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Regional rapid bus system sbX moving forward in San Bernardino

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Workers construct a bus stop for the SBX Rapid Bus Line parking along E Street north of Marshall Boulevard in San Bernardino during the summer. (Gabriel Luis Acosta/Staff Photographer)

A regional rapid bus transit system, with faster vehicles that can load more riders, is taking shape in the San Bernardino Valley.

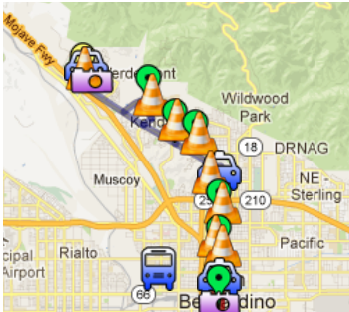
Construction is under way on a line that runs down the E Street corridor in San Bernardino, from northwest of Cal State San Bernardino to the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans Medical Center in Loma Linda.

The middle portion of the E Street corridor features dedicated lanes for the buses running down the middle of the road, and ticketing platforms in the middle of key intersections that include Marshall Boulevard, Highland Avenue, and Base Line Road.

Substantial completion is anticipated for early 2014, with testing and training taking place at that time, said Omnitrans spokesman David

sbX line

Below is a map with current construction information for the sbX Project, as updated by Omnitrans:



Rutherford.

The brand name for the rapid bus system is sbX, which stands for San Bernardino Express, Rutherford said. The E Street corridor is the first sbX line to be constructed. It's part of a larger sbX network of corridors envisioned to run on key thoroughfares throughout the San Bernardino valley and as far west as Rancho Cucamonga.

Rutherford called the project a "light rail experience on wheels," citing loading platforms that mirror ticketing platforms for rail projects such as the Gold Line.

"We want to reduce traffic congestion, and we think that by making a service available that is faster, or a more frequent service, that will attract a bigger ridership than we've had in the past with these BRT lines," Rutherford said. "We're developing the corridors and our goal is to provide connectivity with the other Omnitrans routes, as well as other transit services."

Bus rapid transit officials said it's faster and has fewer stops

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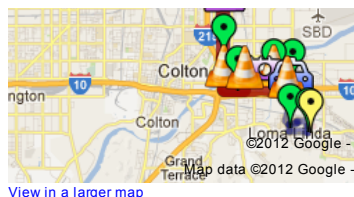
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Source: Omnitrans, Google

Bus rapid transit, officials said, is faster, and has fewer stops. The buses will also have traffic signal priority capability, allowing them to change stoplights to green for speedier travel.

Goals include mitigating increasing traffic on the region's freeways, increasing bus ridership, fostering transit-oriented development in the west end of San Bernardino County, and providing better transit links between the Omnitrans system, Metrolink, the Gold Line, and the LA/Ontario International Airport.

Potential sbX corridors include the east to west streets of Foothill Boulevard and Holt Boulevard, and north-south streets of

Mountain Avenue, Haven Avenue, Sierra Avenue, and Riverside Avenue. The overall vision for an sbX system was approved by SANBAG in 2004.

Construction for other corridors is dependent on funding, and Omnitrans officials hope potential success with the E Street corridor will serve to bring money for the rest of the system.

"Before we even pursue (development on the other corridors), we have to complete this (E Street) project," Rutherford said. "If the (Federal Transit Administration) is satisfied with this corridor then, I think that will lead to funding for future corridors."

An 18-month study on the Foothill corridor is ongoing, while a preliminary study on Holt, to investigate stops and bus paths, is set to begin in January.

Rancho Cucamonga city officials met this past week to discuss planning for a line on Foothill Boulevard and Haven Avenue.

"The takeaway from the meeting I think is a recognition that it's a long-term project, and it's not going to get done in the next year or two, but (city leaders) asked that as we go along, we carefully analyze it, and we'll bring more details back to them for further review," said Jeff Bloom, deputy city manager for economic and community development.

City leaders, Bloom said, indicated desire to maintain bus stop or station designs consistent with the city's overall aesthetic.

"In Rancho, they've very carefully made the bus terminal fit the development," Bloom said. "They're very nicely done. They didn't want the BRT to adversely change that in a bad way."

According to the city's general plan, seven stops are envisioned, for a bus route that could conceivably run down the middle of Foothill Boulevard. The BRT would also connect to a route down Haven Avenue to the Ontario International Airport.

"I think bus rapid transit really is the future of transit," said Rohan Kuruppu, director of planning for Omnitrans.

"That's how we can most efficiently and effectively meet the mobility needs of this region. It is sustainable because as traffic conditions increases as congestion increases, we will still be able to maintain the operating speed because of dedicated lanes, stations and signal priority."

Reach Neil [via email](#), call him at 909-483-9356, or find him on Twitter [@InlandGov](#).

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