Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

Metro

Board Report

File #: 2023-0513, **File Type:** Informational Report **Agenda Number:** 43.

OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

SUBJECT: NEXTGEN SPEED & RELIABILITY PROGRAM UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the NextGen Speed and Reliability Program Update.

ISSUE

The NextGen Bus Plan is a reimagining of the Metro bus system. It includes a redesign of the bus route network and a capital program to improve the speed and reliability of the network. This report provides an update on the NextGen Speed and Reliability Program initiatives, including bus priority lanes, recently awarded grant funding, and all door boarding improvements.

BACKGROUND

The NextGen Bus Plan was initiated in 2018 and approved by the Metro Service Councils in September 2020 followed by Metro Board adoption in October 2020. A key part of the plan was to establish a fast, frequent, and reliable network of bus services capable of competing effectively in the overall market for travel to grow Metro bus ridership. This network was largely implemented between December 2020 and December 2021.

As part of NextGen, a Bus Speed and Reliability Program, was established to accelerate design and implementation of initiatives to improve the speed and reliability of the bus system, focused on quick-build, tactical transit engineering. These approaches can also be applied to street-running rail operations, resulting in operational improvements for Metro's light rail system as well.

In July 2018, the Board adopted Motion 38.1 (Attachment A) by Garcetti, Kuehl, Bonin, and Garcia, as amended by Barger, endorsing travel speed, service frequency, and system reliability as the highest priority service design objectives for the NextGen Bus Study. These objectives were incorporated into the NextGen Regional Service Concept approved by the Board in July 2019. This provided the framework for restructuring Metro's bus routes and schedules under the NextGen Bus Plan, the first comprehensive review of the Metro bus network in a generation. It focused on establishing a fast, frequent/ reliable network that is easy to understand and competitive in the overall

market for travel in LA County. This new network would be capable of supporting growth in overall ridership for the bus system by addressing opportunities to be more competitive at off peak times and for shorter distance trips.

In July 2019, the Board approved Motion 22.1 (Attachment B) by Bonin, Garcetti, Krekorian, Solis, and Garcia entitled NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group as part of the NextGen Service Concept. This motion directed staff to establish a partnership between Metro and LADOT to identify, design, fund, and implement transit supportive infrastructure to speed up transit service as part of the NextGen Bus Plan. Specifically, this motion requested the following:

> A. Develop a list of priority bus supportive infrastructure projects needed to support the NextGen bus service plan, with an emphasis on near-term improvements that can be implemented concurrently with each phase of NextGen;
> B. Form a NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group co-chaired by the Metro CEO and the General Manager (GM) of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), or their designees, and establish a regular meeting schedule, at least monthly;
> C. Assess the need for coordination with additional local jurisdictions and municipal operators where bus delay hotspots exist; and
> D. Report back to the Operations, Safety and Customer Experience Committee on the above in April 2020, and quarterly thereafter.

In response to Motion 22.1, Metro appointed a Technical Working Group in 2019 focused on identifying, planning, designing, and implementing bus speed and reliability improvements. Metro Service Planning, in close partnership with LADOT's equivalent technical team, consisting of Traffic Operations, Active Transportation, Vision Zero, and Transportation Planning Groups, have met regularly (every 2-4 weeks) to ensure ongoing coordination and advancement of the program. Additional Metro departments (e.g. Customer Experience, Planning, Office of Management & Budget, Office of Strategic Innovation, Program Management, Security) and other municipal traffic departments as well as transit operators are engaged as needed when specific projects have been defined and advanced towards design and implementation.

An External Affairs Working Group was also established in 2019 and continues as a subcommittee of the Technical Working Group. It is comprised of staff from Metro Community Relations, LADOT External Affairs, StreetsLA, the Los Angeles Mayor's Office, Metro Board Staff and Metro Service Planning. Their work focuses on coordinating communication and engagement efforts as well as preparing communities for coming improvements and identifying and addressing potential impacts for these projects.

DISCUSSION

As of September 21, 2023, 40 lane miles of bus priority lanes are operational, increasing speed and reliability by up to 15%. Another 45 lane miles of bus priority lanes are under design or construction, and another 13 lane miles are in the planning stage. A map detailing these projects is provided in Attachment C.

Since the last NextGen Speed & Reliability Program update provided to the Board in April 2023, the

Working Group has met regularly in support of the following initiatives:

Venice Boulevard Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 33)

In partnership with LADOT, the initial phase of the Venice Bl Safety and Mobility Project in the Mar Vista and Palms neighborhoods was completed and celebrated in June 2023. This project incorporated the following elements:

- Conversion of the rightmost traffic lane to full-time and bus priority lanes in both directions between Inglewood Bl and Culver Bl near Culver City E Line Station
- Parking-protected and buffered bike lanes along this segment and served by several adjacent Metro Bikeshare stations

Preliminary data (comparing April 2023 pre-implementation to July 2023 post-implementation) indicates that Line 33 travel speeds have improved up to 8 MPH faster during the rush hour periods, which represents up to a 130% speed improvement in the most congested segments. On-time performance has also improved from 54% to 79%, with late buses decreasing by 73%. Early buses have also increased to 10%, indicating that Line 33 buses are now beating previously established schedules and allows for reinvestment of captured time savings into more competitive bus service in future schedule changes.

Metro was also recently awarded $6.5M under the California Transportation Commission's (CTC) 2022 Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP) to further partner with the City of Los Angeles to upgrade 38 bus stops with expanded boarding islands and 27 bus shelters equipped with lighting and real-time passenger information. These elements will be designed and implemented under the next phase of this project in the coming years and Metro staff will provide future updates.

La Brea Avenue Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 212)

In August 2023, Metro reached final completion of the 5.7 lane mile peak period bus priority lanes on La Brea Av between Sunset Bl and Olympic Bl.

Sepulveda Boulevard and Ventura Boulevard Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 234)

In September 2023, LADOT began implementation of this 11.3 lane mile project and expects to reach completion in October 2023. This project provides full-time bus priority lanes along Sepulveda Blvd and morning rush-hour bus priority lanes on a segment of westbound Ventura Blvd.

Florence Avenue Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 111)

In June 2023, StreetsLA completed nearly 2 miles of roadway repairs to prepare for the upcoming 10.2 lane mile peak period bus priority lanes project along Florence Av from Florence A Line Station to West Bl. In August 2023, LA County Department of Public Works began designing their jurisdictional segment of the project between Florence A Line Station and Central Ave. In September 2023, LADOT began their design within the City of Los Angeles segment between Central Av and West Bl. An implementation schedule will be provided in a future update.

SR-2 Santa Monica Boulevard Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Line 4 & Big Blue Bus)

Caltrans is making roadway improvements to Santa Monica Bl, between Centinela Av and Sawtelle Bl. As part of these improvements, Caltrans will be implementing 2.6-lane miles of peak-hour bus lanes in both directions. These bus lanes will operate within the existing peak-hour lanes, which currently have AM and PM peak weekday parking restrictions. There are typically over 26,000 daily Metro bus boardings along the Santa Monica Blvd corridor with key connections to Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, Hollywood and Central Los Angeles, in addition to bus boardings on City of Santa Monica Big Blue Bus routes making key connections to Westwood and UCLA. The project is not anticipated to remove any parking. Caltrans has partnered with Metro and Big Blue Bus to ensure these new bus lanes support these agencies' efforts to improve bus speed and reliability, with start of construction anticipated in Summer 2024.

Vermont Avenue Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Lines 204 & 754)

As part of the Vermont Transit Corridor project, Metro staff conducted extensive community engagement to establish priorities to complete the project. One of the key outcomes from the community included implementing short term projects to deliver immediate improvements for the current bus service on the corridor. As a result, the Technical Working Group identified a 5 lane mile northern segment of Vermont Av between Sunset Bl and Wilshire Bl, and a 7.5 lane mile southern segment of Vermont Av between Gage Av and Vermont/Athens C Line Station, as the next corridor to study for bus priority lanes. The proposed bus lanes would be in service full-time along the southern segment and weekday peak periods along the northern segment. Metro Community Relations staff will also conduct briefings and presentations to interested stakeholders, community groups, and neighborhood councils, as well as outreach to businesses along Vermont Av. There are significant equity benefits to improving today's bus service on Vermont Av, such as the following key points:

- Typically, there are over 43,000 boardings per day, representing the busiest Metro bus only corridor in the entire system
- 84% do NOT own or have access to a car, indicating they rely on Metro service for mobility
- 87% are below the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) Very Low Income Level
- 93% ride Metro everyday or nearly everyday
- 96% are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)

However, the Metro "How Women Travel Study" identified that disproportionately women in this corridor travel off-peak hours so staff is assessing how to address this need. Community engagement is slated for Fall/Winter 2023, design in Spring 2024, and implementation in Summer 2025.

Wilshire Boulevard Bus Priority Lanes (Metro Lines 20 & 720)

In partnership with the City of Los Angeles Council District 5, LADOT will upgrade a segment of the Wilshire Bus Priority Lanes between the City of Beverly Hills and Comstock Ave from peak period only to full time. Previously, this segment was open to general traffic during off peak periods, as street parking in this segment is not permitted. This upgrade to full time bus only lanes will improve overall bus lane operations by more clearly rationalizing this segment of Wilshire Blvd at all times.

Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Transportation Improvement Program

As an element of the Long Beach-East Los Angeles Corridor Mobility Investment Plan (formerly I-710 Freeway project), Metro was recently awarded $14.5M in grant award funding from the California Transportation Commission's (CTC) Local Partnership Program (LPP) as part of a $31.13M program for SELA tactical transit improvements, including:

- Transit Signal Priority expansion to 114 SELA intersections using state-of-the-art cloud-based technology
- Purchase and installation of bus shelters with real-time displays and improved lighting at 100 of the busiest bus stops that lack shelters today
- Purchase and installation of solar-powered lighting upgrades at 100 other bus stops that do not have shelters
- Operational and customer experience improvements at Norwalk C Line Station, Artesia A Line Station, and Compton A Line Station / MLK Transit Center
    - Bus terminal layover upgrades for operational capacity and passenger amenity improvements
    - Purchase and installation of ten zero-emission bus charging masts

Metro will be working with key stakeholders in the SELA region, including the Long Beach-East Los Angeles Corridor Mobility Investment Plan Taskforce, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, municipal transit operators, and local municipalities to implement these tactical transit improvements.

Camera Bus Lane Enforcement (CBLE)

Metro remains on schedule to enforce parking violations in bus-only lanes through the use of automated, on-vehicle, forward-facing cameras under California Assembly Bill AB917. Metro is currently reviewing proposals and in a communications blackout period and staff anticipates returning to the Board with a recommendation for contract award in October 2023.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The NextGen Bus Plan was developed with an equity methodology, placing service in Equity Focus Communities (EFC) where transit was more likely to provide a key mobility option for residents. The above report shows progress in rolling out speed and reliability improvements for improved transit travel times on corridors benefitting EFC residents.

These gains for EFCs should continue to improve as bus speed and reliability improvements increase the competitiveness of the NextGen Bus Plan. As described above, staff include rider survey data in developing these projects along project corridors to measure the benefits and impacts to marginalized groups as a result of these projects. One example includes the Vermont Ave Bus Priority Lanes project, which is a key component of the NextGen Bus Plan. The Bus Priority Lanes project will deliver improved service for over 43,000 riders along the Tier 1 network, which was developed through the NextGen Bus Plan's equity analysis. By reducing delays and improving transit

travel times along the Tier 1 network, the project supports Metro's Equity Platform of removing barriers and supporting increased access to opportunity for all riders.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Recommendations support strategic plans:
Goal #1: Provide high quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling. Improving the speed and reliability of the bus network will reduce transit travel times, as well as improve competitiveness with other transportation options.
Goal #2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system. These initiatives help to move more people within the same street capacity, where currently transit users suffer service delays and reliability issues because of single occupant drivers.
Goal #3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. With faster transit service and improved reliability, residents have increased access to education and employment with greater confidence that they will reach their destination on time.
Goal #4: Transform Los Angeles County through regional collaboration and national leadership. Because Metro does not have jurisdiction over local streets and arterials, collaboration with other partner agencies such as LADOT, Caltrans, City and County of Los Angeles are necessary to ensure these speed and reliability improvements are successfully implemented.

NEXT STEPS

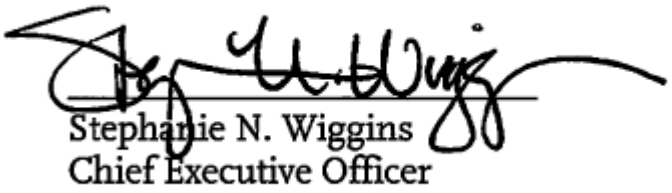
The NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group will continue to discuss and analyze future corridors along key arterials for equitable opportunities and are actively collaborating with partner agencies and stakeholders. Staff plans to provide further details about these corridors in the next quarterly update in early 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion 22.1
Attachment B - Motion 38.1
Attachment C - Bus Lane Progress Map

Prepared by: Stephen Tu, Senior Director, Service Development, (213) 418-3005
James Shahamiri, Director, Engineering, (213) 922-4823
Julia Brown, Senior Manager, Community Relations, (213) 922-1340
Joe Forgiarini, Senior Executive Officer, Service Development, (213) 418-3400

Reviewed by: Conan Cheung, Chief Operations Officer, (213) 418-3034



Stephanie N. Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

Metro

Board Report

File #: 2019-0572, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response **Agenda Number:** 22.1

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JULY 25, 2019

Motion by:

DIRECTORS BONIN, GARCETTI, KREKORIAN, SOLIS AND GARCIA

Related to Item 22: NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group

In June 2018, the Metro Board endorsed speed, frequency, and reliability as the highest priorities for Metro's bus service in the NextGen Bus Study. In recent years, the primary contributor to slow speeds and poor schedule reliability has been growing traffic congestion on city streets. This congestion directly increases Metro's operating costs and reduces the quality of the service that Metro can afford to provide. Providing high-quality transit options with competitive travel times is the single most important step Metro can take to retain and grow ridership, increase the carrying capacity of local roadways, and shift regional travel patterns toward more efficient modes. These goals are essential components of both Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan and the City of Los Angeles' Mobility Plan 2035 and Sustainable City pLAn.

The phenomenon of traffic congestion impeding mass transit operations is particularly acute in Downtown Los Angeles and nearby neighborhoods -- and the experience of the recent Flower Street pilot bus lane has demonstrated the effectiveness of strategic bus-supportive infrastructure in allowing transit riders to bypass congestion. Other types of bus-supportive infrastructure may include queue jumpers, signal priority, or boarding islands. Combined with operational improvements like All Door Boarding, these types of infrastructure improvements can cut stop times and improve bus speeds by 20% or more.

Metro buses operate on streets controlled by local jurisdictions. Therefore, close coordination between Metro and local agency partners is essential to successfully implement infrastructure changes. A working group is needed to ensure close coordination between Metro's Operations Department and city transportation agencies.

SUBJECT: NEXTGEN BUS SPEED ENGINEERING WORKING GROUP

APPROVE Motion by Directors Bonin, Garcetti, Krekorian, Solis and Garcia that the Board direct the CEO to:

A. Develop a list of priority bus-supportive infrastructure projects needed to support the NextGen bus service plan, with an emphasis on near-term improvements that can be implemented concurrently with each phase of NextGen;

B. Form a NextGen Bus Speed Engineering Working Group co-chaired by the Metro CEO and the General Manager of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, or their designees, and establish a regular meeting schedule, at least monthly;

C. Assess the need for coordination with additional local jurisdictions and municipal operators where bus delay hotspots exist; and

D. Report back to the Operations, Safety, and Customer Experience Committee on the above in October 2019, and quarterly thereafter.

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

Metro

Board Report

File #: 2018-0414, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response **Agenda Number:** 38.1

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JUNE 28, 2018

Motion by:

GARCETTI, KUEHL, BONIN AND GARCIA
AS AMENDED BY BARGER

Related to Item 38: **NEXTGEN BUS STUDY SERVICE PARAMETERS**

MTA should strive to deliver the best customer experience of any public transit provider in America.

MTA's customers should be able to easily and conveniently access MTA services and data and feel assured that their transit trip will be fast, convenient, and reliable.

Additionally, MTA's customers should feel that MTA actively cares about their experience. MTA's customers should see a proven, constant, and continuous effort by MTA to improve the experience of using MTA's services.

Furthermore, MTA must demonstrate that its services are superior to alternatives.

The Ad Hoc Customer Experience Committee was formed to ensure that MTA was focused on these issues.

Since July, the ad hoc committee has met six times. The committee has examining a wide range of issues, including quality bus service, station cleanliness, TAP, pass programs, real-time data, service interruptions, marketing, Customer Care, system accessibility, and the causes of MTA's recent ridership trends.

In the coming fiscal year, the duties of the Ad Hoc Customer Experience Committee will transition to the Operations Committee.
However, as MTA continues important customer experience initiatives, especially the NextGen Bus Study, it is important that the Board remain engaged on customer experience issues.
Additionally, as MTA advances the NextGen Bus Study, it is appropriate for the Board to provide policy direction on the highest priorities for the future restructuring of the MTA bus network.

SUBJECT: MOTION BY GARCETTI, KUEHL, BONIN AND GARCIA

NEXTGEN BUS STUDY SERVICE PARAMETERS

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT the Board:

A. Rename the System Safety, Security and Operations Committee to the Operations, Safety, and Customer Experience Committee;

B. Endorse Travel Speed, Service Frequency, and System Reliability as the highest priority service parameters to guide the work of the NextGen Bus Study;

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Board direct the CEO to:

C. Develop customer experience key performance indicators (KPIs) within Operations, Communications, Information & Technology Services, TAP, System Security and Law Enforcement, and other functional areas of MTA to regularly report on the status of the system, transit service, and the transit service environment;

D. Develop an Annual Customer Service and Experience Plan, including but not limited to improvements planned and desired for:

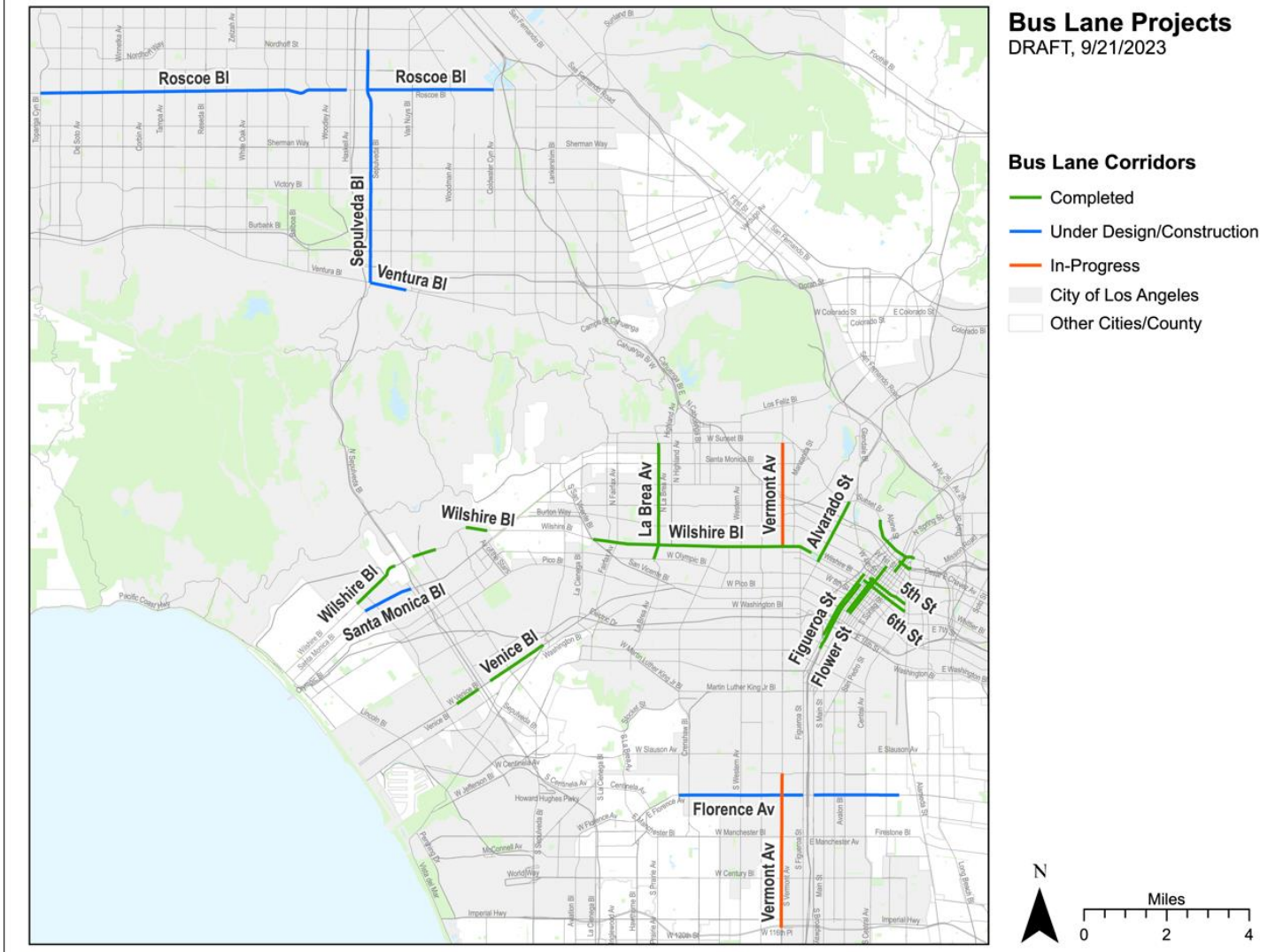
1. KPIs developed under section C. above
2. The status of Customer Service & Experience projects
3. Key accomplishments, objectives, and challenges in Customer Service and Customer Experience for the following budget year
4. Key accomplishments, objectives, and challenges in transit service marketing for the following budget year
5. The CEO's Ridership Initiatives, including the Customer Experience Strategist (Board File 2018-0365);

E. Report back to the Operations Committee on all the above in 120 days.

<u>BARGER AMENDMENT: continue to seek input and feedback on priorities from NextGen working groups and relevant community stakeholders.</u>

Attachment C

Bus Lane Progress Map



NEXTGEN Bus Plan

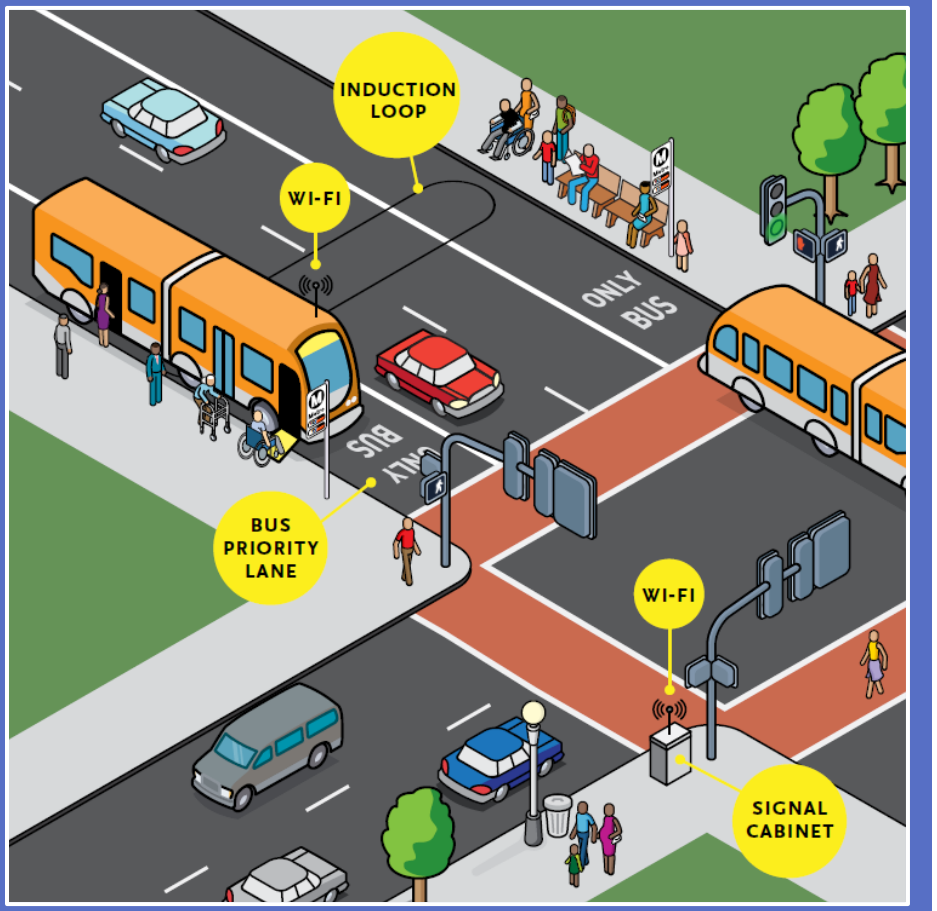
Speed & Reliability Program Update

Metro

SEPTEMBER 2023

Speed & Reliability (S&R) Background

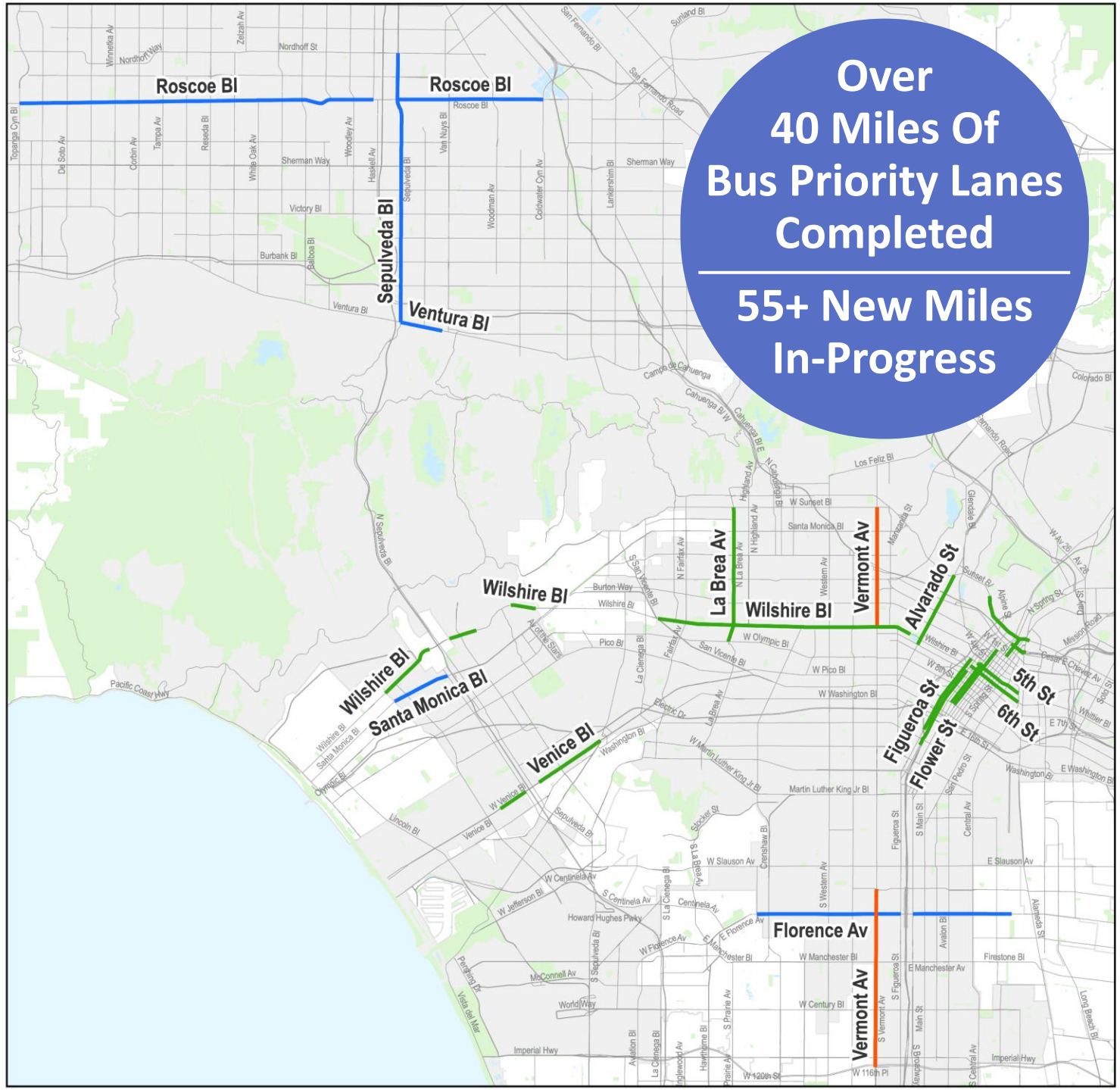
- NextGen Bus Plan improves transit competitiveness through faster, more frequent, and more reliable bus service
- Pursuant to Motions 38.1 (July 2018) and 22.1 (July 2019), a Bus Speed & Reliability tactical transit infrastructure program was established to accelerate collaborative solutions for bus delays
  - 100+ Miles of Bus Priority Lanes
  - 1,600+ Intersections with Transit Signal Priority
  - All Door Boarding to Reduce Dwell Times
  - Tactical Treatments & Studies (Bus & Rail)
  - Bus Stop & Layover Improvements
- Force multiplier that improves the customer experience (CX) and operator conditions with operational savings reinvested into better service



Bus Lane Map

Bus Priority Lane Corridors

- ✓ Wilshire Bl
- ✓ Flower St
- ✓ Aliso St
- ✓ 5th St
- ✓ 6th St
- ✓ Alvarado St
- ✓ Grand Av
- ✓ Olive St
- ✓ Venice Bl
- ✓ La Brea Av
- Sepulveda Bl
- Florence Av
- Santa Monica Bl
- Vermont Av



Over 40 Miles Of Bus Priority Lanes Completed

55+ New Miles In-Progress

Bus Lane Projects
DRAFT, 9/21/2023

Bus Lane Corridors

- Completed
- Under Design/Construction
- In-Progress
- City of Los Angeles
- Other Cities/County

N

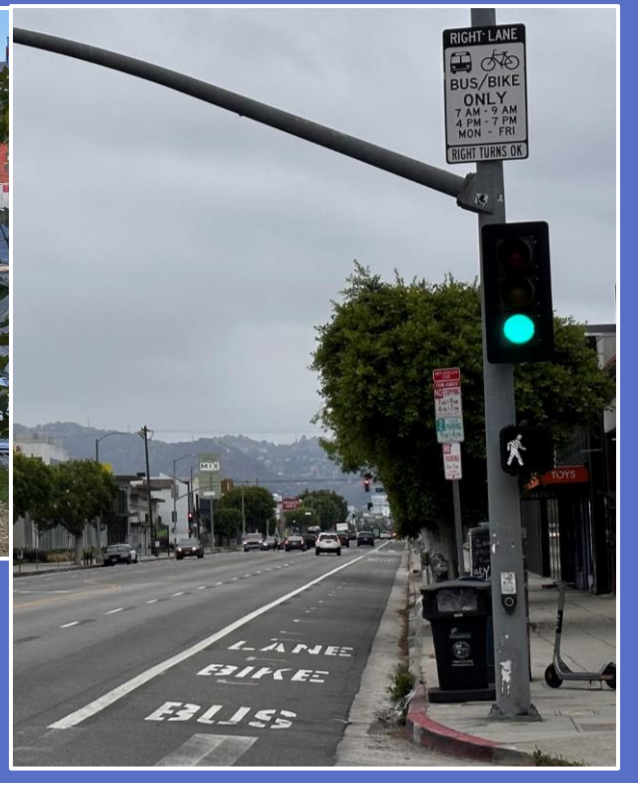
Miles
0 2 4

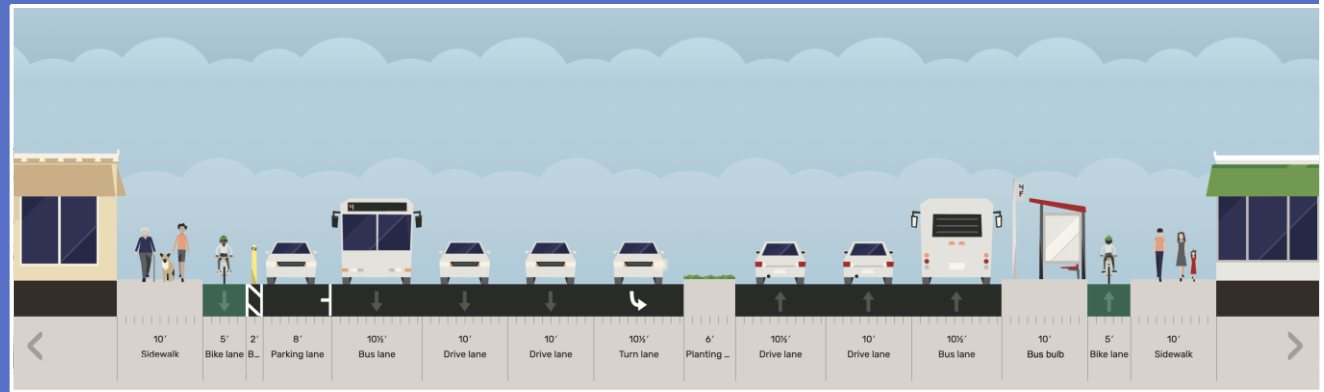
Bus Priority Lanes Update

Venice Bl (Line 33): Completed June 2023

- Bus speeds have improved up to 8 MPH faster, or up to 130% speed improvement
- On-time performance improved 54% to 79%, with 73% fewer late buses
- California Transportation Commission (CTC) recently awarded $6.5M for Phase 2 partnership with City of LA to upgrade 38 bus stops with expanded boarding islands and 27 bus shelters with lighting and real-time arrival displays

La Brea Av (Line 212): Completed August 2023





Bus Priority Lanes Update

Sepulveda Bl (Line 234) in SFV

Implementation began September 2023

Florence Av (Line 111)

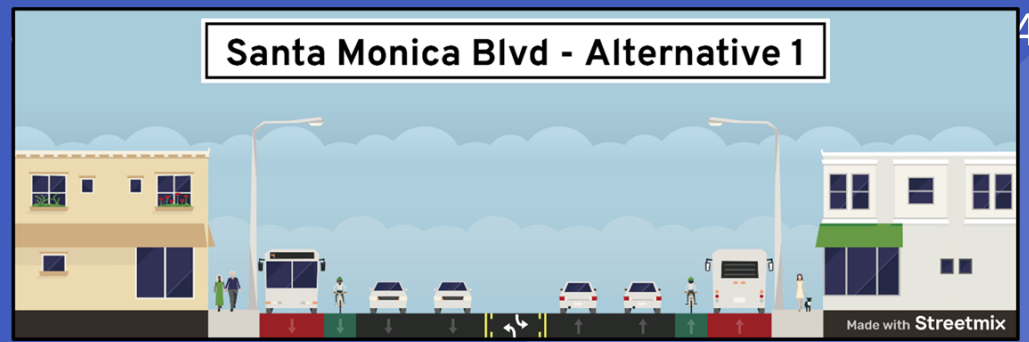
- In June 2023, StreetsLA completed nearly 2 miles of roadway repairs to prepare for bus lanes
- In September 2023, design work began for the bus lanes. Project timeline will be provided at the next quarterly update.

Wilshire Bl (Lines 20 & 720)

Upgraded segment between the City of Beverly Hills and Comstock Av from peak period to full-time hours

Santa Monica Bl (Line 4 & Big Blue Bus)

Partnering with Caltrans to implement a peak-period bus lane between the I-405 Fwy and Centinela Av,



Vermont Av (Lines 204 & 754)

Proposed northern segment between Sunset Bl and Wilshire Bl, and southern segment between Gage Av and Vermont/Athens C Line Station

- Typically, over 43,000 boardings per day, busiest bus corridor in the entire Metro system
- 84% do NOT own or have access to a car
- 87% below HUD's Very Low Income Level
- 93% ride Metro every day or near daily
- 96% are BIPOC

Community engagement slated for Fall/Winter 2023, design in Spring 2024, and implementation in Summer 2025

Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Transportation Improvement Program

Metro recently awarded $14.5M from the CTC Local Partnership Program (LPP) as part of a $31.13M program for tactical transit improvements, including:

- Transit Signal Priority expansion to 114 SELA intersections using state-of-the-art cloud-based technology, providing more green time for buses
- Purchase and installation of bus shelters with real time displays and improved lighting at 100 of the busiest bus stops that lack shelters today
- Purchase and installation of solar-powered lighting upgrades at 100 other bus stops that do not have shelters
- Operational and customer experience improvements at Norwalk C Line Station, Artesia A Line Station, and Compton A Line Station / MLK Transit Center