

Support Material – Public Comments

Transit Committee Meeting

March 13, 2025

9:00 AM

Location:

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

First Floor Lobby Board Room

1170 W. 3rd Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410

Public Comments

Written public comments were received in regard to Discussion Items No. 3 and No. 4, and are being provided as Support Material.

From: [Henry Fung](#)
To: [clerkoftheboard](#)
Subject: Comment for 3/13/2025 meeting
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 3:52:33 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.

Dear SBCTA members,

For FY 2024-25 LCTOP allocations (item 3), please do not fund the Ontario Airport tunnels until there is a business plan for constructing the project without the use of taxpayer funds. Redirect that amount to improve service on the West Valley Connector, which will be providing frequent service between the two destinations of ONT and Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink in less than a year from now.

For item 4, SBCTA should move forward with this project which will provide needed capacity and operational flexibility for the San Bernardino Line.

Sincerely,
Henry Fung

From: [Everardo Zazueta](#)
To: [clerkoftheboard](#)
Subject: Public comment for tomorrow's SBCTA meeting
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 4:34:21 PM

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Hello,

My name is Everardo Zazueta Jr. and I believe we should be funding the West Valley Connector BRT and not the ONT Tesla Tunnels. I do not wish to see the money go to these deathloop tunnels when we could invest in infrastructure we know works, like bus rapid transit and rail. I also would like to state that we should be moving forward with the SBL Lilac-Sycamore double track as it will be a good investment long-term for rail.

Warm regards,

Everardo Zazueta Jr.

From: [Adriana Rizzo](#)
To: [clerkoftheboard](#)
Subject: SBCTA Transit Committee 3/13 public comments
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 4:40:58 PM
Attachments: [SBCTA transit committee comments 3_12.pdf](#)

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 Dutrey,
Please find Californians for Electric Rail's comments regarding the Transit Committee agenda, items 3A and 4, attached.

Sincerely,
Adriana Rizzo
Californians for Electric Rail



March 12, 2025

Mayor John Dutrey
Chair
San Bernardino Transportation Authority
Transit Committee

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

Dear Mayor Dutrey,

Californians for Electric Rail is a statewide, volunteer advocacy organization that includes Metrolink riders living in San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Riverside, and Orange Counties who benefit from investments in our regional rail system. We advocate for a fast, frequent, integrated, electrified statewide regional rail network. Please see our comments regarding the March 13th Transit Committee agenda:

Item 3A:

We support the allocation of LCTOP funding to the West Valley Connector, an important project that will speed up bus travel in the Ontario area and improve transit access to the Ontario Airport. We are very supportive of weekend service, and are disappointed that only \$20,000 is being offered towards service. The best way to get people to ride transit is by offering service that is convenient in time and place, and that means more frequent service. San Bernardino County has some of the lowest transit mode share and highest levels of ozone in the country, a direct consequence of policy decisions that often put transit last. Everyone who can afford it drives because transit is often inconvenient and infrequent. We ask you to allocate transit funding towards improving service wherever feasible so that transit becomes a more attractive option for more people and better serves existing riders.

The ONT connector should receive no additional taxpayer funds - please vote no on allocating LCTOP funds to the ONT connector. The ONT connector is duplicative of the West Valley Connector and relies on unproven technology that closely resembles the failed Las Vegas Loop (which has failed to solve traffic and is plagued with disruptions and workplace safety issues). The project is an extremely poor value for money, with a capacity of only 100 people per hour, significantly fewer than the potential of the West Valley Connector, but with a cost of nearly \$500 million, a cost that is likely a significant underestimate given the costs of tunneling in the region. Finally, the project conflicts with the State Rail Plan, which calls for multiple standard-gauge, zero emission electrified rail connections to the ONT airport by 2050. The opportunity cost of this project is tremendous, allocating limited transit funds to a project with

very low value - as can be seen today, with the proposal to allocate nearly 5x as much money to this project as to West Valley Connector service.

Additionally, the \$901,675 proposed allocation is nowhere near the project's unmet need. Piecing together small amounts of funding from many sources is poor practice that creates funding uncertainty and adds to project cost and timelines - at greater total cost to the taxpayer. Please vote against this allocation to the ONT connector.

We also express concern about funding the A Line extension to Montclair. While the A line extension to Pomona is a great project, the further extension is a low value for money and potentially harms Metrolink. The 3-mile extension of the A Line, which parallels Metrolink with no additional stops, is set to cost \$895 million (\$298 million /mile), far more than the \$50 million for the Lilac to Sycamore double track (\$71 million/mile). The project will also move the Claremont Metrolink station farther away from destinations, and disrupt Metrolink service during construction. We are also concerned that this will impede full double tracking of the San Bernardino Line (SBL), whether through physically blocking the infrastructure or simply through absorbing funding and staff capacity, and would like to see assurance from SBCTA that full SBL double tracking will still be possible if the A line extension moves forward.

The Foothill Construction Authority is also plagued by what appear to be financial improprieties. CEO Habib Bailan makes more in annual salary than LA Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins, despite only managing 13 vs over 11,000 employees. Foothill Gold Line employees receive bonuses of up to 40% salary for completing construction milestones, which is not standard practice in the industry. Further, the contract for extension to Montclair received a single bid from Kiewit corporation, the same company that has managed previous segments, flying in the face of competitive bidding best practices. ***We suggest that taxpayer funding to the project be paused until a thorough audit of the Foothill Construction Authority is complete.***

Item 4:

Californians for Electric Rail strongly supports the Lilac to Sycamore Double Track project and are happy to see the project moving forward, though we continue to be disappointed by the reduced scope compared to the initial proposal. This project will improve the reliability of the San Bernardino Line and enable more consistent, reliable 30 minute Metrolink service in San Bernardino County. Please approve the MOU and move this much-needed project forward.

We would like to use this opportunity to comment on transit project delivery best practices. In other countries where construction costs are consistently lower than the United States, construction funding is typically awarded after design is complete or nearly complete. It is difficult to truly constrain costs for a project until design is higher than 60% complete. If initial cost estimates turn out to be too low, projects may not have sufficient funding to cover construction, causing projects to be paused (driving up costs further) or scaled back. For example, costs for capacity improvements on the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line doubled in the last four years before and after design was completed, and now the board is considering

pausing the project. Given that the Lilac to Sycamore double track was funded prior to significant design, we are concerned that it may face a similar outcome.

We urge the board to commit to funding the Lilac to Sycamore double track without future scope reductions, even if costs rise after full design. We have already highlighted lower value projects that are a potential source of funds. Moving forward, SBCTA should work with Caltrans and the state to fund and execute full design for rail projects prior to applying for construction funding. Please see [our recent letter to the SB 125 task force](#) for more detailed recommendations about project development, many of which are applicable to this important project.

Sincerely,
Adriana Rizzo
Californians for Electric Rail