Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

File #: 2026-0778, **File Type:** Contract **Agenda Number:** 16.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 19, 2026

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT AND OUTREACH SERVICES BENCH

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to:

A. EXECUTE Modification No. 4 to Communications Support and Outreach Services Bench Contract Nos. PS85397000 through PS85397015 to increase the cumulative contract value in an amount Not-To-Exceed (NTE) $1,500,000, increasing the contract value from $50,000,000 to $51,500,000; and

B. EXECUTE individual contract modifications within the Board-approved contract modification authority.

ISSUE

The Communications Support and Outreach Services Bench (Bench) has successfully provided professional communications and outreach support services to multiple and diverse Metro projects, programs, and initiatives, exhausting the NTE $50M contract value. To date, 41 task orders have been issued against the Bench, for a total contract value of $47,997,253.85, leaving only $2,002,746.15 in contract authority remaining until a new contract is awarded, anticipated in March 2027.

The Bench provides Metro Departments, including Community Relations, Customer Experience, Planning, Office of Strategic Innovation, Civil Rights, Operations, Diversity and Economic Opportunity, with supplementary services supporting Metro's projects, programs, and initiatives, such as community engagement programs, public information campaigns, special events, surveys, and various public outreach and marketing activities.

BACKGROUND

At its September 2022 meeting, the Board approved the establishment of Communications Support Services Bench contract (Bench) for an amount not to exceed $32,000,000 for a four-year term with 16 Small Business Enterprise (SBE) prime contractors.

At its December 2024 meeting, the Board approved a contract modification of $18,000,000 to increase the cumulative contract value from $32,000,000 to $50,000,000. The contract authority augmentation was needed to continue the K-Line Street Teams and Community Intervention Specialists, prior to these services being awarded with a separate solicitation.

To optimize the Agency's existing communications workforce and to ensure adherence to Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan, Public Participation Plan, Equity Platform, Community-Based Organizations Partnering Strategy, and Customer Experience Plan, a combination of agency staff and contracted services is necessary. The Bench ensures that strategic and equitable communications support services are available to supplement Metro's staff resources.

The Bench contracts have been in place for nearly four years and consist of 16 full-service, multi-disciplinary teams that serve on an on-call, task order-award basis under six disciplines:

1. Strategic Communications
2. Translation/Interpretation
3. Special Events and/or Digital Production
4. Professional Facilitation
5. Mailing Services
6. Technical Writing

To date, the contracts have proven to be successful in their utilization with 41 task orders awarded totaling $47,997,253.85 to the firms shown on Attachment A.

DISCUSSION

The communications support and outreach bench is an essential resource that provides Metro departments with specialized expertise and flexible support to advance critical projects, programs, and initiatives. Through community engagement, public information campaigns, pop-up events, surveys, and targeted outreach and marketing activities, the Bench strengthens Metro's ability to engage diverse communities, build public trust, and ensure meaningful public dialog and participation. Extending the contract is critical to maintaining uninterrupted services, preserving established community relationships, and providing the capacity and expertise needed to meet increasing outreach demands and project delivery timelines. Without this resource, Metro risks delays in public engagement activities, reduced responsiveness to community needs, and disruptions to key initiatives. The extension will ensure Metro can continue delivering timely, inclusive, and effective engagement services that support agency priorities and successful project implementation.

Higher-than-anticipated Bench utilization has been driven in part by expanded agency needs under Task Orders 19 and 31 with Northstar Alliances and Arellano Associates, respectively. Task Order 19 - Special Events Support has required additional resources for major event planning, including the D Line opening celebration and FIFA World Cup mobilization efforts. Task Order 31 continues to require additional support for the expanding Eat, Shop, Play (ESP) Programs for the North Hollywood to Pasadena BRT, Vermont BRT, and East San Fernando Valley Light Rail projects. Future ESP Programs are also planned for the Southeast Gateway Line and Eastside Phase 2 projects.

Additional authority will also support major upcoming efforts, including the D Line Sections 2 and 3 openings, Vermont BRT and North Hollywood to Pasadena ESP, Super Bowl LXI in 2027, as well as other important projects and initiatives.

Several high-profile community engagement programs are currently supported through Bench task including:

- Expanded Eat, Shop, Play Program for multiple corridor projects simultaneously.
- Bus Speed and Reliability Public Outreach Program (Dedicated Bus Lanes)
- Gateway Region Community-Based Organizations Partnership Administration Services
- Enhanced LIFE Outreach Street Teams
- C-Line Extension to Torrance Community Engagement Program
- Joint Development Program Outreach
- Antelope Valley Line Pacoima Metrolink Station and Mobility Hub

To maintain continuity of services for current and approved projects, programs, and initiatives, staff is requesting an additional $1.5 million in contract authority. The requested authority is intended as a limited bridge while Metro completes procurement of a new On-Call Community Relations Bench, which is expected to replace the existing Bench with anticipated Board approval in June 2027.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Contractors may be required to conduct tasks on Metro property where construction or operations may be active. They may be exposed to hostile community members while conducting public-facing activities and therefore will be encouraged to receive de-escalation training to support their public interactions. All safety requirements will be met with requisite training and clearance as established by Metro Safety, Construction, Operations and Human Resources protocols.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The requested action would increase total Bench contract authority from $50 million to a not-to-exceed amount of $51.5 million. This action does not establish a single $51.5 million funding source or budget. Individual task orders are funded by the benefiting projects or departments and may use sales tax, grants, fares, or other eligible agency funding sources. As specific work efforts arise, task orders will be issued and funded from the corresponding approved project or departmental budget.

Funding is included in the department cost center budgets. Each task order awarded to a contractor will be funded with the source of funds identified for that project. Since this is a multi-year contract, the departmental cost center managers will be responsible for budgeting costs in future years.

Impact to Budget
The funding for these task orders depends on the specific project and could consist of federal, state, or local funds.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The On-Call Communications Bench contract advances Metro's commitment to equity and inclusion by ensuring communications activities provide targeted approaches to engage all stakeholders, with specific focus on marginalized and vulnerable communities across the various disciplines: strategic communications, interpretation and translation, special events, professional facilitation, mailing and writing services. Enhanced community engagement opportunities for marginalized or vulnerable groups improve equitable outcomes by capturing and elevating voices that might not otherwise be heard or included in decision-making for Metro's projects, programs, or initiatives.

There are several ongoing task orders that specifically request support services not only for community engagement with the public but also partnerships with various community-based organizations who serve low-income households, black, indigenous and people of color in equity focused communities throughout Los Angeles County.

Future communications and public outreach activities, especially as staff plans for world events coming to Los Angeles in the coming years, will require firms to be innovative in reaching marginalized and vulnerable populations in accordance with Metro's Equity Platform and CBO Partnership Strategy.

For this Communications Support Services Bench, the Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Set-Aside Program was applied, resulting in a total of 16 SBE Prime Bench participants. Bench participants made various SBE commitments for this Task Order (TO)-based contract. Twelve of the 14 SBEs awarded TOs are meeting or exceeding their SBE commitment(s). The average SBE participation for the bench to-date is 77%. Two (2) SBE primes have not met commitment levels; however, both have shortfall mitigation plans on file with DEOD.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

As part of these ongoing efforts, this item is expected to contribute to further reductions in VMT. While contract extensions do not, itself, directly reduce VMT, this item enables the continuation of multiple ongoing Metro systemwide programs, mentioned above, and thus support Metro's overall VMT reduction goals through investment, planning, operational, administrative or customer experience activities that will benefit and further encourage transit ridership, ridesharing, and active transportation. Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets were designed to build on the success of existing investments, and this item aligns with those objectives.

*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The recommended actions support the following goals:

Goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling.
Goal 2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system.
Goal 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.
Goal 5: Provide responsive, accountable, and trustworthy governance within the Metro organization

The Communications Support Services Bench enables the agency to engage stakeholders in an authentic, meaningful, and responsive manner across Metro projects, programs, and initiatives.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may elect not to approve the contract modification. However, this alternative is not recommended, as it would limit Metro's ability to provide timely and consistent community engagement, public outreach, and communication services across multiple departments. Without the contract extension, Metro would need to rely on existing staff resources or initiate new procurement efforts for each assignment, potentially resulting in service disruptions, project delays, increased administrative demands, and reduced capacity to meet critical community engagement needs. Extending the contract ensures continuity of essential services, preserves established community relationships, and supports the timely implementation of Metro's projects, programs, and initiatives.

NEXT STEPS

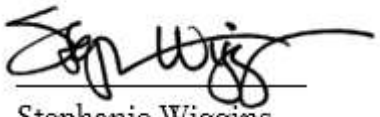
Upon Board approval, staff will execute Modification No. 4 to the Communications Support Services Bench Contract Nos. PS85397000 to PS85397015 and continue to award or modify individual task orders for communications support services.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Task Order Log
Attachment B - Procurement Summary
Attachment C - Contract Modification/Change Order Log
Attachment D - DEOD Summary

Prepared by: M. Dierking, Director, Community Relations
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Reviewed by: N. Englund, Chief of Staff
M. Antonelli, Chief Vendor/Contract Management Officer



Stephanie Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer

Contract Number PS85397000-015 **ATTACHMENT A**

Task Order Log

Task No.	Firm	Lead Department(s)	Task Order Description
1	Lee Andrews Group	Customer Experience	Community Intervention Specialist Street Teams
2	Arellano Associates	Countywide Planning	Southeast Gateway Line First/Last Mile
3	MBI Media	Countywide Planning	Vehicle Miles Traveled Program
4	Del Sol Group	Customer Experience	PSAC Facilitator Services
5	Arellano Associates	Countywide Planning	Long Beach-East LA CMIP
6	North Star Alliances	Countywide Planning	Gateway Cities Area CBO Partnerships Administrator
8	VMA Communications	Countywide Planning	State Route 14 Improvements Projects
9	PGI	Customer Experience	LIFE Program Mailing Services
10	LAZAR	Customer Experience	Older Adults Expo Interpretation Services
11	Lee Andrews Group	Customer Experience	Discounted Fares Program Outreach Team
12	Arellano Associates	Countywide Planning	I-405 Wilmington PA/ED Community Engagement
13	Communications Lab	Customer Experience	Earth Day 2023
14	Murakawa Communications	Countywide Planning	Vermont Transit Corridor Project Engagement Program
15	PGI	Countywide Planning	Bike Share Mailing Services
16	PGI	Community Relations	Community Relations Mailing Services
18	Arellano Associates	Countywide Planning	Rail to River Project - Segment B
19	North Star Alliances	Customer Experience	Special Events Support
20	Natively Fluent	Customer Experience	Interpretation Services for Special Events
21	Lee Andrews Group	Customer Experience	Special Events Support - In-House Consultant Staffing
22	LAZAR	Operations	Service Councils Interpretation Services
23	The Robert Group	Countywide Planning	K Line Extension to Torrance Outreach Program
24	MBI Media	Customer Experience	PSAC Strategic Communications and Program Management
25	North Star Alliances	Office of Strategic Innovation	Mobility Wallet Phase 2A & 2B
26	Community Connections	Customer Experience	Agency Website and Content Management Enhancements

27	Redwood Resources (new name RSCA Corp dba Redwood Resources)	Customer Experience	On the Move Riders Program Special Event Support Services
28	Lee Andrews Group	Countywide Planning	Joint Development Projects Community Engagement
29	Lee Andrews Group	Customer Experience	Community Advisory Council Facilitation Services
31	Arellano Associates	Program Management	Business Engagement & Mitigation Program (Eat, Shop, Play)
32	Communications Lab	Countywide Planning	Westlake MacArthur Park Station Plaza Vending Program
33	Arellano Associates	Operations	Bus Speed and Reliability Improvements Program
34	Communications Lab	Countywide Planning	Countywide BRT Study Engagement Program
35	North Star Alliances	Countywide Planning	Los Angeles General Medical Center Station Study
36	North Star Alliances	Operations	Union Station ADA Walk/Roll Audits
37	Arellano Associates	Countywide Planning	East San Fernando Valley Transit Supplemental Study
38	LAZAR	Diversity and Economic Opportunities	Interpretation for DEOD Programs
39	MBI Media	Customer Experience	CAC Administration and Management Services
40	PGI	Customer Experience	LIFE Program Mailing Services
41	Redwood Resources (new name RSCA Corp dba Redwood Resources)	Customer Experience	Agencywide Online Survey
42	PGI	Operations	Bike Share Mailing Services
43	PGI	Community Relations	Community Relations Mailing Services
44	Del Sol Group	Civil Rights	FIFA Mobile Sensory Stations
45	TBD	Countywide Planning	Measure M Decennial Communications
46	TBD	Countywide Planning	Antelope Valley Line - Pacoima Metrolink Station & Mobility Hub

ATTACHMENT B

PROCUREMENT SUMMARY

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES BENCH
PS85397000 THROUGH PS85397015

1.	**Contract Numbers**: PS85397000 through PS85397015			
2.	**Contractors**: Arellano Associates, Communications Lab, Community Connections, Costin Public Outreach Group, Dakota Communications, Del Sol Group, Lazar Translating & Interpreting, Lee Andrews Group, MBI Media (MBI), Murakawa Communications, Natively Fluent, North Star Alliances, Pacific Graphics Inc., Redwood Resources, The Robert Group, and VMA Communications			
3.	**Mod. Work Description** : Increase the Not-to-Exceed (NTE) cumulative bench contract value.			
4.	**Contract Work Description** Provide as needed communications support services			
5.	**The Following Data is Current as of**: 10/13/2026			
6.	**Contract Completion Status**		**Financial Status**	
	Contract Awarded:	9/22/22	**Contracts Award Amount:**	$32,000,000
	Notice to Proceed (NTP):	N/A	**Total of Modifications Approved:**	$18,000,000
	Original Complete Date:	9/30/26	**Pending Modifications (including this action):**	$1,500,000
	Current Est. Complete Date:	6/30/27	**Current Contract Value (with this action):**	$51,500,000
7.	**Contract Administrator**: A. Dumaua			
8.	**Project Manager**: M. Dierking			

A. Procurement Background

This Board Action is to approve Modification No. 4 to the Communications Support Services Bench Contract Nos. PS85397000 through PS85397015 to increase the NTE cumulative bench contract value and continue to provide supplementary communications services on an on-call basis.

Contract Modifications will be processed in accordance with Metro's Acquisition Policy, and the contract type is task order based, firm fixed unit rate.

In September 2022, the Board approved the award of 16 Contract Nos. PS85397000 through PS85397015 to provide communications support services for a four-year term.

Three modifications have been issued to date.

Refer to Attachment C – Contract Modification/Change Order Log.

B. Price Analysis

The fully burdened hourly rates for the term of the bench contracts were established as part of the competitive contract award in September 2022. Rates remain unchanged and are lower than current market rates for similar services. Task Orders will be subject to technical analysis, price analysis, and negotiations to determine fairness and reasonableness of price prior to award.

ATTACHMENT C

CONTRACT MODIFICATION/CHANGE ORDER LOG

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES BENCH
PS85397000 THROUGH PS85397015

Mod. No.	Description	Status (Approved or Pending)	Date	Amount
1	Add Special Provision SP-20 Drug Free Workplace Policy	Approved	05/23/23	$0
2	Increase the not-to-exceed (NTE) cumulative bench contract value	Approved	11/24/24	$18,000,000
3	Extend period of performance (POP) through 6/30/27.	Approved	8/20/26	$0
4	Increase the NTE cumulative bench contract value.	**Pending**	**Pending**	**$1,500,000**
	Modification Total:			**$19,500,000**
	Original Contract:		**9/22/22**	**$32,000,000**
	Total:			**$51,500,000**

DEOD SUMMARY

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES BENCH PS85397000 THROUGH PS85397015

A. Small Business Participation

For this Communications Bench, the Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Prime Set-Aside Program was applied, resulting in a total of 16 SBE Prime Bench participants. Bench participants made various SBE commitments for this Task Order (TO)-based contract. The contract is 82.96% complete and to-date, 41 TOs have been awarded to 14 of the16 SB Primes. Two SBE Primes, Costin Public Outreach Group and Dakota Communications, have not received TO awards to-date. Twelve of the 14 SBE Primes, awarded TOs, are meeting or exceeding their SBE commitment(s); with 2 SBE Primes in shortfall.

The Lee Andrews Group (LAG) made a 70% SBE commitment, and the current level of overall participation is 56.47%, representing a shortfall of 13.53%. LAG has a shortfall mitigation plan on file and attributes the shortfall to requests by Metro to increase the involvement of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and dedicated Community Impact Specialists (CIS), as confirmed by Metro's Project Manager. LAG indicated it will make every effort to mitigate the shortfall as future task orders are awarded.

Natively Fluent (NF) made a 100% SBE commitment and achieved an SBE participation rate of 97.39%, resulting in a shortfall of 2.61%. NF has a shortfall mitigation plan on file and attributes the shortfall to Metro's request for interpreting services on short notice for its initial assignment. As a result, NF utilized a non-SBE firm, LA Translation and Interpretation, Inc., to perform a portion of the work, as confirmed by Metro's Project Manager.

1. Arellano Associates – 7 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Arellano Associates	30%	94.15%

2. Communications Lab (Barrios & Assoc.) – 3 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Communications Lab (Barrios & Assoc.)	40%	88.59%

3. Community Connections – 1 Task Order Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Community Connections	55%	56.48%

4. Costin Public Outreach Group – 0 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Costin Public Outreach Group	30%	N/A

To-Date no Task orders have been awarded to Costin Public Outreach Group

5. Dakota Communications – 0 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Dakota Communications	65%	N/A

To-Date no Task orders have been awarded to Dakota Communications

6. Del Sol Group – 2 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Del Sol Group	100%	100%

7. Lazar Translating & Interpreting – 3 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Lazar Translating & Interpreting	60%	80.22%

8. Lee Andrews Group – 5 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Lee Andrews Group	70%	56.47%

9. MBI Media – 3 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
MBI Media	70%	98.00%

10. Murakawa Communications – 1 Task Order Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Murakawa Communications	30%	100%

11. Natively Fluent – 1 Task Order Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Natively Fluent	100%	97.39%

12. North Star Alliances – 5 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
North Star Alliances	60%	72.16%

13. Pacific Graphics Inc. – 6 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Pacific Graphics Inc.	100%	100%

14. Redwood Resources – 2 Task Orders Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
Redwood Resources	40%	95.21%

15. The Robert Group – 1 Task Order Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
The Robert Group	100%	100%

16. VMA Communications – 1 Task Order Awarded

SBE Prime Contractor	Small Business Commitment	Small Business Participation
VMA Communications	85%	100%

[1]Current Participation = Total Actual amount Paid-to-Date to DBE firms ÷Total Actual Amount Paid-to-date to Prime.

B. Living Wage Service Contract Worker Retention Policy Applicability

The Living Wage and Service Contract Worker Retention Policy is not applicable to this modification.

C. Prevailing Wage Applicability

Prevailing wage is not applicable to this modification.

D. Project Labor Agreement/Construction Careers Policy (PLA/CCP)

Project Labor Agreement/Construction Careers Policy is not applicable to this Contract. PLA/CCP is applicable only to construction contracts that have a construction related value in excess of $2.5 million.

E. Manufacturing Careers Policy

The Manufacturing Careers Policy (MCP) does not apply to this contract. The MCP is required on Metro's Rolling Stock RFPs, with an Independent Cost Estimate of at least $50 million.