

BRT Public Meetings Yield Valuable Input

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) held public meetings in November 2010 and February 2011 to educate and inform the public about the South Bay Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project and gather valuable feedback from the community.

More than 75 members of the community attended the meetings, which included a PowerPoint

presentation overview of the project and opportunities to learn more about the draft alternatives of the BRT at stations staffed by SANDAG team members. The criteria for selecting a final alternative was discussed in detail, and community members asked questions and provided their input on the project in both written and verbal form.



Team members answer questions about the South Bay BRT Project at a public meeting held on November 17, 2010.

The first meeting, in November 2010, provided an overview of the nine draft alternatives that were initially considered and the draft criteria that would be used to narrow those proposed options down. The second meeting, in February 2011, discussed the three alternatives that are moving forward for further environmental review in preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Over the next few months, the project team will schedule a third

public meeting to discuss the Draft EIR, which is expected to be released in fall 2011. At that point, the public will be able to register their comments and feedback to be incorporated into the final EIR during the 45-day formal public comment period. The final route selection will take place in late 2011 or early 2012.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the South Bay BRT Project?

The South Bay BRT will provide a new rapid and reliable transit system for San Diego along a 21-mile route connecting the Otay Mesa Port of Entry to downtown San Diego via eastern Chula Vista. There will be 11 stations serving major activity centers in San Diego and the South Bay, including offices, shopping, recreational facilities, residential communities and Park & Ride lots.

What are the benefits of the BRT?

The BRT is a critical element of regional transportation plans, serving unmet transit needs and relieving traffic congestion by connecting residents to employment and activities centers in a rapid and reliable manner. Additionally, the BRT will offer faster travel times and better reliability than regular bus service by using "transit only" lanes, traffic signal improvements, and limited station stops.

Why is the project needed?

The transportation corridor which will be served by the South Bay BRT currently does not have a regional transit alternative. At full build out, this project will provide fast, frequent, and comfortable service at 10-minute intervals during peak commute hours and every 15 minutes during the day.

When will the BRT be completed?

The first phase, consisting of a 21-mile transit line connecting downtown San Diego with the Otay Mesa Port of Entry via eastern Chula Vista, is planned to be in operation by late 2014.

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Taking a Closer Look at the South Bay BRT

SPOTLIGHT: Otay Ranch Town Center Station

Planned for construction on the west side of Eastlake Parkway at Kestrel Falls Road, the South Bay BRT station at Otay Ranch Town Center will provide a number of amenities and conveniences to passengers.



Depiction of the Otay Ranch Town Center Station planned for the west side of Eastlake Parkway at Kestrel Falls Road.

The station will be pedestrian-oriented, provide direct access to the shopping center, will be enhanced with upgraded shelters and platforms to ease boarding, and feature landscaped and shaded areas. Modern, comfortable vehicles will utilize dedicated transit-only lanes, allowing them to avoid traffic congestion. The station will feature real-time "next-bus" signs. Cutting-edge "smart card" technology will also expedite fare collection at all South Bay BRT stations.

Project Route & Features

The map to the right shows the route of the South Bay BRT and highlights some of the features of the project, which will connect people traveling to and from downtown San Diego and the Otay Mesa Port of Entry.

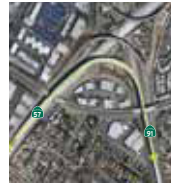
Eleven BRT stations will link major activity centers in downtown San Diego and the South Bay, including offices, shopping centers, recreational activities, residential communities and Park & Ride lots.

The South Bay BRT will also benefit the San Diego region by:

- Relieving traffic congestion;
- Serving unmet transit needs along a critical transportation corridor;
- Connecting residents to employment and activity centers; and
- Providing rapid and reliable transit service.

Direct Connectors

Direct connectors link Express Lanes on one freeway to another. The I-805 South Project will include one direct connector to SR 15. A direct connector at SR 94 is planned as part of a separate project.



Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

The new Express Lanes, in-line transit stations, and Park & Ride locations would accommodate the proposed SANDAG South Bay BRT Project. This transit service will connect the Otay Mesa Port of Entry to downtown San Diego.



Express Lanes

Express Lanes will be constructed in the center of the freeway between East Palomar Street and the I-805/SR 15 interchange. The new lanes will offer users expanded transportation choices to bypass congestion.



Direct Access Ramp (DAR)

A new Direct Access Ramp (DAR) will be constructed on East Palomar Street. DARs connect surface streets directly to Express Lanes in the center median, allowing travelers to enter the Express Lanes without having to navigate through the general purpose lanes.



Future In-Line Transit Stations

New transit stations will be constructed in the freeway at H Street and Plaza Boulevard, providing access to the SANDAG South Bay Bus Rapid Transit System.

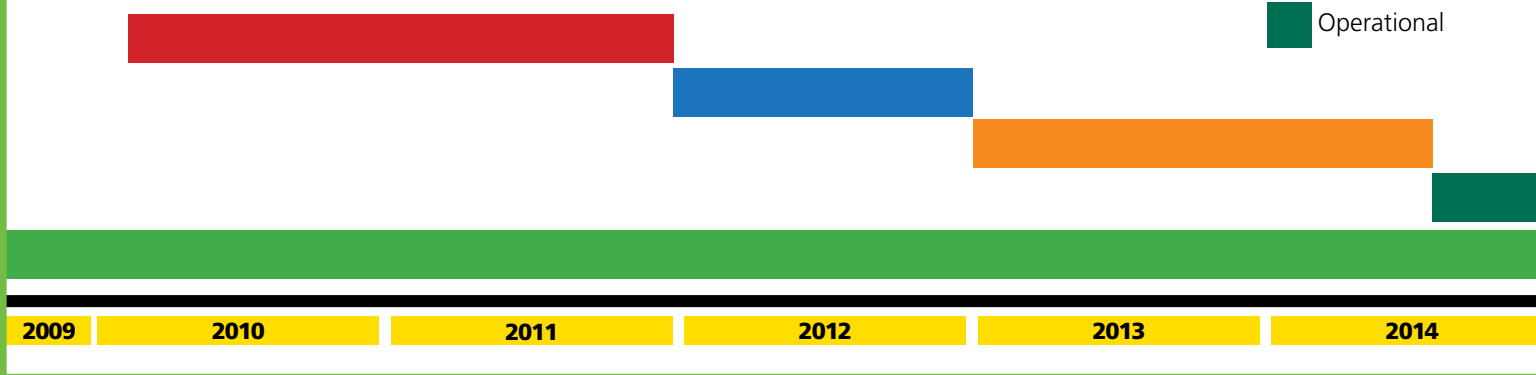


Park & Ride Stations

Park & Ride stations will be constructed near the in-line transit stations and near the proposed DAR and transit station at Palomar Street. The purpose of the stations is to provide travelers with access to the Bus Rapid Transit system, and to provide carpoolers with a convenient location to leave their cars.



Timeline



SOUTH BAY BRT: Project News

Guideway Benefits

A critical feature of the South Bay BRT is the dedicated transit-only guideway, which allows BRT buses to move through the community in a rapid manner which avoids traffic congestion. Only BRT buses will be allowed to use the guideway.

Without the delays associated with mixed flow and general traffic, buses using the guideway can reach riders in the heart of each neighborhood along the route and rapidly move them to their destinations.

The guideway also promotes energy conservation by limiting the number of times a bus needs to stop along the route through traffic signal improvements. Finally, stations along the guideway will be designed with level boarding curbs, providing quick passenger loading and unloading by avoiding the need for ramp deployment.



The transit-only guideway, pictured here, allows buses to avoid traffic and rapidly move passengers to their destinations.

Technical Studies

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), several technical studies are being completed to evaluate the South Bay BRT project and identify impacts and mitigation in several areas. These studies are a key part of the environmental review process and form a basis for the project Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Some of the studies being conducted include:

- A visual impact study, which determines the project's impact on public views and vistas;
- A noise study to measure existing noise levels and evaluate future levels to determine where mitigation will be required; and
- An assessment of impacts to protected plant and animal species and waterways for habitat assessment/jurisdictional delineation.

Once these studies are completed, the Draft EIR will be released for public input and comments. The South Bay BRT Draft EIR is expected to be released this fall.

For more information about the South Bay BRT, visit KeepSanDiegoMoving.com or contact David Hicks, SANDAG Public Information Officer, at (619) 699.6939 or dhicks@sandag.org.

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