

## **Revised Agenda Item No. 4**

### **Transit Committee Meeting**

**November 14, 2024  
9:00 AM**

**Location:**

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority  
*First Floor Lobby Board Room*  
1170 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410

### **Discussion - Regional/Subregional Planning**

#### **4. Priority Transit Corridors for the San Bernardino Valley**

That the Transit Committee recommend the Board, acting as the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority:

A. Direct staff to conduct an evaluation of the application of Transit Signal Priority and other strategies to enhance local bus service, in conjunction with the development of smart corridors in the Valley, with an investment plan to be brought back to the Board of Directors by spring 2025.

B. Direct staff to continue collaboration with local jurisdictions to identify the priority of routes for further development of the Bus Rapid Transit network as identified in the Omnitrans System wide Plan (updated in 2019), to be incorporated into the Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan.

*This item has been revised to include information in bold to the third paragraph of the background.*

## *Minute Action*

REVISED AGENDA ITEM: 4

*Date: November 14, 2024*

***Subject:***

Priority Transit Corridors for the San Bernardino Valley

***Recommendation:***

That the Transit Committee recommend the Board, acting as the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority:

A. Direct staff to conduct an evaluation of the application of Transit Signal Priority and other strategies to enhance local bus service, in conjunction with the development of smart corridors in the Valley, with an investment plan to be brought back to the Board of Directors by spring 2025.

B. Direct staff to continue collaboration with local jurisdictions to identify the priority of routes for further development of the Bus Rapid Transit network as identified in the Omnitrans Systemwide Plan (updated in 2019), to be incorporated into the Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan.

***Background:***

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) is working with stakeholders at all levels to develop a comprehensive Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan (LRMTP) that captures the transportation vision for the County of San Bernardino through 2050. Part of this vision involves improvements to service and efficiency that can be made to existing bus transit routes, both in the Valley and elsewhere.

Omnitrans prepared their original Systemwide Plan of priority transit routes in 2010. An update to the Systemwide Plan was developed in 2019 and is shown in Figure 1 on the following page. The E Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line (Green Line) has been in service for 10 years. The West Valley Connector BRT (future Purple Line) is under construction. As part of the LRMTP, Omnitrans and SBCTA are looking broadly at what investments should be made to other Priority Transit Corridors in the Systemwide Plan and have been seeking input from local jurisdictions over the last several months regarding potential investments on routes serving their jurisdictions. Jurisdictions that responded to this outreach, and with which SBCTA and Omnitrans had discussions, include: the Cities of Chino, Colton, Fontana, Highland, Montclair, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Rialto, San Bernardino, and Yucaipa.

SBCTA has estimated that up to \$125 million in funding could be available from the Measure I Express Bus/BRT Program through 2040. The Express Bus/BRT Program receives 5 percent of Valley Measure I revenue that can be used for both capital and operations. With the right combination of investments, this funding could be leveraged to bring additional State and Federal funds into our area. The types of investments could range from making strategic improvements to transit service on multiple routes, to larger investments that are more focused on one or two corridors similar to the Green Line or Purple Line. **In reviewing the eligibility requirements of the Measure I Express Bus/BRT Program, it was determined that the ONT Connector is also an eligible investment.**

*Entity: San Bernardino County Transportation Authority*

A summary of this initiative was presented by Omnitrans staff to their Executive Committee on September 6, 2024. The same information was presented by SBCTA and Omnitrans staff to the SBCTA Transit Committee on September 12, 2024 with an expectation that a recommendation would be brought back once the outreach had concluded.

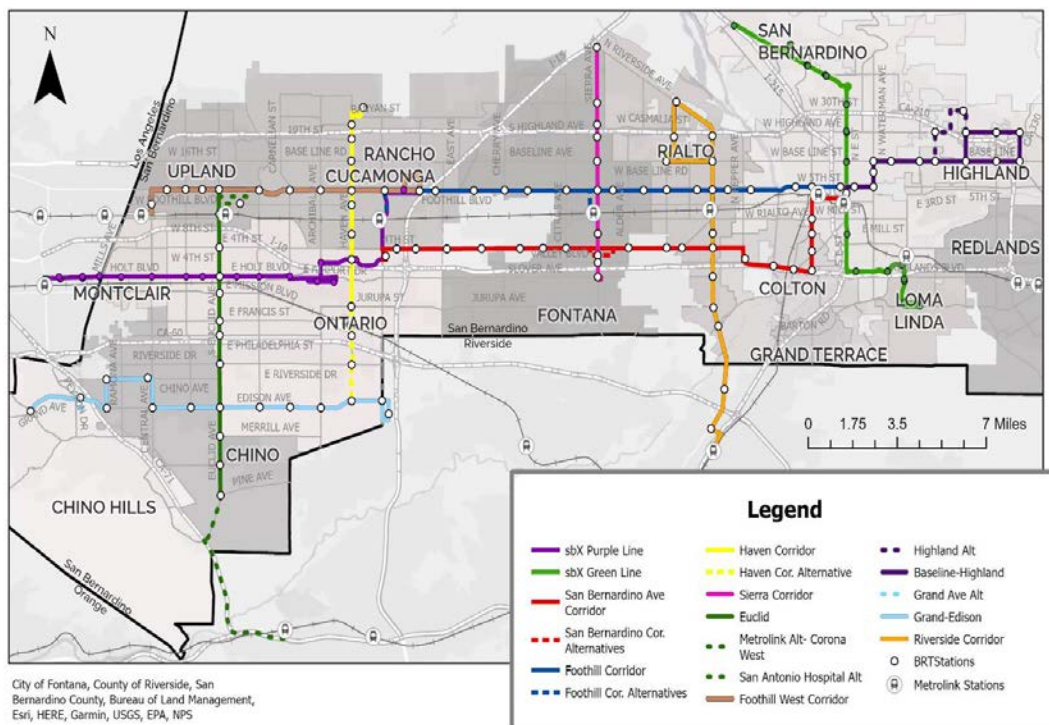
### Evaluation Framework

Subsequent to the local outreach on Priority Transit Corridors, a generalized framework for evaluating the options was developed. Two possible approaches were presented to the local jurisdictions in the outreach:

- Scenario 1: Strategic bus operational enhancements on multiple corridors (e.g. Transit Signal Priority (TSP), queue jumps, adjustments in bus stop locations, etc.)
- Scenario 2: Focus on further development of one or two individual BRT corridors

It is possible that elements of both scenarios could be pursued and incorporated into the LRMTTP, given that the LRMTTP takes a long-term view and consideration of the possibility of an extension of the Measure I half-cent sales tax at some point in the future. In other words, the path forward does not have to be an “either/or” decision – it could be a matter of timing or phasing. Related to this, both LA Metro and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) have embarked on pilot studies of a cloud-based application of the next generation of TSP. SBCTA is following these developments, and any proposed investments should factor these emerging initiatives into future recommendations.

**Figure 1. Ominitrans Systemwide Plan of Priority Transit Corridors, 2019 Update**



In parallel, SBCTA/San Bernardino Council of Governments (SBCOG) has been developing the Smart County Master Plan (SCMP). One of the recommendations from that plan is a set of candidate “smart corridors” that could receive investment in both traffic-related and transit-related operational improvements. The set of candidate smart corridors includes several in the Valley, one in the Victor Valley (Bear Valley Road), and one in the Morongo Basin (State Route 62). There very well could be synergy between the Priority Transit Corridor and SCMP efforts, and a recommendation for a set of near-term investments and potential grant funding opportunities could be brought back to the SBCTA Board of Directors (Board) by spring 2025. The Victor Valley Transit Authority and Basin Transit Authority will be engaged in the smart corridor work in those two areas to determine if there may be transit applications in those areas as well.

Further, the SBCTA Board in July 2021 allocated \$5 million of Measure I Valley Traffic Management Systems Program funding to continued improvement of the San Bernardino Valley Coordinated Traffic Signal System. Funds are to be made available to Valley jurisdictions (\$3 million to east Valley jurisdictions, \$2 million to west Valley jurisdictions). A project on Haven Avenue has already been implemented through the combined efforts of the Cities of Ontario and Rancho Cucamonga. The remaining \$4 million was put on hold pending the outcome of the SCMP.

### **Pros and Cons of Geographically Distributed Investment Across Multiple Corridors Versus Focused Investment on One or Two BRT Corridors**

As noted above, one of the questions being addressed for Priority Transit Corridors is the extent to which investments should be focused on one or two more BRT corridors (similar to the West Valley Connector and E Street BRT applications) or whether the strategies should be more geographically distributed. SBCTA and Omnitrans staff generated a list of pros and cons to provide some perspectives on the potential benefits of each scenario, as highlighted below.

Scenario 1: Strategic bus operational enhancements on multiple corridors (e.g. Transit Signal Priority, queue jumps, adjustments in bus stop locations, etc.)

Pros:

- More broadly based benefit geographically
- Can adapt strategy based on jurisdiction preferences
- Does not require additional buses
- Does not require additional maintenance facility improvements
- Likely competitive for some grant funding programs if submitted as an integrated package (e.g. with advanced technology signal systems or combined with zero-emission bus purchases.)
- Environmental clearance should be simplified because of the focus on technology and operational improvements and not major infrastructure improvements

Cons:

- Lesser ridership growth opportunity due to modest speed improvements and if no frequency improvements
- Limited opportunity to spur economic development along enhanced corridors
- Coordination required across multiple jurisdictions
- May not be as competitive for larger grant funding categories

- TSP implementation may or may not be embraced, depending on jurisdiction and status of signal control equipment
- May require more significant bus equipment investment if all buses need to be equipped with TSP equipment
- It could be harder to highlight how the public funding was invested (perhaps less recognition of the investment made, given it is less visible)

Scenario 2: Focus on further development of one or two individual BRT corridors that include at least partially dedicated lane segments and frequency improvements.

Pros:

- Will be competitive for larger State/Federal grant funding programs
- Significant benefit (e.g. transit speed and frequency improvements) to the corridor(s) selected
- Significant opportunity to spur economic development
- Significant opportunity to expand ridership and increase frequency, convenience, and reliability of the transit network
- Can enhance transition to zero-emission buses through larger grant opportunities, or create opportunities for on-route charging
- The level of investment can be adapted based on jurisdictional preferences as it can be implemented as BRT, BRT-lite (similar to BRT but without any dedicated lanes) or express bus service, even within the same corridor
- More visible implementation of a priority transit network if done as a BRT or BRT-lite

Cons:

- Higher project cost
- Increases operation and maintenance costs
- May be a longer and more costly environmental process especially if roadway widening is contemplated
- May require extensive right-of-way acquisitions depending on corridor design and adjacent land use if a full BRT is proposed
- Could spur additional controversy in the cities where implementation is proposed, with the possibility of forcing compromises in the design
- Depending on the type and number of buses added to the fleet, an additional maintenance facility will be needed
- TSP implementation may or may not be embraced, depending on jurisdiction and status of signal control equipment
- May require more significant bus equipment investment if all buses need to be equipped with TSP equipment

Further, staff has listed a set of criteria for evaluating Scenario 2 BRT and BRT-lite corridors that could help guide which of the corridors should be prioritized for further development, which include:

1. Total current daily ridership and projected ridership in the corridor (e.g. total net projected ridership growth)
2. Current daily riders per mile in the corridor

3. Clear commitment of cities to back the project (given that it could involve modifications to their traffic signal systems and operating protocols)
4. Potential for Transit Oriented Development (e.g. population/employment density – existing and future; potential for redevelopment)
5. Service to disadvantaged communities
6. Cost effectiveness of the corridor implementation
7. Total increase in operations and maintenance costs, and the availability of operations funding
8. Duplication of existing transit services
9. Ability to advance the overall connectivity of the BRT network

These criteria would be applied as part of the process of determining how to invest in future BRT corridors on the Omnitrans Systemwide Plan.

**Figure 2. Current Bus Ridership and Demographics in Priority Transit Corridors for the Omnitrans Service Area**

	Base-High	Edison	Euclid	Foothill	FH West	Haven	Riverside	SB Ave	Sierra
<b>Current Local Daily Ridership</b>	4,070	659	1,111	4,915	2,198	394	792	4,110	1,081
<b>Total Distance</b> <small>(including alt. routing)</small>	13.55	15.69	20.29	20.49	11.59	14.29	16.72	20.75	8.36
<b>Current Avg Daily Riders/Mile</b>	300.4	42.0	54.7	239.9	189.7	27.6	47.4	198.1	129.4
<b>Potential BRT Stations</b>	16	14	14	21	12	14	15	22	12
<b>Population</b> <small>(2022 ACS) (0.5 mile station radius)</small>	68,408	25,581	55,227	88,915	50,451	33,607	56,970	68,150	41,155
<b>Density (ppl/ml<sup>2</sup>)</b> <small>(0.5 mile station radius)</small>	6,462	2,400	5,407	6,229	6,133	3,350	5,252	4,571	5,948
<b>Jobs (2021 LEHD)</b> <small>(0.5 mile station radius)</small>	33,052	34,589	23,940	38,370	32,903	50,889	39,004	50,744	16,846
<b>Density (jobs/ml<sup>2</sup>)</b> <small>(0.5 mile station radius)</small>	3,122	3,245	2,344	2,688	4,000	5,073	3,596	3,403	2,435

**Financial Impact:**

This item has no financial impact on the adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025.

**Reviewed By:**

This item is not scheduled for review by any other policy committee or technical advisory committee.

**Responsible Staff:**

Steve Smith, Director of Planning & Regional Programs

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Approved  
Transit Committee  
Date: November 14, 2024  
Witnessed By: