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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 19, 2011**

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES COUNTY BUS RAPID TRANSIT CORRIDORS

ACTION: APPROVE THE STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the strategy for identifying potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors.

ISSUE

This report responds to the August 2011 Board directive to report back to the Board regarding corridors that can accommodate an effective BRT system that includes dedicated bus lanes.

DISCUSSION

At the August 4, 2011 meeting, the Board directed the identification, analysis, and recommendation of a minimum of five corridors in the County that can accommodate an effective BRT system and return to the October 2011 Board meeting with those recommendations. The selection of the routes was to include, but not be limited to: 1) ridership; 2) station stops/spacing; 3) physical attributes of routes and limited transfers; 4) transfer convenience/demand; 5) congestion and level of service levels; 6) general public and community support; 7) economic development opportunities around stations; and, 8) partnerships with other transit agencies outside of the County. Staff developed a strategy for identifying potential corridors building upon the recommendations of the Los Angeles County Bus Speed and Street Design Improvement Plan (CBSIP), which was presented to the Planning and Programming Committee in September 2010.

CBSIP Study

The CBSIP was conducted in partnership with the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LACDPW). An advisory committee of key stakeholders guided the study's development, including LADOT, LACDPW, municipal operator representatives, the Bus Riders Union and others. The primary objective of the CBSIP was to evaluate the most

effective ways to implement bus speed improvements and improve passenger travel times and schedule reliability. The purpose of the study was to identify near term, low cost, highly effective improvements that could be quickly implemented and lead to substantial bus speed improvements. Potential bus speed improvements included road surface repaving, selective street widening, enhanced transit signal priority, optimized signal operations, and bus stop relocations. Even though the CBSIP's focus was on improvements of a smaller scale than a full dedicated bus lane, the methodology used is valid for bus lane analysis as well. In fact, the CBSIP methodology closely parallels the criteria requested by the Board in August 2011.

Strategy for Developing BRT Corridors

As part of the CBSIP study, systemwide ridership and bus speed data was collected to identify the slowest bus routes, as well as the particular trouble areas for buses for a significant number of riders. The results were ranked in terms of travel delay and a list of the top fifty corridors that showed the greatest potential for opportunities to improve bus speeds, passenger travel times, and service reliability along these highly congested transit corridors was developed. The initial list of fifty was further reduced to the top eighteen corridors (Attachment A) for further review and evaluation. The Wilshire and Van Nuys corridors are not included in this study, as Wilshire has been environmentally cleared through the Wilshire BRT project and Van Nuys is being evaluated through an environmental process currently being undertaken, of which BRT is one alternative being considered for possible implementation.

Considering the findings of the CBSIP study, staff looked at the top eighteen corridors previously identified as benefiting the most from bus speed improvements for a large number of riders. Of the eighteen, seven of the corridors appear promising as potential BRT corridors. These corridors include: Vermont, 3rd Street, Santa Monica, Western, Pico, Venice, and Sunset. In selecting these corridors, staff considered corridor length (corridor had to be long enough in length to benefit from bus lanes), corridor traffic congestion, level of transit service (frequencies, number of bus trips per hour, etc.), physical attributes/constraints of the streets, number of existing traffic/parking lanes, and the potential to enhance carrying capacity.

Of the seven corridors, five are existing Metro Rapid corridors (Vermont, Santa Monica, Western, Pico, and Venice). Metro Rapid services already implement a number of key BRT features such as simple route layout, frequent service, greater distance between stops, low-floor buses to facilitate boarding and alighting, color-coded buses and stops, and traffic signal priority at intersections. The potential addition of peak-period bus lanes along these corridors will further improve transit service and assure their immediate and long-term success as major BRT transit facilities. The remaining two corridors (3rd St. and Sunset) operate local and limited stop services.

Staff is recommending that an additional nine transit corridors also be studied. Of these, five are existing transit corridors and include: Glendale, Artesia, Hawthorne, Huntington, and Washington. The other four would be new transit corridors that were

identified as being important regional links and/or connections currently missing in the existing transportation system. These new corridors include: the SR-134 corridor connecting the Metro Gold Line in Pasadena to the Metro Red Line at North Hollywood, the downtown Burbank to Hollywood corridor connecting the Metro Red Line at the North Hollywood Station to either the downtown Burbank or Burbank-Bob Hope Airport Metrolink stations, the I-405 corridor linking Los Angeles County to Orange County (this is separate from the Measure R Sepulveda Pass project), and the Whittier/Lambert Road corridor linking Los Angeles County to Orange County. These four corridors seem promising in terms of ridership potential and filling gaps that would enhance regional connectivity. Close coordination with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) will be necessary on the latter two.

Recommendation

Building on the CBSIP study, consultant services will be retained to further develop recommendations for a countywide BRT system. We anticipate that the study would take nine months to complete and that it consider the seven lines identified as promising from the CBSIP report, and determine if any other additional routes should be considered from the CBSIP. Further, an additional nine corridors (outside of the 18 identified in the CBSIP) should be studied to ensure a systemwide approach in looking at BRT implementation. As discussed earlier, five of the nine corridors are existing transit corridors while the other four would be new. Attachment B illustrates all of the corridors to be included as part of the study. The study would be conducted in coordination with LADOT and all other affected jurisdictions since ultimate decision-making about bus lane deployment will rest with them.

Another objective of the study is to identify feasible and cost-effective techniques to improve the quality of street life at bus stops along the identified corridors. Quality of life improvements include such things as enhanced sidewalks, street trees, bike racks, improved lighting, and street furniture. Finally, the study will recommend small scale bus speed improvements to expedite bus travel on corridors with high ridership demand, but where dedicated bus lanes are not feasible.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY12 budget contains \$350,000 in Proposition A, C, and TDA Admin Funds for Phase II of the CBSIP study in Cost Center 4240 (Regional Transit Planning), Project Number 405511 (Bus Service Program), Account 50316 (Professional Services). Since the Los Angeles County Regional Bus Lane and Street Design Study is more inclusive in scope and duplicates some of the work efforts proposed under Phase II of the CBSIP, the study will be renamed and the money reallocated to this work.

Impact to Bus and Rail Operating and Capital Budget

There is no impact to the budget. These funds are not eligible for bus/rail operating or capital expenses.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could choose not to adopt the recommended strategy to identify potential corridors for bus lanes, along with a number of other general bus speed and street design improvements. This option is not recommended since much analysis and work on improving bus speeds has already been completed as part of the CBSIP study. This will allow staff to immediately focus on those corridors identified for further study and immediately begin working on the feasibility of bus lanes and other improvements along each.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, staff will seek to hire a consultant for needed technical assistance and support. We will return to the Board with a project update as appropriate.

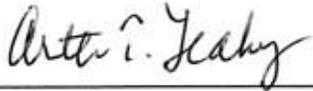
ATTACHMENTS

- A. List of Potential Bus Lane Corridors
- B. Map of Potential Bus Lane Corridors

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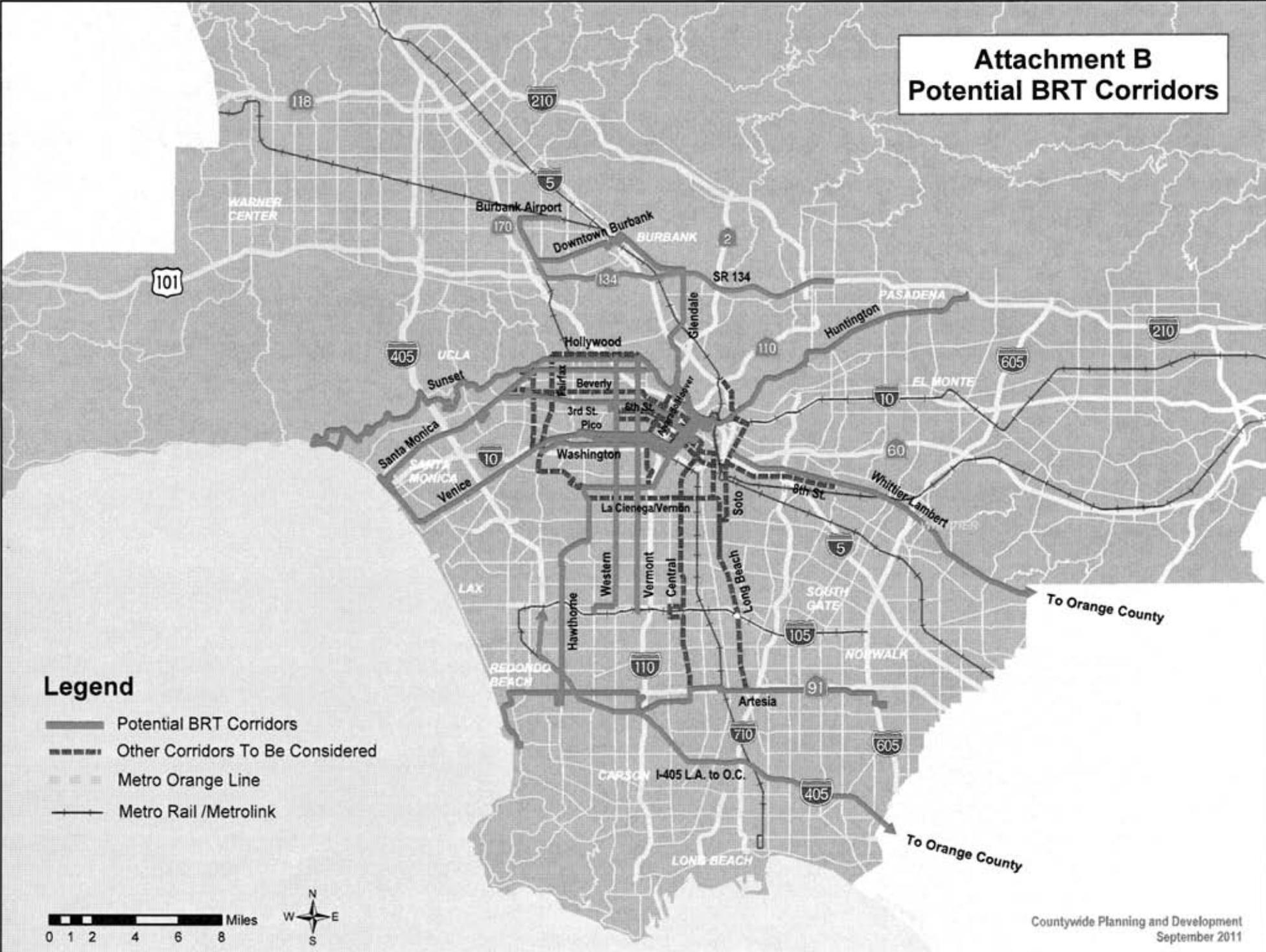
Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer

Potential BRT/Bus Lane Corridors

Top 18 Corridors From CBSIP Study	Current Bus Service
Vermont (120th to Hollywood Blvd.)	204/754
Hollywood Blvd	217/180-181/780
3rd St.	16/316
Fairfax	217/780
Santa Monica	4/704
Western Ave	207/757
Long Beach Blvd	60/760
Alvarado/Hoover	200
Soto St	251/751
6th St. (Western to Bixel)	18
Pico (Rimpau to Figueroa)	30/730
Venice	33/733
Sunset	2/302
8th St.	66
Central Ave	53
La Cienega Blvd/Vernon Ave	105/705
Whittier (Garfield to Soto)	18/720
Beverly	14
Other Potential Transit Corridors	Current Bus Service
Glendale Blvd	92
Artesia Blvd	130
Hawthorne Boulevard	40/740
Huntington Dr	78-79
Washington Blvd	35
New Corridors (no existing bus service)	Current Bus Service
SR-134 Corridor	N/A
Downtown Burbank-Hollywood BRT	N/A
I-405 Orange County/LA	N/A
Whittier/Lambert Road (LA/Orange County)	N/A

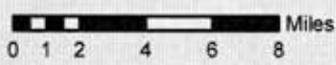
Note: Corridors identified as promising BRT corridors are shaded above.
The remaining corridors will also be considered.

Attachment B Potential BRT Corridors



Legend

- Potential BRT Corridors
- Other Corridors To Be Considered
- Metro Orange Line
- Metro Rail /Metrolink



To Orange County

To Orange County