

PRESS RELEASE:
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For additional information, contact:
Jane Dreher, Public Information Officer
San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG)
909-884-8276, JDreher@sanbag.ca.gov

Two projects will change the future of public transportation in the region

Metrolink Extension and New Transit Center will enhance the connections between Inland Empire transportation systems

SAN BERNARDINO, CA – Changing the way people travel throughout the Inland Empire is the goal of two projects that started construction on Tuesday, February 25, following a groundbreaking ceremony in downtown San Bernardino.

The first project is the Downtown San Bernardino Passenger Rail Project (DTSBPRP), which will extend the Metrolink line from the historic Santa Fe Depot one mile east, where it will join with the second project, the future San Bernardino Transit Center, to be constructed at Rialto Avenue and “E” Street in the city.

These two projects represent a partnership between the Federal Transit Administration, San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), Omnitrans, Metrolink, and the City of San Bernardino. Speakers at the groundbreaking included Leslie Rogers, Regional Administrator for the Federal Transit Administration, California Transportation Commissioner Joe Tavaglione, SANBAG President Bill Jahn, County Supervisor James Ramos, Omnitrans Chairman Alan Wapner, and Patrick Morris, who is both Metrolink Chairman and City of San Bernardino Mayor.

Mayor Patrick Morris welcomed the crowd by stating, “This marks the culmination of many years of work to bring these transformative projects to construction. These two projects are examples of how creating intermodal connections between commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and local and regional bus service can provide enhanced benefits to current transit users and make these travel modes more attractive to future riders in the region.”

Some major changes will occur at the historic Santa Fe Depot, currently the end of the line for the Metrolink commuter train service. “Modifications at the Depot will create a beautiful grand entrance on the south side of the Depot and a new rail boarding area on the north side of the building,” explained Mayor Morris. “A tall pedestrian bridge over the tracks will provide safe access for passengers boarding the trains going in either direction. The DTSBPRP will

feature the addition of double tracks from the Santa Fe Depot to the new Transit Center, along with roadway improvements.”

The Transit Center will be a multi-modal transportation hub where 13 local Omnitrans bus routes, the new sbX Bus Rapid Transit service, Victor Valley Transit Authority (buses from the high desert), Mountain Area Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) bus service, and Metrolink trains will all meet when the projects are completed. The public can transfer from one mode of transportation to another at this hub and go in various directions. Commuter rail service will eventually be extended nine miles further to the east via the future Redlands Passenger Rail Project. That project is still going through environmental studies.

“This is a great project, which will offer greater convenience and connectivity for the community,” stated Omnitrans Chairman of the Board Alan Wapner. The Transit Center project represents more than a decade of visioning partnership between Omnitrans and SANBAG.

The Transit Center will include a 7,500 sq. ft. building, 22 bus bays, customer service and pass sales office, security, restrooms, seating, and shelter. These amenities have not been available to transit customers in the past at one location.

“Combined costs for the two projects total \$128 million, with funds derived from federal sources (\$37 million), state sources (\$26.9 million), and local sources (\$64.7 million),” stated SANBAG President Bill Jahn. “Of the local funds, \$27 million came from Measure I, the ½ cent sales tax approved by San Bernardino County voters for transportation improvements.”

The Transit Center is expected to be completed in Early 2015, while the Metrolink extension and Santa Fe Depot modifications should be completed by Summer 2016.

To follow the progress on these projects, please refer to the websites of SANBAG or Omnitrans: www.sanbag.ca.gov or www.omnitrans.org.

PHOTOS ON FOLLOWING PAGE....

PHOTO SOURCE: SANBAG

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When completed at Rialto and E St. in San Bernardino, the new Transit Center will become a junction for Metrolink and various bus services, thus allowing people to transfer from one mode of transportation to another.



Elected officials and community leaders used a large punch card to symbolize the various transportation options that will be available at the new Transit Center.



Leslie Rogers (left), Regional Administrator for District 9 of the Federal Transit Administration, praised the partners involved in both projects for bringing the combined \$128 million projects to construction.