



Officials Break Ground on New Transit Project for South County

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SANDAG, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), Caltrans, and the City of Chula Vista began construction of the South Bay Rapid project — a \$113 million Bus Rapid Transit service that will provide South County travelers with a frequent and reliable transit choice.

The milestone was commemorated at a ground-breaking ceremony in Chula Vista.

The 21-mile South Bay Rapid route will run between the Otay Mesa Port of Entry and Downtown San Diego via the South Bay Expressway, eastern Chula Vista, Interstate 805, and State Route 94. When completed, it will connect residents to regional employment and activity centers.

South Bay Rapid service is expected to begin in 2018 and will be operated by MTS.

The groundbreaking was attended by SANDAG board chair and county supervisor Ron Roberts; Chula Vista Mayor Mary Casillas Salas; county supervisor Greg Cox; MTS board chairman Harry Mathis; Caltrans District 11 director Laurie Berman; and president of Tijuana Economic Development Council Humberto Inzunza.

“South Bay Rapid is an important part of the SANDAG Regional Transportation Plan, and will provide an innovative mobility choice to areas not currently served by mass transit,” Roberts said. “This TransNet early action project will keep San Diego County moving forward.”

Part of ongoing, regionwide transportation improvements, South Bay Rapid will serve as a critical element of the broader Rapid system. The project will include construction of a dedicated transit guideway, seven Rapid stations, a guideway bridge over the South Bay Expressway, and an Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) near the Otay Mesa Port of Entry.

“This investment in our South County communities is incredibly important,” Salas said. “South Bay Rapid will not only connect eastern Chula Vista with downtown San Diego, it will help manage traffic and help us achieve our climate action goals.”

Funding for the project is being provided by a combination of federal, state, and local programs, including the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP), Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSCP), City of Chula Vista, Otay Water District, and TransNet, the regional half-cent sales tax for transportation administered by SANDAG.

“The South Bay Rapid project is the collaborative effort of many agencies at all levels of government,” MTS board chairman Harry Mathis said. “As a result of this ongoing collaboration, riders will enjoy a new level of transit service with frequent travel times and high-tech amenities when service begins in 2018.”

The South Bay Rapid project represents a collaborative effort between South County communities, SANDAG, MTS, Caltrans, and the City of Chula Vista. Construction of the project is expected to take approximately two years to complete.