's been my mission and goal to contribute to the success of those that helped me, and help others. With WTS-LA, I was also part of the first edition of the Transportation Resume Book (TRB), which opened up my first job opportunity post graduate school. As you can see, WTS has been an important part of my career."

Ms. Delgadillo never expected to be working in highways when she joined Metro. But it's proving to be an exceptional path for her.