

## SBCTAC STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** North County Transit Plan – Plan Update and Coordination Scenarios

**MEETING DATE:** March 12, 2014

**AGENDA ITEM:** 5

**STAFF CONTACT:** Peter Brown

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive update on North County Transit Plan (NCTP) and provide input on analysis of four coordination scenarios.

### **DISCUSSION:**

In 2013, the SBCAG Board appointed a NCTP Steering Committee consisting of the North County city managers and the County Administrator to assist SBCAG staff in guiding the plan's development. Other key stakeholders include transit managers and advisory committee members. On March 3, 2014, the NCTP Steering Committee met and NCTP consultant AECOM presented the key findings from the existing conditions report as well as four potential coordinating scenarios for transit services to be evaluated as part of the update process. SBCAG staff also provided some background on the NCTP and process to date.

Included below is a summary of the feedback received from the NCTP Steering Committee as well as the four coordination scenarios discussed and next steps in the process.

### **Steering Committee Feedback**

The Steering Committee received a presentation on the plan background, existing conditions report and four potential coordinating scenarios. After discussing the scenarios in detail, the committee provided comments and generally supported SBCAG and the AECOM consultant team proceeding to evaluate the four scenarios discussed. One Steering Committee member expressed reservations about the practicality of the fourth scenario (single North County transit agency), but the Steering Committee overall supported including this scenario in order to evaluate a complete range of options.

### **Coordination Scenarios**

The purpose of the NCTP update is to explore options to improve transit delivery and rider experience and achieve cost savings and operational efficiencies. To accomplish this purpose, the update process must define a range of coordination scenarios to study. Evaluation of a range of coordination options is intended to provide decision-makers with information and support informed decision-making, but does not represent a commitment to any outcome.

Consistent with the adopted 2006 NCTP, which recommended exploring a continuum of longer-term alternatives for organizing transit services in the North County, consultant AECOM and SBCAG staff developed four coordination scenarios for Steering Committee consideration. The four coordination scenarios discussed by the Steering Committee are described in outline form below.

Functional coordination: Maximize resources within existing operating and governance structures. Improve customer experience. Consider the following.

- Service expansion
- Schedule coordination (local and regional)
- Unified transfers, fare policies and media
- Consistent, comprehensive public information
- Marketing and branding
- Joint procurement (operating contracts, capital purchases, maintenance functions)
- Planning and studies (short-range transit plans)

Service management: Leverage larger systems to manage and oversee smaller operations on voluntary basis.

- Services maintain local identity
- Local governing and policy structure retained
- Potential for reduced administrative resources
- May be achieved through MOU or joint powers authority (JPA)

Merger of interregional and intercity transit services: Create a single operator for intercity and interregional services. Local transit operators remain independent.

- Creates unified identity for regional services (The Breeze, CAE, Wine Country Express, Cuyama Transit)
- May be achieved through a new regional MOU or JPA
- Local transit operators may voluntarily join regional MOU/JPA
- Facilitates regional scheduling and fare coordination
- Potential for administrative efficiencies and cost savings

Single North County transit agency: Reduce complexity and achieve operational efficiencies and cost savings through a single North County entity.

- May be created through JPA or North County transit district
- Ensures schedule, fare, and operational coordination
- Marshals broad resource base in single service provider
- Large geographic area will continue to define operations, however, multiple facilities required and unique local service areas will remain.

### **Next steps, goal setting and performance objectives**

As a next step, SBCAG staff and the consultant team are developing a set of plan goals, objectives and evaluation criteria in order to evaluate each of the scenarios above. Scenarios will be measured by their ability to meet stated goals in terms of both quantitative and qualitative

measures. SBCTAC and the Steering Committee will be asked to provide feedback on the draft goals and objectives. The updated project schedule is included in Attachment 1.

Once goals, objectives and evaluation criteria have been defined, the project consultant will proceed to more specifically define and evaluate the scenarios, identifying the pros and cons of each scenario, including potential costs savings, service improvements and considerations for implementation. Evaluation of scenarios will provide a basis for informed discussion of alternatives and ultimate selection by the SBCAG Board of a recommendation for implementation to be included in the final plan. Although the final plan will provide a recommendation for implementation, no change to existing transit service or organization can happen without the support of affected jurisdictions and transit operators.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Updated project schedule

# North Santa Barbara County Transit Plan Project Schedule

WORK TASKS	Fall 2013	Winter 2014	May-14	June-14	July-14	August-14	September-14	October-14	November-14
Task 1: Project Administration									
Task 2: Collect Data									
Task 3: Analysis of Existing Conditions									
Task 4: Public and Stakeholder Outreach									
Task 5: Forecast Transportation Needs and Ridership									
Task 6: Goals & Objectives, Performance Measures & Standards									
Task 7: Organizational Structure & Potential Service Scenarios									
Task 8: Recommended Organizational Structure and Service Changes									
Task 9: Develop Implementation Plan									
Task 10: Prepare & Submit Draft Plan									
Task 11: Prepare & Submit Final Plan									

<b>Project and Committee Meetings</b>	Kick-off		Committees	Steering Committee	Steering Committee			Committees	SBCAG Board and Committees		
<b>Public Workshops</b>			Workshop 1			Workshop 2				Workshop 3	
<b>Interim and Technical Memoranda</b>			Task 3		Tasks 5,6	Tasks 7		Task 8	Task 9	Draft Plan	Final Plan