

Additional Public Comments for Agenda
Item No. 32 & No. 34

Board of Directors Meeting

March 5, 2025

10:00 AM

Location:

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
First Floor Lobby Board Room
1170 W. 3rd Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Transit

32. Sole Source Contract No. 24-1003143 Award of Fueling Infrastructure for ZEMU

That the Board, acting as the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority:

A. Authorize the Executive Director, or his designee, to finalize negotiations of and, upon General Counsel's approval as to form, execute Sole Source Contract No. 24-1003143 with Trillium USA Company, LLC, for the Arrow Maintenance Facility Hydrogen Fuel Upgrade Project: Zero Emission Multiple Unit (ZEMU) Hydrogen Fueling System, for design, development, and installation of the ZEMU hydrogen fueling system, hydrogen delivery and system maintenance, with an initial capital cost of \$6,497,069.60 and an initial three-year maintenance and delivery term of \$3,743,912.20, as well as two one-year options with a cost of \$1,280,714.40 for year four and \$1,298,101.40 for year five, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$12,819,797.60, to be funded with Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP), Hydrogen Infrastructure Partnership Program, and Local Transportation Fund (LTF) funds.

B. Approve contingency for Contract No. 24-1003143 for a not-to-exceed amount of \$793,596, which includes \$649,707, or 10% of the capital portion, to be funded with TIRCP funds and \$143,889, or 5% for fuel, to account for change in the indexed price of hydrogen, to be funded with LTF funds.

C. Allocate an additional \$4,811,573 in LTF funds for the maintenance and fuel delivery for a total allocation of \$9,486,573.

34. ONT Connector: Adopt Final Environmental Impact Report

That the Board, acting as the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority:

A. Conduct a Public Hearing to consider the Ontario International Airport Connector Project and related Environmental Impact Report.

B. Adopt Resolution No. 25-061 making findings necessary to approve the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report.

Additional written public comments were received after the submission deadline and are attached for your information.

From: [Kieran Sukachevin](#)
To: [clerkoftheboard](#)
Subject: Stop the ONT Connector Project
Date: Tuesday, March 4, 2025 6:43:21 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening,

My name is Kieran Sukachevin, **I live in Loma Linda and as a resident of San Bernardino County**, I am reaching out to implore the SBCTA **not to go through with the proposed ONT Connector Project**. The proposed "Tesla Tunnels" is a hilariously misguided project compared to other possible light rail (Gold Line) and heavy rail (Metrolink) extensions that can be made between Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink Station and Ontario International Airport. Rail provides peak capacity of 20,000 to 100,000 passengers per hour, but the ONT Connector will "provide a peak one-way passenger throughput of approximately 100 per hour". This project is **not what this region needs and deserves**.

Key concerns about the ONT Connector's Build Alternative that must be addressed in the EIR:

- **Limited Capacity:** The project's peak throughput of 100 passengers per hour is inadequate compared to the project's own required capacity of 300 per hour and the 20,000-100,000 per hour achievable by BRT, light rail, or heavy rail, failing to address future demand at ONT and the Rancho Cucamonga/Brightline Station.
- **Safety & Emergency Concerns:** The Boring Company's Las Vegas Loop, a similar model that is privately operated, has been plagued by traffic, slowdowns, confusion among drivers, and serious safety and EMS concerns during construction and in operation.
- **Costs & Funding Risks:** The \$490+ million estimate for this project is likely understated, given LA Metro light rail costs at similar project lengths ranging from \$1-7 billion. Address funding instability and sources, given that the project is severely uncompetitive, receiving \$0 from the most recent round of California TIRCP grants.
- **Redundant Shuttle Service:** This project will duplicate above-ground ONT Connect shuttle service and West Valley Connector BRT without enhancing capacity. Is this project even necessary?

As a proponent of effective and fiscally-responsible public transit in San Bernardino County, I am deeply concerned that the proposed model will not meet our region's needs for reliable, scalable, and safe transit between ONT and Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink/Future Brightline West Station.

Sincerely,
Kieran Sukachevin

From: [Marven Norman](#)
To: [clerkoftheboard](#)
Subject: Items 32 & 34 Public comment
Date: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 7:11:05 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Chair Marquez & SBCTA Board,

These comments are for items 32 and 34 on the agenda for today, Wednesday, March 5, 2025.

32 - It is laudable that SBCTA is open to considering unsolicited proposals for meeting transportation needs in the region. However, it is clear at this point that the initial promises of the ONT Connector will not be close to being met, with the cost having ballooned many times over to a point that is commensurate with the cost of rail options that it was offered to replace despite having a markedly lower capacity that is at best on par with the under construction sbX Purple Line BRT that will serve the exact same travel corridor. As someone who has used the existing transit options of the Omnitrans Route 380 ONT Connect shuttle service to Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink and Route 61, both are already able to meet the need and will be greatly improved by the opening of the Purple Line. The ONT Connector tunnels will not be able to meaningfully advance beyond that in an amount commensurate with the project's cost.

To make matters worse, it has recently been asserted that this project would qualify as "BRT" which is concerning because when this Board had the opportunity to increase the Measure I percentage going to BRT projects to up to 10% of the funds, that option was eschewed in favor of a lower percentage. Using scarce measure transit dollars to build and operate a worse, redundant version of *an under-construction project* serving the exact same market and funded by the exact same source is not fiscally sound and threatens to shortchange other desperately needed BRT corridors throughout the region (including the second portion of the sbX Purple Line to Fontana).

Of course, the vote today is merely to certify the EIR, not to also issue construction contracts. Given the effort that has already gone into getting that document to this stage, it makes sense to make that final step and certify. However, after certification, the project should be left to a completely private venture, not funded by our limited Measure I dollars which are already stretched way too thin for meeting the transit needs of the region.

34 - Given that the costs associated with ZEMU are continuing to mount, this project appears to be following a familiar pattern as pioneered by other forays into hydrogen passenger train service all around the world: It doesn't work. With this latest increase and the recent revelation a few months ago that the existing DMU fleet has to be completely replaced vs. being convertible to hydrogen as originally envisioned, perhaps it is time to start seeking other options to lower the emissions of the Arrow fleet. As it stands, the existing DMUs use Tier 4 engines which certainly are much lower in emissions than trains of yesteryear and the recent withdrawal by CARB of the In-Use Locomotive Rule from EPA approval removes some of the urgency which existed around ZEMU. Thus, perhaps it is time to take a strong look at ZEMU and explore other, more proven options for zero-emissions rolling stock for that service.

The Stadler FLIRT vehicles are a versatile vehicle family which include not just the diesel variant currently in use or the hydrogen-powered ZEMU being tested, but also can be ordered as a fully electric version as well as a version which uses batteries, including together with diesel as a hybrid. (The Metra rail agency in the Chicago region already has an order for the battery FLIRTs.) Thus, given the continued mounting of costs for ZEMU (to say nothing of its delay of entry into service), it would seem that we are arriving at a point where it makes sense to explore those other options, especially given that one of the key points of urgency for ZEMU is no longer relevant. Indeed, while the existing DMUs cannot be converted to ZEMUs, it is likely that they can be converted to hybrid or battery/full electric operation so perhaps staff can inquire about those options which will almost surely be cheaper than having to buy an entirely new fleet of ZEMUs.

Nevertheless, I understand that ZEMU is not *entirely* a local initiative but also had importance to the State as a demonstrator for the technology which has subsequently manifested as an order by Caltrans for ZEMU vehicles to be used on services run elsewhere around the state beyond Arrow. At the same time, our local dollars are precious and it seems ambitious for us to try to fund experiments for the State out of them. Thus, given that level of interest and the potential outcome, I would strongly urge SBCTA to lean on the State to provide the funding to cover both this cost overrun and any others in the future instead of that funding coming from the Local Transportation Fund account as is the case for the Item on today's agenda.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Marven E. Norman
San Bernardino