

October 28, 2009

CITY OF RANCHO CUCAMONGA  
CITY COUNCIL,  
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT,  
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

A special joint meeting of the Rancho Cucamonga City Council/Fire Protection District/Redevelopment Agency and the Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, October 28, 2009, at Central Park, Etiwanda Hall, located at 11200 Base Line Road, Rancho Cucamonga, California. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Mayor Donald J. Kurth, M.D.

Present were Agencymembers/Boardmembers/Councilmembers: Sam Spagnolo, Diane Williams, Vice Chairman/Vice President/Mayor Pro Tem L. Dennis Michael and Chairman/President/Mayor Donald J. Kurth. Agencymember/Boardmember/Councilmember Rex Gutierrez was absent.

Present were Planning Commissioners: Howdysshell, Stewart, Wimberly and Vice Chair Lou Munoz. Chair Richard Fletcher was absent.

Staff present were: Jack Lam, City Manager; John Gillison, Deputy City Manager/Administrative Services; Linda Daniels, Acting Deputy City Manager/Community Development; James Troyer, Planning Director; Corky Nicholson, Assistant Planning Director; Larry Henderson, Principal Planner; Lois Schrader, Planning Commission Secretary; Mark Steuer, Engineering Director; Jon Gillespie, Traffic Engineer; Trang Huynh, Building & Safety Official; and Kathryn L. Scott, Assistant City Clerk.

Also present were: Sam Gennawey, Project Manager, Hogle-Ireland; Mike Bates, President, Mobility Group; and from Omnitrans arriving @ 4:00 pm: Rohan Kuruppu, Director of Planning & Development Services and Brett Clavio, Planning Project Manager.

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B. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

No communication was made from the public.

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C. ITEM OF DISCUSSION

1. JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING REGARDING FUTURE REGIONAL BUS RAPID TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES.

Upon the introduction by Jack Lam, City Manager, James Troyer, Planning Director, summarized the staff report, clarifying that this is an informational meeting regarding Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Sam Gennawey, Project Manager for the City's General Plan, of Hogle-Ireland, Inc., gave a brief introduction of the BRT system developed by Omnitrans, the San Bernardino Express (sbX), and introduced Mike Bates, President of Mobility Group.

Mike Bates, President, Mobility Group, provided some context and an introduction to the General Plan Vision for Transportation, the Key Mobility Element Issues, the Complete Streets concept and the Concept Transit Plan (PowerPoint Presentation on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Rohan Kuruppu, Director of Planning & Development Services @ Omnitrans presented the PowerPoint presentation (on file in the City Clerk's Office) on the BRT System highlighting:

- Community Based Planning
- Systemwide Plan (Proposed Systemwide Transit Corridors)
- BRT Schedule
- Features of BRT
- Transit Project in the Area
- How BRT helps
- How BRT helps to create TOD (Transit-Oriented Development)
- How to get there (forming of a Working Group, or Project Development Team, that represents the different Cities and Stakeholder along the corridor (Cities of Montclair, Upland, Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana, Rialto and San Bernardino); Destinations: Victoria Gardens, San Antonio Hospital and Metrolink Stations.

Mr. Kuruppu, Director of Planning & Development Services @ Omnitrans, stated that in the design process, one of the criteria established is that traffic on the regular streets cannot worsen; it has to be improved or stay the same. He added with respect to landscaping, local preferences are maintained.

Mr. Kuruppu stated that the long-range transit plan is the single most important element, and then the partnering of neighboring cities, as it has to connect to regional transit. He said it cannot just operate within Rancho Cucamonga. He said it needs to travel to Montclair, Upland, Fontana, Rialto and San Bernardino. Mr. Kuruppu added that a very important step in the planning process is that the transit has to cross political boundaries and get people from residential areas to businesses, activities, schools and colleges. He said it has to be a collective effort, so an inter-agency agreement is initiated for the corridor to set expectations, etc. Mr. Kuruppu's presentation included photos of the bus transit system in Cleveland, OH, and Eugene, OR. He said they were both successful projects; the basic components are dedicated lanes, stations, pre-paid fare, local art, etc.

In response to Mr. Gennaway's question regarding the impact the BRT would have, assuming that the system was using mixed-flow lanes, Mr. Kuruppu replied as traffic congestion increases, all operations slow down. If people are stuck in traffic, the transit is also stuck in traffic. He said the average speed can drop to 8 to 10 miles per hour. He said on a dedicated lane, the operating speed could be 25 to 30 miles per hour. Mr. Kuruppu stated this is when it becomes more attractive and more effective. He said for the same amount of equipment, double the frequency can be provided because it's operating twice as fast as any other bus in a mixed-flow lane. He said the magic formula for transit is reliability, and when operated on dedicated lanes, it becomes very reliable.

In response to Mayor ProTem Michael's question regarding the possibility of transitioning from mixed-use lanes to a dedicated lane, Mr. Kuruppu said that is one of the beauties of BRT—it can grow/evolve. He said BRT can start small ("BRT lite"), with some mixed-flow lanes, some dedicated stations and eventually grow into a more productive, more robust system. He said the most important thing to realize is planning. He said most agencies that build BRT or rail are in a crisis situation, when there's gridlock and complete decay of quality of life; and then they want to build rail to solve the problem at which point the cost is ten times more in order to build something integrated or underground. He said FTA (Federal Transit Administration) is promoting and rewarding forward thinking; to plan correctly, be cost effective and build up to that optimum point gradually.

Councilmember Spagnolo asked if it would be a problem if one city doesn't want to have a designated lane and another city does.

Mr. Kuruppu confirmed that it would not be a problem. He said a good example is the “E” Street, 16-mile Corridor in San Bernardino, which goes through San Bernardino to Loma Linda. He said the Loma Linda section is going to operate in a mixed slow lane because they still have not finalized their plans for a new street to be built. He said on their next phase, they will build a new alignment through Loma Linda.

Mr. Kuruppu answered affirmatively to Mayor Pro Tem Michael’s question that the same application could move in the city where it moves from a dedicated lane to a non-dedicated, shared lane. He said an example is Eugene to Springfield; they both agreed to dedicated lanes, but the County did not agree. He said that is like a 2-mile segment between the two cities that operates on a mixed-flow lane, so it can work. He said now they realize the mistake.

Mr. Bates, President, Mobility Group, stated that different segments of different characteristics are not necessarily uniform throughout the whole system. He commented that there are areas where the lanes fit and there are areas where they may not. He said those systems have shown even that when the bus is in mixed-flow traffic, which is not ideal to the system, but there are still ways to enhance it. He added it’s still operating more rapidly than a conventional bus service and it is not stopping every block the way a local service stops. Mr. Bates said there are a lot of traffic techniques, signal pre-emptions, so when the bus is coming down the corridor, it will either extend a green signal or advance a green signal so that the bus doesn’t have to stop, and the adjacent traffic doesn’t have to stop. He said here are things called queue jumpers, where, if you do have the room at certain locations, you can provide just a short dedicated lane to get the bus to the head of the queue and send it through the intersection ahead of the traffic. He said there are a lot of things you can do if you’re in a situation where you can only operate in mixed-flow traffic.

Mr. Kuruppu answered, in response to Councilmember Spagnolo, in those cities with the established RBT systems, that limited stops or no stops at all are a local decision made during the planning stages.

Mr. Bates stated that Los Angeles has had local express service for many years, and it has introduced BRT on a number of routes in mixed-flow traffic, which is above the express services. He said it’s tiered; that you can take the local service that stops at every block, or you can take conventional express service which wouldn’t have the equipment to pre-empt the traffic signals, or you can take the premium service, which is the BRT. He said they have been able to interweave those different types of service very successfully.

Councilmember Williams, referring to slide based on the *FTA Small Start Planning and Project Development Guidelines*, asked if the Year 1 starting point would be 2010 for the City of Rancho Cucamonga with the operations commencing approximately 2017.

Mr. Kuruppu answered that if this body makes the decision that they do want a bus rapid transit (BRT) system and desires to start at the Foothill corridor, that would be an approximate timeline unless the City starts at a very light scale and then graduates to a full-blown BRT, at which point you could start much earlier.

Planning Commissioner Howdyshell asked if anything will be initiated to look at the current system in place with respect to ridership, because she personally has witnessed an empty bus that travels east and west on Banyan and an empty bus traveling north and south on Milliken several times a day.

Mr. Kuruppu stated that they monitor every trip, every direction throughout the area with automated passenger counters. He said, however, the ridership does vary depending on the time of day and direction; in the morning buses going northbound are full, but when they’re coming down after dropping people off, they are basically empty. He said travel patterns change, just like the freeway; going to LA in the morning is busy, but eastbound is slow. He said that’s how a typical radial route works—goes to one destination and comes back. He said identifying the corridors and supporting the land uses around those stops are key to eliminating those unproductive trips.

Brett Clavio, Omnitrans Planning Project Manager, stated that all the rails are monitored on a monthly basis, if not daily basis, and analytical reports are received that show how the route is performing against the standards. One of those standards is a 20% fare box recovery rate; so, if example, you see a bus on Base Line or Milliken

that is empty, if it remains empty for any long period time, that route will eventually get scrapped if it has not met the 20% fare box recovery ratio. He said from time to time throughout the day a bus might be empty, but overall, it does serve that neighborhood, and a lot of people are riding that route. He added that Foothill Boulevard is probably the second most productive route out of the whole system, with 15-minute frequencies.

Sam Gennawey, Project Manager, of Hogle-Ireland, Inc., added that with respect to the General Plan, SB 375 is a new law mandated by the State of California. He said State standards will take another couple of years, well beyond the General Plan's approval, but the idea behind SB 375 is consistent with SKAG's compass program, which is the nexus between housing, land use and transportation. He said for cities to be able to obtain transit funds in the future, they will have to demonstrate that they are taking care of that nexus of issues. Mr. Gennawey said due to the land uses on Foothill Boulevard, mostly on the west side, that have been enhanced to allow for mixed use development and more flexibility for development that would be compatible with bus rapid transit, we are going to be able to satisfy well in advance of the State's demands for SB 375 for Rancho Cucamonga's General Plan. He said the major growth within the City is focused just on Foothill Boulevard, which is a way of keeping Foothill Boulevard a viable corridor for now and in the long term; and supported with bus rapid transit, the most advantageous stops have been identified and the land uses around those stops have been studied. He said it really brings everything together the way that the State has commanded.

Mayor Kurth stated we take a great deal of pride in our City and all of us and all of our staff has worked very hard for many years to make our City what it is today, and further commented that the architecture and design of the overall plan should be up to our standards and should fit with what we do here in Rancho Cucamonga.

Mr. Kuruppu responded that it has to be thought out very carefully, as we are trying to accomplish unique identity throughout the San Bernardino Valley. They want people to know, once they see the station or the sign, that it is a "sbX line, and that is what drives ridership, an important factor in driving the passenger confidence. He said that is one of the disadvantages in operating the buses. He said the rail kind of identity through the Valley gives a high level of confidence, and that is what we are trying to sell. He said you can put the local identity to it. He said that Omnitrans does not try to push something on the City that the City does not like. He said this should show the City's character, as Omnitrans want the City and the residents to like it.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Michael, Mr. Kuruppu said during the planning and design phase, Omnitrans is basically hands off, as they just guide the process and advise on the pros and cons. He said the City will be making the decisions, and Omnitrans will not interfere in that process. He added that the local decision-making to come up with the locally preferred ordinances is 100% the City's responsibility. He added that Omnitrans will need a schedule to stop the bus to load and unload passengers. He added that the two-year planning process exercise has to be done well, as the City wants a nice identity. He said the City will need to work with the community groups and businesses. He said they spend over \$700,000 in doing that phase. He said if it's going to be an effective process, you have to give more; it's expensive and time consuming, but in the long term, it will pay off.

In response to Councilmember Williams' question of who foots the bill, Mr. Kuruppu answered that Omnitrans generally drives the process and pays for it, but that we have jointly filed an application for a planning grant.

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Chairman/President/Mayor Donald J. Kurth left the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

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Commissioner Stewart asked about the grant process and how the funding mechanism work.

Mr. Kuruppu responded that the local match requirement for the Federal portion is a 20% local match. The City can contribute in the form of plan checks, development and construction fees, etc. He said part of the City's contribution might be to have a dedicated staff to review construction documents, station locations, right of ways, etc. He said it does not have to be cash.

Commission Stewart asked if the Federal money will dry up and questioned if it will be around five to ten years from now.

Mr. Kuruppu replied that there is a very firm commitment from the Federal Government to build a state of the art transit system that can really meet this country's needs by 2015. The transportation system needs to drive the economic engine, and that's their vision. He said the primary motor travel in metropolitan areas will shift, and that is going to happen whether we like it or not; it's an economic decision. He said it will not be cost effective for us to build elevated or double-deck freeways to our urban centers. The market itself will drive this; so whoever has the system in place today will be the most economically viable place for the future. We are a metropolitan area and we are going to see the fallout from the Los Angeles area. We will become the winning cities in the future and because of the lead time that is required, the decisions have to be made today. Mr. Kuruppu said transit needs to play an important role in the future. As a City, he said it is important to identify which corridors to put the transit; and, if done properly, then the suburban areas can be preserved. He said you can have a quality of life and still make this happen. He said the Foothill corridor cannot go wrong; it's working well today; the densities are there; it's a winner.

Commissioner Howdysshell asked how extensive of an evaluation does Omnitrans perform before determining the amount of money that it is going to take to really put a system in place that may not be beneficial, and what components of that system would be the most beneficial versus others.

Mr. Kuruppu said this is a "win-win" situation. The residents and businesses benefit.

Planning Commission Vice Chair Lou Munoz felt there is a lot of value to having a city that is connected to itself; and said there's value in those seats filled if the terminus is somewhere where people need to go, generally work, and heading westbound. In referencing the slide on the *Proposed Systemwide Transit Corridors*, Vice Chair Munoz asked what thought has Omnitrans put into planning where this is going to go, and, what are the plans regarding the area north of the valley, which has not been addressed (the Foothill Corridor-Pasadena).

Mr. Kuruppu said they are very good at travel forecasting models that can analyze the origins, destinations and the travel patterns. He said it is the job of SKAG & SANBAG to collect this data and do the surveys, and they have the models that can project the origins, destinations and the demand. He said until two years ago, they could not forecast the transit usage in the Valley; it was just by experience that they did the planning and decision making. Mr. Kuruppu said Omnitrans does the transit component. He said it is the first in the region to be actually approved by the Federal Transit Administration because they do a lot of validation before they commit to \$150 or \$200 million, and they make sure that these things are clear. He added that there are a lot of tools available to do that projection, and that is how the long range transit plan for the entire County is built on—that data base.

Councilmember Williams said one of the things that intrigues her about the Foothill Corridor and looking into the future, is that we have an opportunity now to get things in place and be ready to go. She said along Foothill corridor the City has more and more workforce housing. She commented that a tremendous number of people would have the opportunity for employment that they don't have right now, because it takes so long to get somewhere. Mrs. Williams said it is discouraging, costly and timely if you have to spend a couple hours getting to work on a bus.

Councilmember Williams said we need to know if people would ride if there were opportunities to get to different points, such as Ontario Mills, and the Airport and distribution centers, which are huge employment centers. She asked if models were available to reference. She said we need to appeal to the young people, as they need to have the mindset that they do not need to have two cars. She said as sustainability of cities and our earth become more to the forefront, society will change, and she thinks the time will come when it will be frowned upon to have more than one car.

Mr. Kuruppu replied that a faster growing segment of our ridership is the young people. He said the young people are also far more sensitive to the environment than the previous generation. They are into recycling,

transit, walking, and they are far more cautious and conscious of the environment than anybody else. The environment is driving that entire segment. He felt we do not need to do anything to convince them to use the transit. He said with their I-pods and having WI FI on the system, they will be happy customers.

Mayor Pro Tem Michael said it is important they everybody understands the futuristic view of what the vision is. Mayor Pro Tem Michael said, as a member of the Omnitrans Board, that the public does not like it whenever Omnitrans has had to reduce routes. He thinks everybody wants to get on a bus where there are like people riding the bus. He said if he got on a bus in an area that did not make him feel comfortable, he would probably shy away. He felt that down the road for Rancho Cucamonga this system will bring the workforce on the buses and the people who want to go to Victoria Gardens to lunch, etc.

Mr. Gennewey said he would venture to guess that most of the first time users for the rapid transit will be those who try to get to Victoria Gardens on the weekend, and then they'll become hooked, as this mode is going to give them an advantage over the car. He added that the destinations that were selected for this city are the ones that are going to help drive the success of the transit system, which is one of the reasons the Omnitrans staff are excited to be here today.

Mr. Kuruppu, in answer to the question of how we can forecast ridership, stated that people will be behave very similar as they do to light rail. He said as far as forecasting at a block level, we have very good data for each business size, square footage, etc.

Mayor Pro Tem Michael asked as we move forward, should the City wait for development to occur that will bring in the ridership or should all the stations, that you believe you need, be installed.

Mr. Kuruppu answered that his recommendation is to send a very strong message and not to go very small.

Mayor Pro Tem Michael said the City Council and Planning Commission want to leave here in giving some degree of direction on this subject with respect to the City's General Plan.

Mr. Gennawey said he would recommend at this time acknowledgement that Omnitrans and the City should continue to work together in the development of bus rapid transit, that all alternatives need to be analyzed, but no decisions have to be made at this time. He said that within the circulation plan we are going to make a recommendation that the system go through the heart of Victoria Gardens, only because that is taking it off of Foothill Boulevard. He said that is the one major initiative that we want to insist upon for the City. He said Mike Bates and Jon Gillespie have worked together on determining where they believe the other stations would be appropriate in the community based on the various land uses that they are looking at and also the sensitivity of the surrounding neighborhoods. Within the General Plan, Mr. Gennawey said we would be looking at including BRT in the Plan, to use the proposed stations as a negotiating point and, then, if additional language for standards need to be added for station design, etc., it can be put in the Plan. He said what he is really trying to avoid is bus rapid transit coming through Rancho Cucamonga, cause that will make the Plan very complicated. We just want a thumbs up to go in that direction.

Rohan Kuruppu concurred with the direction, stating that would be the key first step.

Mayor Pro Tem Michael stated that from the standpoint of the Planning Commission and the City Council, we will move forward to bring this into reality downstream.

Mr. Gennawey stated that Mobility Group and Hogle-Ireland, speaking on behalf of Rancho Cucamonga, will only do what is in the interest of the City of Rancho Cucamonga, and will work closely with Omnitrans to make sure that the City is getting what it needs to get out of the system.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Michael, Mr. Kruppu stated that once this decision is made and the ground gets approved, Omnitrans will take the lead on forming the Working Group with the surrounding cities.

Mr. Gennawey stated that Hogle-Ireland is working on the Rialto General Plan, and that bus rapid transit is part

of their City's General Plan. He said Upland is also updating their General Plan at this time, and he understands that the BRT is becoming part of their General Plan as well.

Mr. Gennawey stated that you have to be forward leaning to think beyond the political life and where you are going to go, as this is a wonderful opportunity to get on the ground floor of an exciting new technology before you get in the position of trying to fix a crisis. He said with careful planning now, we'll be able to prevent the crises, and yet enhance the value of the Foothill Boulevard corridor and keep it a very vital corridor. He said that is critical to this General Plan.

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D. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem L. Dennis Michael adjourned the meeting at 5:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathryn L. Scott, CMC  
Assistant City Clerk

Planning Commission:

Approved by City Council/Fire Protection District/Redevelopment Agency: November 18, 2009