



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 32.

**OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
JANUARY 19, 2023**

SUBJECT: NEXTGEN SPEED AND RELIABILITY PROGRAM UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the NextGen Speed and Reliability Program Update.

ISSUE

The NextGen Bus Plan is a reimagining of the Metro bus system. It includes a redesign of the bus route network and a capital program to improve the speed and reliability of the network. This report provides an update on the NextGen Speed and Reliability Program.

BACKGROUND

The NextGen Bus Plan was initiated in 2018 and approved by the Metro Service Councils in September 2020, followed by Metro Board adoption in October 2020. A key part of the plan is to establish a fast, frequent, and reliable network of bus services capable of competing effectively in the overall market for travel to grow Metro bus ridership. This network was largely implemented between December 2020 and December 2021.

In July 2018, the Board adopted Motion 38.1 (Attachment A), 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 NextGen Regional Service Concept approved by the Board in July 2019. This provided the framework for restructuring Metro's bus routes and schedules under the NextGen Bus Plan, the first comprehensive review of the Metro bus network in a generation, and focused on establishing a fast, frequent, and reliable network that is easy to understand and competitive in the overall market for travel in LA County. This new network would be capable of supporting a growth in overall ridership for the bus system by addressing opportunities to be more competitive at off peak times and for shorter distance trips.

In July 2019, the Board approved Motion 22.1 (Attachment B) entitled NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group as part of the NextGen Service Concept, which provided 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.

DISCUSSION

The NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group has implemented over 10 lane-miles of bus priority lanes since its creation in 2019. Bus priority lanes have been installed on 5th St, 6th St, Aliso St, Alvarado St, Flower St, Grand Av, and Olive St. These bus priority lane corridors have seen up to 15% travel time improvement for buses.

Since the last NextGen Speed & Reliability Program update provided to the Board in September 2021, the Working Group has met regularly in support of the following initiatives:

Alvarado Street Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 2)

In partnership with LADOT, and with guidance and support from Caltrans, the remaining northern Bus Priority Lane (0.5-mile segment of Alvarado St between Sunset Bl and US-101) began implementation on December 7, 2022, and is now operational. Metro will conduct a post-implementation survey in early 2023 of Line 2 bus riders to gather feedback on their overall experience using the newly completed bus lanes.

La Brea Avenue Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 212)

Metro, in partnership with LADOT and Council District 5, is moving forward with the first phase of weekday, peak period bus priority lanes on La Brea Ave between Sunset Blvd and Olympic Blvd, starting December 2022. Completion is anticipated within six weeks from the start of implementation. Metro will update the community on the construction schedule and impacts. Metro and LADOT continue to work with stakeholders on completing the second phase on La Brea Ave between Olympic Blvd and Coliseum St.

Venice Boulevard Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 33)

Metro is partnering with LADOT on the Venice Blvd Safety and Mobility Project in the Mar Vista and Palms neighborhoods. Conversion of the rightmost traffic lane to full-time, bus priority lanes in both directions between Inglewood Ave and Culver Blvd near Culver City E Line (Expo) Station began in December 2022. Parking and protected bike lanes will also be installed along this segment. LADOT led community outreach and design. Between June-Sept 2022, LADOT and Metro engaged community members to learn more about their experiences on the corridor and priorities for improving mobility on Venice. During this process, key feedback received focused on improvements to safety and comfort and that ensuring Venice remains accessible and efficient is important to connectivity.

Sepulveda Boulevard Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 234)

The Technical Working Group identified a 5.5 mile segment of Sepulveda Blvd, from Ventura Blvd to Rayen St, as the next corridor to study for bus priority lanes. The proposed bus lanes would be in

service full-time along Sepulveda Blvd and 7-9 am weekdays only along the short 0.5 mile segment of westbound Ventura Blvd between Vesper Ave and Sepulveda Blvd. Community engagement began in the Summer of 2022, with a virtual community meeting on November 10, 2022. Design is underway, with implementation anticipated in Winter 2023.

Florence Avenue Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 111)

In partnership with LADOT and Council Districts 8 and 9, Metro has proposed a peak-hour bus priority lane for a nearly five-mile segment along Florence Ave from Florence A Line (Blue) Station to West Blvd. Community engagement was completed through Summer 2022, with design in-process and implementation anticipated in Spring-Summer 2023. Overall pavement quality along Florence Av was identified as a community concern in certain segments that have not been recently resurfaced. As a result, the Working Group has passed forward this information to StreetsLA as part of this project.

LADOT Parking Enforcement of Bus Priority Lanes

In partnership with LADOT, targeted enforcement for bus lane compliance began in March 2022 based on bus operator and public feedback. This effort will continue through June 30, 2023.

In March 2022, LADOT reported an average of 530 vehicles each week in non-compliance. In November 2022, an average of 435 vehicles a week were found in non-compliance, an 18% improvement in overall compliance. The results indicate that the targeted enforcement effort is improving drivers' behavior blocking bus lanes.

As a result of this targeted approach, Metro has seen up to 15% travel time improvement in the first month of enforcement, or up to 2 minutes saved, on Metro Rapid 720 on Wilshire Blvd and Metro Line 2 on Alvarado St.

Given this program's successful outcomes, Metro is working with LADOT on establishing an ongoing targeted enforcement effort for current and future bus priority lanes, along with an upcoming program to pilot camera-based enforcement on buses.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The NextGen Bus Plan was developed with an equity lens, prioritizing service in Equity Focus Communities where transit was more likely to provide a key mobility option for residents. The above report shows progress in rolling out speed and reliability improvements for improved transit travel times on corridors benefitting EFC residents. These gains for EFC residents should continue to improve as bus speed and reliability improvements increase the competitiveness of the NextGen Bus Plan

Staff includes rider outreach in developing these projects and also conduct post-implementation surveys with bus riders along project corridors to measure the benefits and impacts to marginalized

groups as a result of these projects. These projects blend a data-driven approach with customer feedback, and staff continues to commit to centering marginalized community feedback to ensure marginalized voices are heard, and equitable outcomes are reached.

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, 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, Caltrans, City and County of Los Angeles are necessary to ensure these speed and reliability improvements are successfully implemented.

NEXT STEPS

The NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group will continue 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 2023.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion 38.1

Attachment B - Motion 22.1

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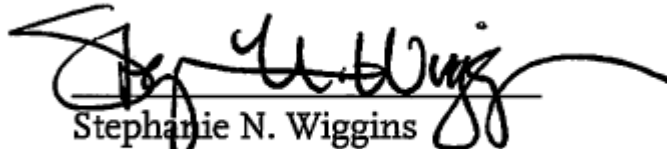
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