



February 9, 2017

To: Transit Committee

From: Darrell Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Central Harbor Boulevard Transit Corridor Study Update

Overview

In August 2015, the Orange County Transportation Authority initiated the Central Harbor Boulevard Transit Corridor Study to analyze and develop options to improve transit service on Harbor Boulevard, between the Fullerton Transportation Center and Westminster Avenue. To date, the project team has developed the study goals, objectives and evaluation criteria, and identified a set of 12 draft conceptual alternatives for review and comment.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

The Central Harbor Boulevard Transit Corridor Study (Harbor Study) is an initial planning study and is intended to serve as a screening process to evaluate a broad range of conceptual transit alternatives that include a variety of alignment, mode, and feature options. The study's approach is focused on working with the corridor cities, stakeholders, and the public to identify the alternatives that perform the best and receive the widest community support. The top performing alternatives could then potentially be recommended for further evaluation in a more detailed study.

The study area includes an eight-mile stretch of Harbor Boulevard, between the Fullerton Transportation Center and Westminster Avenue (the future terminus of the OC Streetcar); and a 2.5-mile stretch of Katella Avenue, between Harbor Boulevard and the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC).

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) initiated the study in August 2015, and has worked closely with technical staff from each of the corridor cities (Anaheim, Fullerton, Garden Grove, and Santa Ana) throughout the process. To date, the team has analyzed the study corridors, identified mobility needs and study objectives, defined evaluation criteria, and developed 12 draft conceptual transit alternatives for review and comment.

The original study scope focused on the Harbor Boulevard corridor and was tasked to develop and evaluate up to nine alternatives. In October 2016, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) and the City of Anaheim agreed to conclude city-led planning efforts to develop the Anaheim Rapid Connection Streetcar Project, and instead evaluate transit connections between the Anaheim Resort and the ARTIC as part of the Harbor Study. At that time, the study scope was amended to add three additional alternatives that focused on connections between Harbor Boulevard and the ARTIC. Over the past few months, the project team has performed the analysis of this corridor and identified three additional alternatives.

In January 2017, the City of Anaheim adopted a resolution expressing opposition to a streetcar on Harbor Boulevard or Katella Avenue. OCTA responded with a letter acknowledging that the Harbor Study would consider this input, along with the input received from other cities, stakeholders, and members of the public, (Attachment A). All input received during the review and comment period will be used in conjunction with planning considerations to refine the draft alternatives prior to the evaluation process. The aim of this staff report is to initiate a public review of the draft alternatives and the evaluation criteria. Following the presentation to the Transit Committee and the Board, the project team will offer updates to each of the city councils, meet with the stakeholder working group, hold two public workshops, and provide an online engagement tool to solicit feedback.

Discussion

The project team completed an extensive analysis of the study area and identified a number of mobility problems and key themes. An initial round of outreach was conducted to engage and inform the general public and stakeholders, and to solicit early input on the mobility needs. A summary of the full analysis is included in the Purpose and Need Statement (Attachment B) and the Open House Round 1 Summary Report (Attachment C). Additionally, based on input from the cities of Anaheim and Fullerton, Anaheim Boulevard/Lemon Street was identified as a viable, alternative alignment for conceptual transit improvements.

The following are key themes from the Purpose and Need Statement:

- Highest Transit Usage – The study area includes the cities with the highest transit usage rates in the county.
- Heavy Commute Focus – Approximately 78 percent of OCTA bus trips are commute trips to/from work or school.
- High Traffic Volumes and Right-of-Way Constraints - Traffic conditions limit the speed and reliability of transit service. Roadway widths on Harbor Boulevard vary between four and eight lanes.
- Population and Employment Densities – 20 percent higher than the county's average.
- Major Employment and Resort Destination – 27 million annual visitors and associated employees in Anaheim Resort.
- Inconsistent User Experience – Inconsistency in the level of stop amenities and branding in the study area.

In addition, early stakeholder input has emphasized:

- Improving the connectivity of transit services locally and regionally.
- Maintaining or improving bicycle access in the corridor.
- Providing efficient linkages to key destinations.
- Ensuring service is expanded to serve work hours and sporting events.
- Signal synchronization between jurisdictions to improve traffic flow for all vehicles.

Based on the mobility problems identified and early input received, a set of draft evaluation criteria were developed to allow for a comprehensive evaluation of alternatives. The evaluation criteria incorporate standard transit performance metrics, as well as Federal Transportation Administration New Starts performance measures. Attachment D includes a description of the draft evaluation criteria.

As part of the alternatives development, four main alignment options (Harbor Boulevard north and south of Katella Avenue, Anaheim Boulevard/ Lemon Street, and Katella Avenue) were identified. A variety of mode and feature options were then considered for each alignment option. A description of all of the draft alternatives is included in the PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this staff report.

Summary

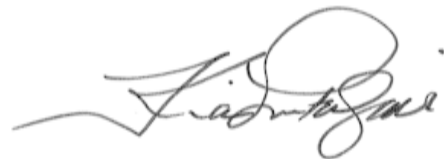
OCTA initiated the Harbor Study to analyze and develop options to improve transit service on Harbor Boulevard, between the Fullerton Transportation Center and Westminster Boulevard, and to evaluate transit connections on Katella Avenue, between Harbor Boulevard and the ARTIC. The project team has developed 12 draft alternatives and evaluation criteria for review and comment. Following this update, staff will solicit input through a stakeholder meeting, city council briefings, and two public workshops through March and April 2017. Staff anticipates returning to the Board with the final alternatives and evaluation results in July 2017.

Attachments

- A. Letter to Mr. Paul Emery, City Manager, City of Anaheim - Dated January 27, 2017 - RE: City Resolution Related to a Streetcar System in Anaheim
- B. Orange County Transportation Authority - Central Harbor Boulevard Transit Corridor Study - Purpose and Need Statement - Final
- C. Orange County Transportation Authority - Central Harbor Boulevard Transit Corridor Study - Open House Round 1 Summary Report - Final
- D. Central Harbor Boulevard Transit Corridor Study - Draft Evaluation Criteria

Prepared by:

Eric Carlson
Senior Transportation Analyst
Transit and Non-Motorized Planning
(714) 560-5381

Approved by:

Kia Mortazavi
Executive Director, Planning
(714) 560-5741