Paseo del Norte High Capacity Transit Study

WHAT IS BUS RAPID TRANSIT?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high capacity, relatively low-cost public transit solution that can significantly improve urban mobility. It is a permanent, integrated system of buses or specialized vehicles on roadways or dedicated lanes to efficiently transport passengers to their destinations. BRT offers flexibility in meeting transit demand by adding vehicle capacity as needed and can compete well with private vehicles, even on very congested roadways, under the right circumstances. In general, BRT provides many of the attributes of light rail transit at a substantially reduced cost. BRT systems vary according to local needs and resources, but some of the most common features of this type of transit include:

- **Dedicated Infrastructure** – Where possible, BRT runs in its own dedicated lanes or guideways to permit efficient operation that is competitive with private vehicles in terms of travel time. Dedicated infrastructure can be particularly important under congested conditions during peak periods.



- **Improved Operations** – BRT may benefit from favorable treatment at intersections through signal prioritization and timing plans to ensure that buses travel as efficiently as possible by extending green lights or enabling steady traffic flows along major transit corridors. Another feature, demonstrated in the images below, is a "queue jump." Queue jumps typically include a short dedicated lane at key intersections with a special signal phase that allows buses a head start into the intersection a few seconds before the rest of the traffic is released.



- **Station Amenities** – BRT may rely on "light rail-like" stations with distinctive design or well-developed park and ride facilities. In either situation, BRT stations typically feature a range of amenities to improve boarding times and reduce delay. BRT may also include expanded passenger services such as electronic "Next Bus" readouts to show waiting times. Common design features to reduce dwell times include level boarding platforms and off-vehicle fare collection. Stations are spaced at ½ to 1-mile intervals, farther apart than typical bus service, to ensure higher quality service and reduced travel times.

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Station Amenities



- **Passenger Services** – BRT includes quality high-capacity buses that provide a smooth and comfortable ride for passengers, easier access for persons with disabilities, and more convenient bicycle storage than typical local buses. Buses typically operate at no more than 15-20 minute intervals (and usually less) to ensure frequent options for riders. Many BRT services provide wireless Internet connections at stations and/or on-board. Passengers also benefit from a service that is fully integrated into the larger transit network. BRT is not an isolated or stand-alone service, but one that provides rapid connections around the region.

A LOCAL EXAMPLE

An example of a modest form of BRT in Albuquerque is the Rapid Ride service. Although it does not include all the elements of BRT mentioned above, Rapid Ride provides high-capacity and high-frequency service with stations spaced at approximately one-mile intervals. There are also locations with dedicated lanes and signal prioritization that ensure more efficient service than regular local routes.

In the case of the Paseo del Norte High Capacity Transit Study, the objective is to identify a preferred route alignment and station locations and consider opportunities for BRT features such as dedicated infrastructure and operational enhancements that could guarantee travel times along an increasingly congested corridor.

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