



# Draft Appendix B: Countywide Transit Vision

San Bernardino County Long Range Multimodal  
Transportation Plan

*San Bernardino, CA*  
December 6, 2024



INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



## Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Local Bus and BRT .....	1
3	Urban and Regional Rail .....	3
4	Other Multimodal Components.....	8

## Figures

Figure 1. Priority Transit Corridors in the Current Omnitrans System-wide Plan .....	2
Figure 2. Overview of the Transit Vision for the San Bernardino Valley.....	5

Draft

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

# 1 Introduction

San Bernardino County is often thought to be merely a sprawling suburb of Los Angeles. While the county is one of the largest centers of logistics in the U.S. and is building a diverse set of more affordable and market-driven housing types, it is also densifying and laying a foundation of transit and other multimodal systems as well as more compact and mixed land use around transit lines. These investments are providing more mobility options than ever before.

With a combination of local bus and bus rapid transit (BRT) routes, urban trains, regional trains, and specialized services, the county's goal is to provide efficient, reliable, accessible, and equitable transportation for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. The system not only helps reduce traffic congestion and environmental impact but also ensures that all residents, regardless of location or mobility, have the means to travel for work, education, daily business activities, and leisure. The sections that follow explain where we are and where we are going in three areas: 1) local bus and BRT; 2) urban and regional rail; and 3) other multimodal components including managed lanes, transportation demand management (TDM), and active transportation. Land use planning is also an important component. How these services are integrated is a critical element of creating the network that gives travelers the best set of mobility options and that connects to the vast regional transit network in other counties.

## 2 Local Bus and BRT

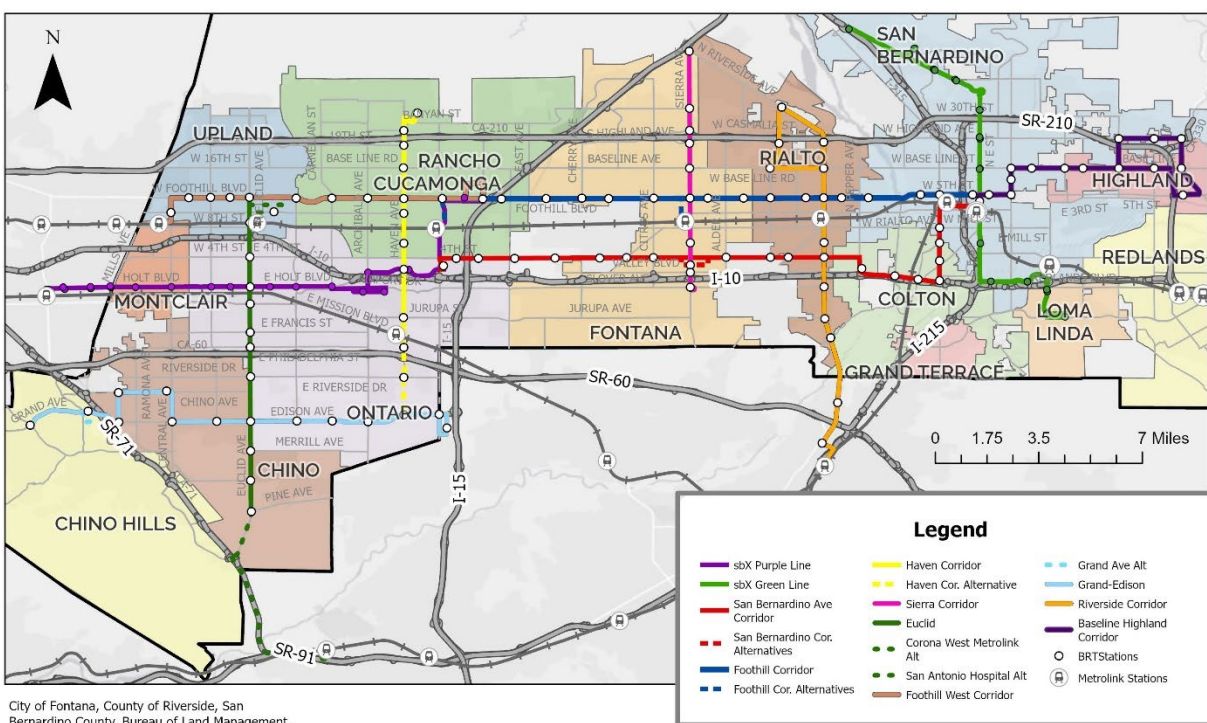
Bus transit service is provided in all the incorporated areas of San Bernardino County, with some transit agencies providing inter-regional services. These services are particularly important for travelers who do not have access to a personal vehicle. In the Valley subregion, for example, some 80 percent of the bus riders indicate that they do not have access to a car for their trip. Thus, local bus service and BRT are absolutely critical for basic mobility needs and represent one of the county's efforts to promote equity and mobility especially for disadvantaged communities in our delivery of transportation services.

The transit operators by subarea include:

- **San Bernardino Valley Subregion** - Operated by OmniTrans and their fixed route bus, bus rapid transit (sbX), circulator services (OmniGo), paratransit (OmniAccess) and microtransit (OmniRide) transit services.
- **Victor Valley Subregion** – Served by Victor Valley Transit Authority (VVTA) provides fixed-route bus, microtransit (Micro-Link), paratransit, and vanpool operations.
- **Mountain/Desert Subregion** – Serviced by Morongo Basin Transit Authority (MBTA), Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority (Mountain Transit), and Needles Area Transit (NAT). Each of these agencies is provide various fixed route bus, paratransit, and on-demand services.,
- **Existing and Future Express Bus/BRT Investments in the Valley** - The 2010 *Omnitrans System-wide Transit Corridor Plan* (System-wide Plan) for the San Bernardino Valley identified routes that had the potential for higher-capacity transit, such as BRT. The sbX Green Line has now been operational for 10 years. The Zero-Emission West Valley Connector (WVC) sbX

Purple Line is under construction. The construction and ongoing operation of these system has been funded, in part, by the SBCTA Measure I Express Bus/BRT program, along with substantial state and federal grants. The System-wide Plan was updated in 2019 as part of the project development effort for the WVC and represents a set of “Priority Transit Corridors” that are candidates for a range of transit investment, from targeted transit priority improvements to more robust BRT similar to the Green and Purple Lines (See Figure 1). Adjustments are in the process of being made to the Baseline-Highland route based on discussions occurring between the cities of Highland and San Bernardino.

**Figure 1. Priority Transit Corridors in the Current Omnitrans System-wide Plan**



Discussions were held with most local jurisdictions in the Valley in Summer 2024 regarding their interest in collaborating with SBCTA and Omnitrans on further developing these routes with priority transit treatments/BRT. Cities were presented with two possible scenarios:

1. Move forward with one or more corridors, similar to the process employed for the sbX Green Line and WVC.
2. Focus on multi-corridor transit signal priority (TSP), queue jumps, bus stop balancing and operational investments that could improve service on a multiple-route or system-wide basis, drawing from strategies that are described in the SCAG *Transit Priority Best Practices Report*. See link at: [Transit Priority Best Practices Report - Southern California Association of Governments](#).

Multiple cities have shown interest in the potential investment on priority transit routes serving their communities, but no clear conclusion has been reached within the timeframe of the LRMTMP. The direction for the next round of investments in priority transit corridors will be determined by the SBCTA Board in collaboration with Omnitrans.

More detailed information on systems and where they are headed can be found in the respect transit agency Short Range Transit Plans (SRTPs) or Comprehensive Operational Analyses (COAs).

### 3 Urban and Regional Rail

The 550-mile Metrolink system is operated by the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) and has served the 5-county region for over 30 years. Enhancements to this system will be discussed below along with other passenger rail initiatives. But Metrolink can be thought of as what ties the Southern California regional transit system together. It can be considered the backbone of the regional network, linking together with the LA Metro urban rail and light rail system and the many local bus and BRT systems in the region. Amtrak also provides service in the San Bernardino Valley with long-distance passenger train service between Chicago and Los Angeles.

As we turn to the future, we can see that multimodal transportation initiatives are coming together in an unprecedented way. With support from state and local partners, SBCTA has been able to begin operation on multiple major transit improvements in last ten years. The advancements in Bus Rapid Transit were highlighted earlier. The first urban rail transit project branded “Arrow,” and incorporated into the Metrolink San Bernardino Line. Each of those projects included new mobility hubs that allow for improved transit connectivity through active transportation and local bus service and support higher density transit-oriented development.

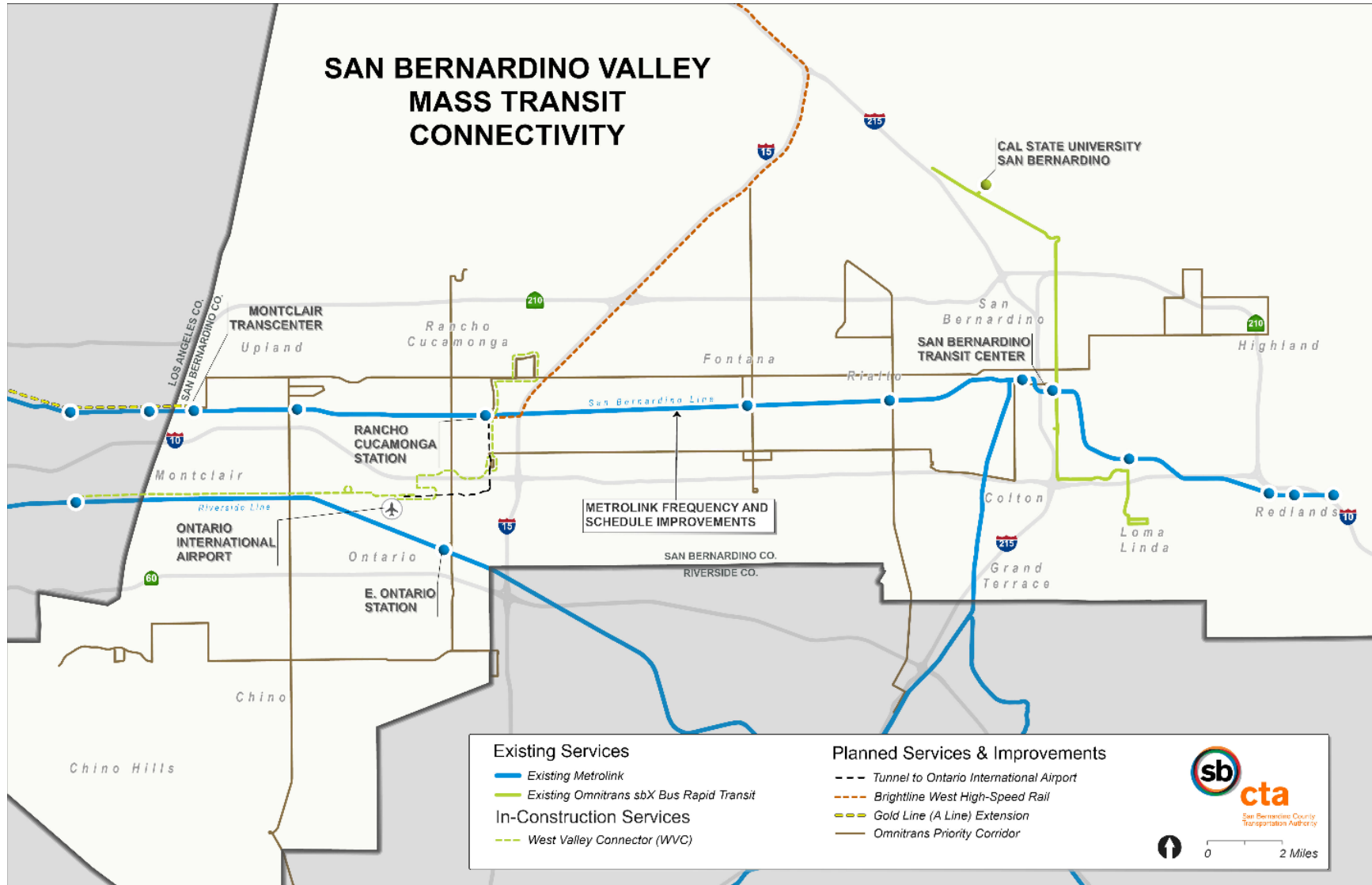
This overview explains how the initiatives incorporate the East and West Valley and connect to the Victor Valley as well, and describes how they will benefit the Southern California region as a whole. It is a multimodal vision in the sense that it incorporates strategies for increasing transit, shared-rides, and active transportation, as well as promoting the efficient movement of goods. This summary highlights some foundational transit improvements and where they are within the planning, project development, construction, and operation stages. It also highlights ground-breaking advanced technology transit ventures with the Zero Emission Multiple Unit (ZEMU) hydrogen-fueled train on the Arrow line, Brightline West, and ONT Connector. Highlights of these initiatives are provided in the bullet points below, followed by a section on the overall vision. Projects can be identified in Figure 2.

- **Zero Emission Multiple Unit (ZEMU)** - North America’s first federally compliant self-powered, zero-emission passenger train arrived in San Bernardino County on June 20, 2024. The train’s arrival at the San Bernardino Depot Train Station marks a significant milestone on its incredible journey from concept to reality. The passenger train, a ZEMU, uses a hybrid hydrogen and battery technology to propel the train and power onboard electrical systems. Water vapor is the only emission generated from the propulsion system, making this a clean transit alternative. SBCTA is leading the charge for a greener passenger rail future by piloting zero-emission rail technology for the new Arrow service between San Bernardino and Redlands.
- ZEMU is in the final phase of testing that will include trips on the Arrow line and Metrolink system checks with a goal of safe entry into service in 2025. Once operational, SBCTA’s vision is to replace the remainder of the diesel Multiple Unit (MU) vehicles with ZEMUs and potentially deploy ZEMUs on the Metrolink San Bernardino Line, pending further collaboration with SCRRA. SCRRA is currently studying the implementation of multiple unit rail vehicles on the San Bernardino Line as the phase two deployment of the ZEMUs.



- **Brightline West from Rancho Cucamonga to Las Vegas** – A publicly and privately-funded zero-emission high speed train service to and from Las Vegas is proceeding toward implementation. Brightline West (which currently runs passenger rail service between Fort Lauderdale and Miami) is planning to implement this multi-billion-dollar project to initiate service between the San Bernardino and Victor Valleys and Las Vegas. With stations in Rancho Cucamonga, Hesperia, and Apple Valley and rail connection to Los Angeles via Metrolink, these will become important transit hubs for increased local and regional connectivity. Additionally, Brightline West will provide local rail service to provide a transportation alternative for residents of the Victor Valley to travel conveniently by train to and from the San Bernardino Valley and to the greater Los Angeles Basin. The project is set to operate along or near the Interstate 15 alignment, with no road intersections, increasing travel safety and reducing noise . This investment will reduce congestion on I-15 and open a new opportunity for zero-emission transit travel to/from the LA Basin from/to Las Vegas.
- **ONT Connector** – SBCTA has partnered with Ontario International Airport (ONT) to develop forward-thinking transit solutions for current and future passengers while ensuring neighboring communities experience reduced congestion. ONT Connector will create a dedicated transit connection between the Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink Station (also the future Brightline West station) and ONT terminals. The project would seamlessly integrate into the existing Metrolink Station and feature a bi-directional system where passengers traveling to and from ONT will be transported in zero-emission vehicles on an “on-demand” basis.

Figure 2. Overview of the Transit Vision for the San Bernardino Valley



INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

- **Metrolink San Bernardino Line Service and Schedule Improvements** – In October 2024, SCRRA updated their Metrolink service on the San Bernardino Line to provide more flexibility and better-timed connections. The new schedule moves to a consistent bi-direction hourly service for more predictable train schedules and less stress for travelers. While the new schedule makes it easier for riders with trains leaving at the same time after every hour, there is still a desire under Metrolink’s Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) program and Service Development Growth Plan to reduce headways further to 30 minutes, add more frequent weekend service, and add shuttle service within the San Bernardino Valley. These service improvements will be especially important as Brightline West and ONT Connector come online in the future.
- Additionally, there are multiple projects being considered on the San Bernardino Line under different design and concept planning phases. The Lilac to Rancho project in Rialto and San Bernardino is the most advanced. The project will add approximately 3-miles of additional track capacity and a second passenger platform at the existing Metrolink Rialto Station. Ten at-grade crossings within the study area will incorporate quiet zone safety enhancements.
- **Quiet Zone Improvements** – In addition to the Quiet Zones implemented along the Redland Passenger Rail Project (Arrow service) and being considered as part of the Lilac to Rancho project, SBCTA is envisioning additional quiet zones along Metrolink lines. Unfortunately, these community and safety improvement are not currently fundable with existing revenue services, but SBCTA is in the planning phase to include these improvements in upcoming grant opportunities and voter measures.
- **Future Arrow Expansion** – With the opening of the Arrow service in 2022 and ZEMU service planning for 2025, there is renewed focus on new stations and expanded Arrow service. This may include a new station at Waterman Avenue along the existing corridor and extending Arrow service west along the San Bernardino Line to service existing Metrolink stations within the County and potentially provide service all the way to Los Angeles Union Station.
- **Metrolink Eastern Maintenance Facility (EMF) Buildout** – A study is in progress by SCRRA to improve the functionality, productivity and overall demand for fleet inspection, service, repair, storage and rehabilitation. The study will identify and explore improvements to ensure that the facilities can support future agency initiatives and goals for the next 30 years including expansion of MU and ZEMU fleets.
- **LA Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension to San Bernardino County** – As part of the Phase 2B of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) Gold Line Expansion project, the LA Metro A (Gold) Line will extend light rail service from Azusa to San Bernardino County in Montclair. The SBCTA Board approved additional funding in May 2024 to support LA Metro and the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority to complete the project. The project is planned to break ground in 2025 and be completed in 2030.
- **Pacific Electric (PE) Trail** – SBCTA owns roughly 21 miles of former Southern Pacific Transportation Company right-of-way, extending from the western parts of the City of San Bernardino to the Los Angeles-San Bernardino County line. As part of the Year 2000 Pacific Electric Inland Empire Trail Master Plan, SBCTA reserved 45-foot right-of-way for future transit improvements. In 2013, the eastern-most segment of the 21-mile Pacific Electric Trail was

completed and traverses the communities of Upland, Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana and Rialto. SBCTA is continuing to preserve the right-of-way for existing active transit and future mobility improvements.

## 4 Other Multimodal Components

**Transportation Demand Management (TDM), Active Transportation, and First/Last Mile Initiatives** – An important part of the multimodal system SBCTA is building involves shared-ride options promoting carpool formation and vanpooling. Some 10 percent of San Bernardino County residents take shared rides to work. This makes vanpooling/carpooling the second most common means of commuting after driving alone. SBCTA is also making it easier to get to/from transit stations and stops through first/last mile solutions. Transit cannot be provided for every origin and destination combination, so it becomes important to provide easy access to transit lines to extend transit's reach as well as to provide safer routes to neighborhood schools. SBCTA and our local partners have invested over \$60 million over a five-year period to upgrade bicycle and pedestrian linkages to Metrolink stations, bus stops, schools, work centers, and other points of interest in the San Bernardino Valley. The funding is for the improvement of bus stops, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. In 2023, a call for projects resulted in the award of \$7.2M in grant awards for bike trails, multi-use paths, bike/pedestrian crossing improvements, Safe Routes to School initiatives, and bus station improvement projects.

These advances in transit and TDM are accompanied by progress in building a system of multimodal managed lanes and auxiliary lanes on Interstates 10 and 15 as part of a planned region-wide managed lane system launched in 2012 with the adoption of the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) by SCAG.

- **I-10 Corridor Freight and Managed Lane Project** – The first of SBCTA's I-10 Express Toll Lanes opened in Summer 2024 between the Los Angeles-San Bernardino County Line and I-15. Phase one of a three phased program has added ten-miles of managed lanes that includes new high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes that provide priority to transit, plus free tolls for 3+ carpools and clean air vehicles. New auxiliary lanes will improve truck and auto flows and enhance safety for merging and weaving movements. It is part of the emerging regional managed lane system that, enabled by advanced technology, also includes express lanes in Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside Counties. Phases two and three will add 23 more miles of managed lanes that will extend the lanes from I-15 all the way to Redlands, with phase two planned to begin construction in 2026. It is part of what is becoming a truly managed system for both people and goods, with priority for transit and shared-ride modes.
- **I-15 Corridor Freight and Managed Lane Project** – The fully funded project will add express lanes from SR-60 to Foothill Boulevard and auxiliary lanes in three strategic locations for improvement in truck operations and safety. This will extend the I-15 express lanes now being completed in Riverside County. Like I-10, this will improve flows for both trucks and cars and give priority to HOVs in this highly congested segment. It will greatly improve merging to and from the I-10/I-15 interchange, designated as the 10<sup>th</sup> most critical truck bottleneck in the U.S. by the American Transportation Research Institute.

These are unprecedented investments in multimodal transportation for our area. That these advances are occurring in San Bernardino County might seem surprising to some, but when one considers San Bernardino County's history with passenger rail and bus transit, it should not be surprising at all. Our

county has long served as a gateway to the nation from Southern California, driven by our geography as well as the pioneering spirit of our residents and businesses. It is also important to note that these investments are connected to the extensive regional Southern California transit network, as illustrated in Exhibit 3.1 of the SCAG 2020 RTP/SCS (access Connect SoCal at: [Read the Plan Adopted Final Plan - Southern California Association of Governments](#)).

Draft

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK