



November 9, 2017

To: Transit Committee
From: Darrell Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Transit Master Plan – Corridor Line Evaluation

Overview

The Transit Master Plan will develop an integrated bus, rail, and paratransit plan for Orange County. This plan will identify future potential transit corridor studies and recommended changes to existing transit service. An evaluation of potential corridor lines is presented for review and potential next steps.

Recommendation

Direct staff to seek public/stakeholder input and return to the Board of Directors in January 2018 with an action plan.

Background

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) initiated the Transit Master Plan (Plan) in summer 2016. This process is taking a high-level look at long-term transit needs throughout Orange County (County) and recommending a series of corridors suitable for additional transit improvement. In addition, the Plan will guide future recommendations for fixed-route bus service. Projects identified in the Plan will be considered in the OCTA Long-Range Transportation Plan and position OCTA for upcoming transit funding opportunities.

Discussion

In July 2017, staff presented the draft Transit Opportunity Corridors to the Board of Directors (Board). Ten draft corridors were recommended after an initial screening was conducted on more than 30 potential corridors throughout the County. The ten corridors were finalized based on Board and stakeholder feedback. Some of the ten corridors were split or combined to make 11 lines for further evaluation (see the following list). Most lines have a range of mode options which could be considered in a subsequent study (Attachment A).

- North Harbor Boulevard-Santa Ana Boulevard: Rapid streetcar or bus rapid transit (BRT) between California State University, Fullerton and the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center, primarily via Harbor Boulevard (and including the OC Streetcar alignment currently in design),
- Westminster Avenue-Bristol Street: Rapid streetcar or BRT between the Goldenwest Transportation Center and the University of California, Irvine, via 17th Street/Westminster Avenue and Bristol Street (including short segments of Main Street and the OC Streetcar alignment),
- Harbor Boulevard South: BRT or rapid bus on Harbor Boulevard between 17th Street/Westminster Avenue and Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach,
- State College Boulevard: BRT or rapid bus on Bristol Street and State College Boulevard between the Brea Mall and Downtown Santa Ana,
- Beach Boulevard: Rapid bus on Beach Boulevard between the Fullerton Park-and-Ride and Downtown Huntington Beach,
- Main Street: Rapid bus on Main Street between Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center and the South Coast Plaza Park-and-Ride,
- La Palma Avenue-Lincoln Avenue: Rapid bus on La Palma Avenue and Lincoln Avenue between Hawaiian Gardens and the Anaheim Canyon Station,
- Chapman Avenue: Rapid bus on Chapman Avenue from Hewes Street to Beach Boulevard,
- McFadden Avenue-Bolsa Street: Rapid bus on McFadden Avenue and Bolsa Avenue from Goldenwest Transportation Center to Larwin Square,
- Interstate 5 (I-5): Freeway BRT on I-5 from the Fullerton Park-and-Ride to Mission Viejo/Laguna Niguel Station,
- State Route 55 (SR-55): Freeway BRT on SR-55 from the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center to Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach.

Transit Opportunity Line Evaluation

The 11 lines were evaluated using the 29 criteria included in the Transit Investment Framework. Each line was modeled for future ridership and projected cost to determine its performance. For routes where multiple modes are being considered, the most intensive mode was used during the evaluation in order to model the highest potential costs and benefits. Each criterion was ranked on a scale from one (worst) to five (best). The results are shown in Attachment B (Appendix B).

The North Harbor Boulevard-Santa Ana Boulevard and Westminster Avenue-Bristol Street lines had the highest projected ridership and highest overall scores. Ridership was highest because the lines included some of the highest existing bus ridership segments, and streetcar/BRT service would attract the highest number of new riders.

The Main Street and Beach Boulevard lines ranked the highest of the corridors where BRT and rapid bus were considered. The freeway BRT routes also performed well because of their speed and land use adjacent to the proposed stop locations.

The draft Transit Opportunity Corridors were presented to the OCTA Citizen's Advisory Committee, Elected Officials Workshop, and the Planning Director's Workshop. There was general consensus on the need for high capacity transit and on the opportunity corridors presented.

Corridor Potential Next Steps

Based on the evaluation, the project team developed potential next steps for the Transit Opportunity Corridors. For major capital investments, these steps would closely follow the Federal Transit Administration's process that includes well-defined criteria linked to possible future federal grant opportunities. Potential next steps include:

- Conducting corridor studies for the North Harbor Boulevard-Santa Ana Boulevard and Westminster Avenue-Bristol Street lines. A section of North Harbor Boulevard is currently being studied,
- Implementing Rapid Bus Service on Beach Boulevard (Bravo! Route 529),
- Studying upgrading Main Street corridor to Rapid Bus service,
- Developing strategies for incremental speed and amenity improvements for existing and future Rapid Bus (Bravo!) corridors,
- Conducting a Freeway BRT network study.

Most of these efforts focus on additional feasibility studies prior to advancing into the formal project development process. The Bravo! 529 service is already planned for implementation in 2019 using grant funding.

Potential Next Steps Beyond the Corridors

Throughout the Plan, staff received input regarding transit needs outside of the core service area where most Transit Opportunity Corridors would serve. Stakeholders and the public acknowledge that these areas may not be best served by infrequent fixed-route bus service. Potential options for these areas were developed collaboratively by members of the project team and incorporate feedback received from the Board, the Citizens Advisory Committee, and the public throughout this process. Potential next steps for these areas include:

- Considering additional service areas for “OCFlex” micro-transit, pending results from the pilot project,
- Improving service on non-opportunity corridor bus routes to meet Transit Investment Framework standards,
- Supplementing year-round transit service with special event and seasonal shuttles,
- Working with local jurisdictions to enhance transit access and develop transit-supportive projects.

Some service improvements to key bus routes outside the core service are planned for February 2018 as part the OC Bus 360° effort. Future improvements may be made through additional service reallocation.

Next Steps

Through November 2017, staff will be soliciting feedback on the proposed recommendations from the public and stakeholders using an online survey. An action plan will be developed based on feedback received, and staff will return to the Board in early 2018 with final plan recommendations. The Plan document will also be finalized based on Board, stakeholder, and public input.

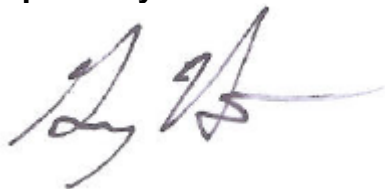
Summary

This report provides the results of the Transit Opportunity Line evaluation. Based on the evaluation, potential next steps are presented for the highest performing corridors. Based on input received during the Plan process, next steps were also developed for transit needs outside of the core service area.

Attachments

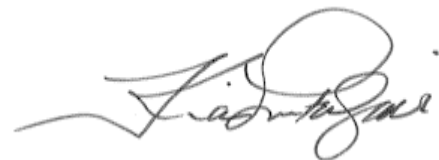
- A. Map of Transit Opportunity Line Alignments and Potential Modes
- B. OC Transit Vision, Transit Opportunity Corridors, Line Evaluation, October 2017

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