



Transportation Committee

Meeting Date: May 2, 2024

[[!Agenda Item No. {{item.number}}!]]

Approval of the Regional Transit Network

Action

Author: Kristina Svensk

Attachments: Yes

Approved by: Kristina Svensk

Referring Committee: Not Applicable

Issue:

Approval of the Regional Transit Network and associated final plan.

Recommendation:

That the Transportation Committee recommend that the board approve the Regional Transit Network.

Background:

SACOG began the development of a transit network for the region in 2022 as an implementation strategy for the Next Generation Transit Study (or Next Gen Transit) adopted in 2021 by the board. The Next Gen Transit effort identified a need for regional and intercity/intercounty/interagency travel, which the current systems collectively cannot accommodate in an effective manner.

Over the course of the last year and a half, SACOG has brought key milestones of the project to the Transportation Committee and board for updates and validation. Most recently, staff brought the results of the corridor development and prioritization process and draft list of corridors to the committee and board in September 2023. After obtaining feedback, the consultant team and SACOG moved forward with finalization of the corridors and advancement of the next (and final) phases of the project. Prior to that, staff had presented information related to the plan's goals, process and existing conditions report in November 2022. The information being presented at this meeting is the final plan for the Regional Transit Network.

Discussion/Analysis:

The Regional Transit Network (RTN) presents strategies for a broad long-term network spanning across the six counties, as well as near-term speed and reliability improvements to help advance and mature existing high ridership corridors in the region that are prime for high capacity transit services. Generally speaking, high capacity transit is inclusive of different types of transit service that is able to move a lot of people quickly and often through various attributes like greater frequency, fewer bus stops, branded service, and technology to support faster service like transit signal priority, among many others.

The RTN is centered around five key goals inspired by the broader goals from the Next Gen Transit Study:

RTN Goal	Next Generation Goals	Description
Fast and Reliable Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast and Reliable 	Increases the competitiveness of transit with driving.
Equitable Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable 	Reduces disparities in transit travel time and access and provides more transit options for historically disadvantaged communities.
Access and Interconnectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves the Economy Interconnected User Friendly 	Leverages existing transit services to provide seamless and easy travel for all users to the top regional centers and destinations.
Financial Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost-Effective Financially Sustainable 	Puts public funds to the best use by minimizing costs while maintaining or increasing ridership.
Climate Smart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Smart 	Meets or exceeds targets for reduced emissions and vehicle miles travelled.

The long-term RTN components were developed through a multi-step process including framework development, corridor identification, corridor screening, corridor prioritization, and final concept development. Based on the analyses conducted, the resulting transit network is comprised of long, medium, and short distance corridors throughout the six county region. In total, there are 47 corridors: seven long distance, 30 medium distance, and 10 short distance. In addition to identifying the most feasible routes, various types of high capacity transit services were assigned to each of the corridors:

- **Bus with speed and reliability improvements:** Enhanced local bus service with techniques that improve speed and reliability, such as stop consolidation, queue jump lanes, transit signal priority, and other spot treatments at intersections. Six short distance and 13 medium distance corridors have been proposed for these service improvements.
- **"BRT Lite":** Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lite includes the noted reliability improvements above with additional improvements to convenience, speed, and reliability, such as off-board fare purchases at distinguished stations with robust passenger amenities. One short distance and six medium distance corridors have been identified for these service improvements.
- **Full BRT:** Full or traditional BRT operates like light rail with a dedicated right of way and advanced infrastructure, but is more efficient in terms of capital and operational costs. Two short distance and four medium distance corridors are proposed for Full BRT.
- **Freeway BRT:** Inter-county regional and commuter focused transit service along limited-access freeways to serve longer distance corridors with stations spaced farther apart (typically three to five miles), taking advantage of managed lane infrastructure. All seven long distance corridors have been identified for Freeway BRT.

While the focus of the RTN is to develop high capacity transit corridors for the region's long-range transit vision, the team also identified potential near-term projects to improve speed and reliability more quickly on existing bus routes that have the greatest likelihood of maturing to a more defined high capacity transit route. Advancing near-term improvements will demonstrate proof of concept for strategies that decrease bus travel times, make service more reliable, and produce near-term results that encourage more people to use public transit. SACOG staff and the consultant team worked closely with transit operators and local jurisdiction staff to identify the following six corridors and the proposed near-term improvements:

1. **Arden:** Queue jump and transit signal priority
2. **Broadway:** Queue jump, transit signal priority, in-lane stops, and bus only lanes
3. **Florin:** Stop relocation, queue jump, transit signal priority, and in-lane stop
4. **Rio Linda/Grand:** Queue jump, transit signal priority, in-lane stops, and bus only lanes
5. **Stockton:** Queue jump, transit signal priority, in-lane stops, and bus only lanes
6. **Sunrise:** Queue jump, signal priority, and bus only lanes

During the development of the entire plan, the consultant team conducted extensive engagement with partners including transit agencies and individual jurisdictions through one-on-one meetings, focused group meetings, the Transit Coordinating Committee, and the Regional Planning Partnership. Additionally, as the RTN serves as a basis for the long-range transit network in the Blueprint, the consultant team and SACOG staff worked closely together over the last year to create a system that reflected both the high capacity transit and local transit visions for the region.

The identification of corridors and services is the first step in developing a truly regional transit network. Upon completion of the RTN, SACOG and its partners will need to work together on a governance and operating structure that works for the region, as well as develop more robust operating costs and associated and financial plans that lay the groundwork for funding. At the same time, SACOG will continue to work with transit agencies and other partner jurisdictions to prioritize near-term strategies identified in the plan to begin the strengthening of key corridors with enhanced transit services.

Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

The fiscal impact is included in the approved Overall Work Program and budget.