

Bristol Street Transit Corridor Study Draft Purpose and Need Statement

Background and Project Purpose:

The Bristol Street Transit corridor is one of the highest ridership corridors in Orange County. In the 2018 OC Transit Vision, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) identified the Bristol Street Transit corridor (as part of the greater 17th/Westminster Transit Opportunity Corridor) as high in existing and new ridership potential.

The Bristol Street corridor is one of the county's densest regions in terms of residents and jobs, despite the predominance of low-rise buildings and single-family land uses. Furthermore, the area surrounding this corridor is critical to the economic vitality of Orange County with a total of 144,000 residents (a population density of 12,600 residents per square mile) and 118,000 jobs (an employment density of 10,400 jobs per square mile).

There is significant potential to improve transit service on this corridor and offer residents, students, and employees a competitive transit alternative to the automobile. This is due to several key activity centers in close proximity to the Bristol Street Transit corridor study area. These centers include; Santa Ana College, Santa Ana Civic Center/Downtown Commercial District, Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center, Mater Dei High School, the South Coast Metro Area, John Wayne Airport, and the Irvine Business Complex.

Mobility Needs:

The Bristol Street Transit Corridor Project will address the following five mobility needs:

1. *Local Connectivity: Enhance transit mobility to local activity centers within the corridor through improved north-south services in the Bristol Street corridor.*
 - Existing transit headways and service spans may not be conducive to short and spontaneous trips between the numerous activity centers located within the study area. Therefore, a goal of the project is to ensure that future service includes increased frequency to promote short and spontaneous trips while serving longer trips to regional activity centers outside of the study area.
2. *Transit Performance: Make improvements that lead to an increase in the speed and reliability of transit.*
 - Existing transit service along Bristol Street is limited by operating in mixed-flow traffic and bottlenecks at both ends of the study area. Therefore, the project will evaluate options for improving transit speeds such as, improved passenger boarding and transit prioritization at strategic locations.
3. *Regional Connectivity: Improve transit access to areas outside the Bristol Street corridor through better connectivity with key crosstown routes and the OC Streetcar.*
 - It is imperative that service be configured to benefit as many users as possible. These potential users could include numerous regional activity centers located outside the study area, in addition to premium transit service on the OCTA Bravo! 543 and 560 lines, Metrolink Orange County and Inland Empire Lines, Amtrak Pacific Surfliner, and the OC Streetcar. To enhance regional connectivity, the project will focus on providing one or fewer transfers to longer distance activity centers and improvements that facilitate transfers.

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4. *Land Use:* *Support local land-use planning with improved mobility options.*
 - The northern end of the Bristol Street Transit corridor has some of the highest densities in Orange County and typical land uses along the corridor contribute to a reliance on the automobile. This project can potentially support city land-use changes, which contribute to transit ridership growth. This can be achieved by supporting enhanced first/last mile connections, as well as offering complementary transit service to existing population/job hotspots and future multi-family/mixed-use developments.
5. *Customer Experience:* *Enhance the customer experience and convenience in using transit.*
 - In addition to a reduction in travel time, the experience of a transit user while waiting at a bus stop plays a significant role in determining the overall user experience. This project, therefore, seeks to improve the level of amenities at stops, streamline boarding and alighting activities, improve branding, and address user safety concerns while waiting at a stop.

Moving Forward

This purpose and need statement incorporates the five mobility needs identified for the Bristol Street Transit corridor. It must also support the definition of alternatives, evaluation criteria, and final evaluation of alternatives. This will ensure that potential project alternatives address current and future issues in the corridor and that the highest rated alternatives are moved forward, in addition to framing the stakeholder and agency outreach.