



NEWS

July 26, 2001

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BUSWAY ROUTE INCLUDES CHANDLER BLVD. ALTERNATIVE **MTA BOARD APPROVES BUSWAY FOR SAN FERNANDO VALLEY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR**

The MTA Board of Directors today adopted a 14-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, also called a "busway," as the locally preferred alternative for the San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor.

The busway would run from the Metro Red Line North Hollywood Station to Warner Center via the Burbank/Chandler right-of-way, which includes a 1.5-mile segment on Chandler Boulevard. At a later date the Board may consider an option to operate weekend buses on Oxnard Street and Lankershim Boulevard instead of on the Chandler Boulevard segment.

The Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) designation is the federal government's term for the transit improvement preferred over other potential alternatives and is required before federal funding can be made available for construction.

Today's Board action followed a 65-day comment period, which included two public hearings held to solicit input from community members, including residents living along and near the MTA-owned Burbank/Chandler right-of-way on which the busway would be constructed. In addition, the MTA held a Board workshop July 19 to discuss the project during which additional public comment was taken.

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Operating as an exclusive roadway for buses, the busway would provide a quicker transit alternative across the San Fernando Valley than is now available. The dedicated right-of-way will produce a travel time between North Hollywood and the planned Warner Center Transit Hub of approximately 30 minutes, including stops. By comparison, it takes 55 minutes to make the same trip via on-street bus service available today.

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation may employ technology to briefly extend the duration of green signal lights to allow the smooth flow of buses operating on the busway, while not adversely impacting north-south traffic. This technology has already been successfully implemented on Ventura and Wilshire/Whittier Boulevards.

The busway would pass through communities including North Hollywood, Valley Glen, Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Tarzana and Woodland Hills. It would link activity centers such as Warner Center, Pierce College, the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area, the Van Nuys Government Center, Valley College and the NoHo Arts District.

At the busway's North Hollywood terminus, the Metro Red Line subway would provide busway patrons with convenient access to Hollywood and downtown Los Angeles.

Thirteen busway stations would be located at major cross streets and trip destinations, spaced approximately one mile apart along the route. While service frequencies would be adjusted as demand for service grows, initially the time between bus arrivals during peak travel periods would vary between seven minutes to 10 minutes in each direction. A passenger information system at each station would inform travelers when the next bus is due to arrive.

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Stations would have amenities typically associated with rail transit, such as covered waiting platforms, secure lighting, and appealing design. Park-n-ride lots located at various locations along the route would provide parking for approximately 3,000 vehicles, augmenting existing parking spaces at the Metro Red Line North Hollywood Station.

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses and other clean fuel technologies are under consideration for deployment along the busway. MTA currently operates the largest fleet of CNG-fueled buses in North America.

The 26-foot wide busway would be built in the median of the Burbank/Chandler right-of-way, which was purchased by MTA from Southern Pacific in 1991. The right-of-way is generally 100 feet wide, leaving ample room for groundcover, new trees, bike and pedestrian paths, soundwalls, and other design enhancements.

The busway would be fully landscaped with groundcover, trees and other plantings, including more than 4,000 new trees.

The project will include room for a cross valley bikeway. The MTA will initiate the bikeway design as part of the busway design and will seek funding so the two projects could be built concurrently.

The project also will include the creation of two or more mid-block pedestrian crossings in the Orthodox community on Chandler Boulevard. They will include protected, signalized pedestrian crossings of both North and South Chandler Boulevards and the median busway.

The cost of the full BRT, including the busway, stations, landscaping, environmental mitigation, park-n-ride lots, new buses, and traffic signals is estimated at approximately \$285 million. The state legislature awarded \$145 million to the project. The balance will come from local transportation funds.

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As a result of today's action, MTA staff and consultants will begin preparation of the final environmental impact statement/report for the full BRT project and complete the preliminary engineering. Construction of the busway would begin in 2003. MTA could begin operation in 2005.

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