



April 6, 2020

To: Regional Planning and Highways Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Beach Boulevard Corridor Study Final Report

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell Johnson", is written over the "From:" line of the email header.

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority, in partnership with the California Department of Transportation and local agencies, have completed a corridor study for Beach Boulevard in February 2020. Study efforts, findings, and next steps are presented as information for the Board of Directors.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

Beach Boulevard is approximately 21 miles long, extending from Pacific Coast Highway in the City of Huntington Beach to Whittier Boulevard in the City of La Habra and traverses through the cities of Anaheim, Buena Park, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, La Habra, Stanton, Westminster, and the County of Orange. In October 2018, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 12 and local agencies, initiated the Beach Boulevard Corridor Study (Study) to address opportunities for multimodal investments. Therefore, the primary objective of this Study was to collaboratively develop a comprehensive multimodal transportation vision for the Beach Boulevard corridor to address existing and anticipated future demands for local and regional travel.

The Board of Directors (Board) was provided with a Study update on September 9, 2019. This update included discussion of the Purpose and Need Statement, baseline conditions, draft toolbox of recommended improvements, public engagement Phase 1, and preparations for public engagement Phase 2.

Since that time, the Study team completed Phase 2 of public engagement, developed a refined set of recommended improvements, and completed the Study report. The outcomes of these efforts are discussed below.

Discussion

The following Study goals were established early on as part of the Purpose and Need Statement to help guide development of the vision and recommendations for the Beach Boulevard Corridor:

- Improve travel time, reliability, and convenience of transit,
- Reduce impediments to walking and biking along and across the corridor,
- Maintain vehicular throughput and access to and from the regional freeways network,
- Provide a safe and accessible environment for all user groups, and
- Support local land-use planning with improved mobility options.

From these goals, potential improvement options were identified and categorized by mode (transit, pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicle). These elements were analyzed and refined to create a “toolbox” of improvement options that reflect input from the corridor agencies and the public. The solutions range from enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities to improved signal synchronization. Elements identified in the Beach Boulevard Improvements Toolbox provide flexibility for corridor agencies to address needs and priorities with respect to the five Study goals. The Toolbox Elements Summary Table is provided as Attachment A. Furthermore, the adaptability of these elements allows them to address unique circumstances, as well as more common environments throughout the corridor.

Additionally, the Study includes five case studies that illustrate how the toolbox could be used to implement the vision of an enhanced multimodal corridor along Beach Boulevard. The case studies also demonstrate how combining improvement options can provide significant benefits to travelers on Beach Boulevard.

Implementation of the various improvement projects identified can support current and future multimodal circulation and access. Corridor agencies should now build on these concepts by developing more detailed local and regional multi-modal projects to address the various corridor needs. The Study also considered the long-term potential of recent trends in mobility services, transportation and land-use planning, urban design, and economic development to support Study goals. The application and adoption of long-term trends such as mobility hubs, connected corridors, microtransit, and micromobility could have a significant impact on the design and operation of the Beach Boulevard Corridor.

Public Engagement

Given the size of the corridor, the Study included extensive public outreach in two separate public engagement phases during 2019. Phase 1 occurred in the spring to inform key stakeholders and the general public about the Study purpose, as well as to identify improvement opportunities (Attachment B). Phase 2 occurred in the fall to determine how receptive the public would be to modify their travel behavior in response to the proposed improvements (Attachment C).

The primary outreach strategy for both phases was the promotion and use of online surveys. A variety of tactics were used to promote the survey, including 17 local pop-up events, city briefings, presentations to community organizations, print and electronic notices, onboard bus outreach, and social media platforms. In addition, staff conducted individual interviews with corridor agencies and participated in the Meet on Beach open streets event held in November 2019. Staff also presented to the Renew Beach Boulevard Coalition, which focuses on aesthetic improvements and public safety along the corridor.

A total of 2,300 online survey responses were collected over the course of the Study. Surveys were conducted in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese and were also provided in written format at events. Listed below are the top two corridor improvements identified by respondents for each mode from the Phase 1 survey:

- Vehicles
 - Optimize traffic signals
 - Extend turn pockets
- Transit
 - Enhance bus stop amenities
 - Build a high-capacity transit system
- Bike
 - Provide barrier-separated bikeways
 - Add bike lanes on parallel streets
- Walk
 - Add sidewalks where there are gaps
 - Add pedestrian bridges

Responses to the Phase 2 survey indicated that usage of each mode (other than vehicular) may increase if the following were provided:

- Transit
 - Improved transit travel time using transit-only lanes or technology to enhance traffic signal timing

- **Bike**
 - Allow biking on sidewalks or provide barrier-separated bikeways were provided
 - Add bike lanes to parallel streets or improve connections to and from Beach Boulevard were improved
- **Walk**
 - Encourage walking with better lighting or wider sidewalks, improve street crossings with enhanced crosswalks, provide more frequent crossing locations, and reduce crosswalk distances by extending sidewalks or curbs

Public input was used not only to screen the toolbox and identify popular improvements options, but also provided to corridor agencies as a resource. Detailed results of the two public engagement phases allows agencies to review public feedback at a jurisdictional-level, and thus the ability to focus efforts based on each respective jurisdiction's public feedback.

Next Steps

With completion of the Study, local agencies are now encouraged to initiate next steps in the project development process, including project selection, environmental review, design, and implementation, as priorities and funding allow. OCTA staff will continue to be available and have encouraged local agencies to reach out for project development needs.

Summary

In partnership with the Beach Boulevard Corridor agencies and the California Department of Transportation District 12, the Orange County Transportation Authority initiated the Beach Boulevard Corridor Study in October 2018. The purpose of this study was to develop a comprehensive multimodal transportation vision for the 21-mile Beach Boulevard corridor. This corridor study is complete and is being presented for Board of Directors' information.

Attachments

- A. Toolbox Elements Summary Table
- B. Beach Boulevard Corridor Study Outreach and Survey Results
- C. Beach Blvd Corridor Study: Round Two Survey Results
- D. Executive Summary
- E. Beach Boulevard Corridor Study

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