



Board Report

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OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE JANUARY 21, 2021

SUBJECT: MOTION 22.1: NEXTGEN BUS SPEED ENGINEERING WORKING GROUP STATUS UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the status report in response to Motion 22.1 entitled NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group (July 2019). This update provides details regarding a technical working group appointed by Metro and its efforts to coordinate with a complementary group from Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to develop a work program to improve bus priority and assess the need to coordinate with other jurisdictions and municipal operators.

ISSUE

In July 2019, the Board approved Motion 22.1 entitled NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group as part of the NextGen Service Concept. This motion requests the following:

- A. Develop a list of priority bus supportive infrastructure projects needed to support the NextGen bus service plan, with an emphasis on near-term improvements that can be implemented concurrently with each phase of NextGen;
- B. Form a NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group co-chaired by the Metro CEO and the General Manager (GM) of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), or their designees, and establish a regular meeting schedule, at least monthly;
- C. Assess the need for coordination with additional local jurisdictions and municipal operators where bus delay hotspots exist; and
- D. Report back to the Operations, Safety and Customer Experience Committee on the above in April 2020, and quarterly thereafter.

This report provides a status update for FY21 Q2 on the response to Motion 22.1.

BACKGROUND

In July 2018, the Board adopted Motion 38.1, endorsing travel speed, service frequency, and system reliability as the highest priority service design objectives for the NextGen Bus Study. These objectives were incorporated into the Regional Service Concept approved by the Board in July 2019, which provides the framework for restructuring Metro's bus routes and schedules.

Concurrent to the approval of the Regional Service Concept, the Board approved Motion 22.1: Engineering Working Group, which provides direction to staff to establish a partnership between Metro and LADOT to identify, design, fund and implement transit supportive infrastructure to speed up transit service as part of the NextGen Bus Plan.

The Metro CEO appointed a Technical Working Group focused on identifying, planning, designing and implementing bus speed and reliability improvements. This group, consisting of Metro Service Planning, will work in close partnership with LADOT's equivalent technical team, consisting of Traffic Operations, Active Transportation, Vision Zero, and Transportation Planning Groups, meeting on a regular basis (every 2-4 weeks) to ensure ongoing coordination and advancement of the program. Additional Metro departments (e.g. Communications, Planning, OMB, OEI, Program Management, Security), as well as other municipal traffic departments and transit operators, will be engaged as needed when specific projects have been defined and advanced towards design and implementation.

An External Affairs Working Group was also established as a subcommittee of the Technical Working Group. It is comprised of staff from Metro Community Relations, LADOT External Affairs, StreetsLA, the Los Angeles Mayor's Office, Metro Board Staff and Metro Service Planning. Their work focuses on coordinating to communicate with and prepare communities for coming improvements including identifying and addressing potential impacts, as well as coordinating outreach and engagement efforts for these projects.

At major milestones and as needed, the Technical Working Group will report on progress to the Metro CEO and LADOT's GM, and/or their designees, to seek direction on goals and objectives of the Technical Working Group, as well as policy guidance on balancing priorities for roadway and curb space.

DISCUSSION

Since the last update provided to the Board on October 15, 2020, the Technical Working Group has met regularly on the following:

Alvarado Street Bus Priority Lane

In partnership with LADOT and Caltrans, the Technical Working Group is studying the feasibility and impacts of converting the peak hour, curbside mixed flow lane into a bus priority lane on Alvarado Street from 7th Street to Sunset Boulevard.

- Weekdays between 7:00-10:00 AM Southbound // 3:00-7:00 PM Northbound
- Typically, 8 buses per hour use Alvarado, which equates to one bus every 7 ½ minutes
- Significant equity benefits for transit riders on Alvarado Street
 - Over 12,000 boardings per weekday (pre-COVID) on Alvarado
 - 94% of bus riders on Alvarado do not own or have access to a car and therefore rely on Metro bus service
 - 77% of bus riders on Alvarado use Metro bus service at least five days per week
 - 63% of bus riders on Alvarado are below the poverty line

- 96% of bus riders on Alvarado are people of color (POC)
- Aligned with LADOT's Vision Zero goals, Bus Priority Lanes have been shown to improve overall traffic and pedestrian safety by reducing accidents caused by aggressive lane weaving, excessive speeding and failure to yield
- Curbside parking would remain during midday, evening and weekends (outside of proposed bus priority lane hours) and curbside parking would always generally be available on at least one side of the street, where it exists today
- Minor impacts to traffic flow could be expected of up to 90 seconds additional, pre-COVID drive time, or approximately one red light cycle

Community outreach for the Alvarado Bus Priority Lane is expected to begin in January 2021, with a goal for implementation in Spring 2021.

Grand Avenue & Olive Street Bus Priority Lanes

In May 2020, LADOT reported that the Working Group identified Grand Avenue (southbound) and Olive Street (northbound) as high frequency bus corridors that would benefit from bus priority lanes. In coordination with StreetsLA's ADAPT resurfacing program, LADOT designed and relocated the existing bike lanes on both one-way corridors to the left side of the roadway to reduce conflicts with transit and allow for future bus priority lanes. The joint working group anticipates that community outreach for these dedicated bus lanes will begin in Spring 2021, with a goal of implementation by Summer 2021.

- Weekdays between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM
- Typically, over 60 buses per hour use either Grand Avenue or Olive Street, which equates to one bus every minute
- Benefits to bus riders using routes from South LA, San Gabriel Valley and Gateway Cities
- Benefits to municipal transit operators LADOT DASH, Foothill Transit Commuter Express and Torrance Transit 4X

Looking Ahead

The NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group is continuing to discuss and analyze future corridors along key arterials for equitable opportunities and are actively collaborating with partner agencies and stakeholders. Staff plans to provide further details about these corridors in the next quarterly update in April 2021.

Additionally, Metro is working with LADOT to expand TSP to more buses and along non-TSP Tier 1 corridors under the NextGen Bus Plan. Today, only Metro Rapid (Red) buses receive TSP, which can extend green lights to prioritize certain buses. Given the NextGen Bus Plan to combine the best of Metro Rapid priority attributes with Metro Local access for all riders, Metro is exploring the viability to install TSP transponders on its entire 2,300 bus fleet and work with LADOT to increase opportunities for Metro buses to receive signal prioritization along Metro Tier 1 bus routes.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

This report does not have a negative effect on the safety of our customers or employees.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Recommendations support strategic plans:

Goal #1: Provide high quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling. Improving the speed and reliability of the bus network will reduce transit travel times, as well as improve competitiveness with other transportation options.

Goal #2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system. These initiatives help to move more people within the same street capacity, where currently transit users suffer service delays and reliability issues because of single occupant drivers.

Goal #3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. With faster transit service and improved reliability, residents have increased access to education and employment, including Cal State LA Station, with greater confidence that they will reach their destination on time.

Goal #4: Transform Los Angeles County through regional collaboration and national leadership. Because Metro does not have jurisdiction over local streets and arterials, collaboration with other partner agencies such as LADOT, City and County of Los Angeles are necessary to ensure these speed and reliability improvements are successfully implemented.

NEXT STEPS

Metro and LADOT will continue to collaborate on implementing transit supportive infrastructure and provide quarterly progress reports to the Board.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion 22.1

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