
Director's Policy

Number: DP-27-R1

Effective Date: November 15, 2013

Supersedes: February 2007

TITLE Bus Rapid Transit Implementation Support

POLICY

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) recognizes and supports the concept and implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as a potentially cost-effective strategy to maximize people throughput (emphasizing the movement of people, not just vehicles), reduce traveler delay, increase capacity, and foster energy savings on the California State Highway System (SHS), as well as on conventional highways. Caltrans will work closely with local jurisdictions, regional transportation planning agencies, transit operators, and other stakeholders to plan, develop, implement, and advocate for BRT systems.

This policy is consistent with existing directives to reach context-sensitive solutions through a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach involving all stakeholders in the development of the transportation infrastructure. This policy supports Caltrans' goal of Mobility – Maximize transportation system performance and accessibility.

“BRT can best be described as a combination of facility, systems, and vehicle investments that convert conventional bus services into a fixed-facility transit service, greatly increasing their efficiency and effectiveness to the end user.” [Cited from the Federal Transit Administration, BRT Demonstration Program, December 2002.] BRT typically includes bus services that are, at a minimum, faster than traditional ‘local bus’ service and, at a maximum, include grade-separated bus operations. Features of BRT systems may include transit signal priority, dedicated lanes, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) drop ramps, faster passenger boarding, faster fare collection, and a system image that is uniquely identifiable. BRT represents a way to improve mobility at relatively low cost through incremental investment in a combination of bus infrastructure, equipment, operational improvements, and technology.

INTENDED RESULTS

The intended result of this policy is improved mobility options through the full integration of BRT as an investment alternative into system and comprehensive corridor planning documents and project development processes. BRT will provide any person in California with a degree of mobility that is in balance with other values.

The intent of this policy is to clearly establish a corporate expectation for conducting business between Caltrans and local BRT agencies as follows:

- To quickly optimize BRT on Caltrans facilities where appropriate to increase person throughput and capacity, and reduce traveler delay on State highways efficiently and affordably.
- To allow flexibility in applying design standards to support BRT, but only if consistent with the operational and safety needs of other modes of highway traffic.
- To establish an internal process to resolve issues and conflicts that may arise when proposals utilize or intersect with Caltrans facilities.
- To formally partner with planning and transit agencies, usually in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding, Memorandum of Agreement, and/or Cooperative Agreement, when integrating BRT with Caltrans facilities.
- To provide training opportunities for Caltrans personnel on the successful integration of BRT as a modal alternative on the SHS and within State rights-of-way.
- To develop a process that identifies and advocates innovative and inclusive approaches that reflect BRT as an emerging technology.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Director:

- Promotes BRT implementation.
- Recognizes and highlights individuals, teams, and projects that advance the goals of this policy, and encourages staff to conduct and participate in internal and external meetings, and conferences to expand their knowledge of BRT solutions.

Chief Deputy Director:

- Implements and coordinates policy in a timely manner.

Deputy Directors for Planning and Modal Programs, Project Delivery, and Maintenance and Operations:

- Collaborate in updating guidance for Caltrans to facilitate the implementation of BRT strategies on the SHS and within State rights-of-way when feasible.
- Establish an administrative process to facilitate appropriate implementation of BRT strategies and resolve conflicts between BRT needs and established standards.
- Update guidance for districts to consider BRT as a viable alternative when warranted, as a part of the districts' comprehensive corridor and system planning and improvement strategies for all urban State routes.

District Directors:

- Ensure coordination with local planning and operating agencies for the purpose of identifying BRT potential.
- Ensure environmental scans and concept reports for corridor plans include current and future BRT issues and concerns, as applicable.
- Recognize that consistent with BRT flexibility, planning and operating agencies across the State approach BRT very differently with some concentrating on surface streets, while others focus on major freeway projects.
- Ensure initial district reviews take into consideration overall multimodal system benefits for the various regions; as well as community goals, plans and values.
- Appoint a person responsible for district BRT activities, in those districts that have existing or planned BRT systems.
- Ensure the person responsible for BRT activities has sufficient knowledge of BRT systems and status within the district to effectively represent the district in meetings with external agencies.
- Consider BRT or transit-related mitigation measures to address impacts to the SHS that are determined through the Intergovernmental Review process.
- Ensure that project initiation documents for capacity-increasing projects in urban areas consider as appropriate BRT as a viable alternative.
- Assign resources, as needed, for the successful implementation of this policy in their respective districts.
- Empower the person responsible for BRT activities to liaise between district Traffic Operations (Freeway Operations/HOV) and transit operators to leverage transit utilization of existing facilities.

Chiefs, Divisions of Mass Transportation and Traffic Operations:

- Take a leadership role in advancing the knowledge and acceptance of BRT within Caltrans, and take additional steps to institutionalize and advance this technology.
- Update BRT Handbook as needed to illustrate Caltrans' policy and support for BRT.
- Ensure the BRT Handbook is available to elected officials, city and county staff, local planning and transit agencies, and the public.
- Take a leadership role in developing, training and implementing transit model technology to be applied on corridor level of service analysis.
- Assign resources, as needed, for the successful implementation of this policy in their respective divisions.

Chief Counsel, Legal Division:

- Designates legal staff to assist other Caltrans staff in addressing BRT issues and legal aspects of BRT implementation, including statutes that may require change.

Chief, Division of Research, Innovation, and System Information:

- Conducts research, develops operational techniques, and promotes use of Intelligent Transportation Systems technology to enable safe and efficient deployment of BRT.
- Revises procedural documents to facilitate the application of BRT solutions.

Chief, Division of Training:

- Coordinates BRT training, with input from planning and transit agencies, and considers local and national training programs to implement this effort.

Employees:

- Assist Caltrans in providing quality and timely products and services to the people of the State of California. Every employee is responsible for meeting Caltrans' commitments.

APPLICABILITY

All Caltrans employees involved in the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operations of the transportation system. All BRT projects within State-owned rights-of-way, projects that may affect the operations of State facilities.


MALCOLM DOUGHERTY
Director

11/15/2013
Date Signed