



# Information Item

Date: February 7, 2013

To: Mayor and City Council  
From: Edward F. King, Director of Transit Services  
Subject: Lincoln Boulevard Bus Only Lane

## **Introduction**

The following is an update on the Lincoln Boulevard Bus Only Lane Project.

## **Background**

On [September 27, 2005](#), Council adopted Ordinance Number 2171 amending Municipal Code Section 3.12.675 to restrict parking on Lincoln Boulevard for the creation of transit lanes for use by public transit buses, dial-a-ride vans, and charter party carriers operating pursuant to state licenses and permits. The ordinance created parking and traffic restrictions allowing for peak-hour bus only lanes along Lincoln Boulevard from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. weekdays, to enhance one-way peak directional curbside lane travel for buses from the Santa Monica Freeway to the city limit at Grant Street, a 1.2 mile segment of the Lincoln Boulevard corridor.

## **Discussion**

The concept of bus only lanes has become popular with the advent of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). A bus only lane application is one component of successful BRT deployment, providing buses exclusive use of a travel lane to improve schedule reliability and travel speed, as well as providing customers a more direct and faster trip than conventional fixed route bus service. In converse, bus only lanes constrict all other vehicular traffic to the remaining lanes during hours of operation and eliminate parking in the travel lane during the operation of designated BRT service.

The original staff analysis of the Lincoln Boulevard bus only lane completed in September 2005 identified a number of benefits including substantial trip time savings (over eight minutes per trip) as well as an increase in ridership due to the attractiveness of faster travel. The project scope recommended signage along each block impacted, street pavement lines delineating the lane while providing for right turns at intersections where permitted, and the elimination of parking at metered spaces during the peak periods. Parking enforcement, towing of parked vehicles and issuance of moving violation citations would be managed by the Police Department. Public outreach during this analysis indicated that there was overwhelming support by the community and businesses that were surveyed and contacted as part of the outreach process.

On June 4, 2012, Caltrans relinquished ownership of Lincoln Boulevard from the Santa Monica Freeway to the southern city limit at Grant Street. As part of the City's visioning process for improving the corridor, BBB staff participated in the community outreach process to ensure business owners and stakeholders along the corridor still supported the bus only lane project. During two community meetings, business owners expressed concern with the loss of parking, direct access to the fronts of their businesses and the overall impact of restricting traffic to buses only in the curbside lane. Further staff analysis revealed that due to inconsistencies in data calculations used to project the eight-minute one-way travel savings, the full eight minutes could not be achieved. The original analysis did not consider dwell times for boarding/alighting at the stops along the segment, nor did it consider additional ridership that has occurred on both the Rapid 3 and Route 3 over the last two years (FY12-13 YTD ridership on Route 3 has increased 3%, Rapid 3 ridership has increased 5%). Therefore, the one-way travel time savings would be closer to two to three minutes depending upon the trip time and traffic conditions.

## Regional Analysis

In 2011, at the request of the LA Metro Board of Directors, Metro staff developed a strategy for identifying potential corridors for Bus Rapid Transit through the LA County Bus Speed and Street Design Improvement Plan (CBSIP). As a result, 43 potential candidate corridors were identified for study. Lincoln Boulevard was a corridor identified in the initial CBSIP analysis. The CBSIP was conducted in partnership with Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) and Los Angeles County Department of Public Works with the primary objective to evaluate the most effective ways to implement bus speed improvements and improve passenger travel times and schedule reliability. The purpose was to identify near term, low cost, highly effective improvements that could be quickly implemented and lead to substantial bus speed improvements. Of the original 43 corridors identified for study, 18 have been recommended for further review and evaluation and it is anticipated that nine more will be added. The Lincoln Boulevard corridor is not on either of these final lists.

In December 2012, staff met with representatives of LA Metro and LADOT to advocate for including the Lincoln Boulevard corridor in the project and consideration of additional criterion in corridor evaluation, rather than just density and employment. Although Lincoln Boulevard would rank well in these categories, staff believes that additional data should be included in the analysis. As a result of this meeting it was agreed that staff will present data to Metro that will include congestion patterns in the corridor during peak and weekend periods, schedule adherence challenges, capacity on BBB Rapid and regular Route 3 buses, employment, and generators including business and schools (Santa Monica College) which would warrant further analysis. Lastly, Lincoln Boulevard will eventually be anchored by Los Angeles International Airport and the Metro Green Line Light Rail Station on the south and Metro Expo Light Rail and downtown Santa Monica on the north, which would dictate that the corridor will become even more congested by 2016. A solution is a bus only lane along the entire corridor rather than only one small segment.

## **Summary**

Dedicating a 1.2 mile bus only lane segment on one of the region's most heavily traveled corridors that is not supported by the business community nor significantly reduce travel time is not consistent with BRT bus only travel lane industry best practice. The overall public benefit of a very short bus only travel lane does not significantly reduce the travel time for customers riding the service compared to the impact of traffic delays created in the segment. Therefore, the implementation of the Lincoln Boulevard Bus Only Lane will be delayed until such time that a more comprehensive regional planning approach for the entire corridor is studied with regional partners. Staff will participate on the CPSIP team comprised of LA Metro and LADOT staffs to recommend that the entire Lincoln Boulevard Corridor from the Santa Monica Freeway to Los Angeles International Airport and the Green Line Light Rail Station be incorporated into the CBSIP analysis. The solution to faster travel times, reducing congestion and providing better service to the riding public and potential riders is to provide BRT peak bus only travel lanes along the entire Lincoln Boulevard corridor.

**Prepared By:** Edward F. King, Director of Transit Services