



AB 1560 – Major Transit Stop: Bus Rapid Transit

Summary:

AB 1560 revises the definition of “major transit stop” to include a bus rapid transit station, as defined, which is served by a local circulator or a local serving on-demand transit program. The bill also increases the frequency of service interval to 20 minutes.

Background:

California Public Resources Code Section 21155.4 sets forth a statutory exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for residential, employment center, and mixed-use projects within a transit priority area. Eligibility is limited by the definition of “transit priority area” and has prevented a number of projects from utilizing the CEQA exemption.

Currently, “Major Transit Stop” as defined in California Public Resources Code Section 21064.3 excludes areas in the San Fernando Valley which are well served by transit as many major bus lines either do not intersect, or do intersect, but fall short of the 15-minute headways required by the definition. The definition of “Major Transit Stop” is applied in the City of Los Angeles Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Guidelines, per Measure JJJ. The definition of “Major Transit Stop” defines, and consequently limits the eligibility of projects for development incentives for projects that include affordable housing.

As presently defined, there are a significantly limited number of Transit Priority Areas as the definition of Major Transit Stop excludes many of the San Fernando Valley’s major bus lines. Consequently, large swaths of the San Fernando Valley are excluded from eligibility under the TOC Guidelines and under the CEQA exemption discussed above.

The current definitions of Transit Priority Area and Major Transit Stop fail to address use of on demand and first mile last mile services that are essential to a vibrant transit community that is responsive to today’s technology and demands.

The Orange Line is one of the busiest transit lines operated by LA Metro and serves riders traveling in the San Fernando Valley and throughout Los Angeles County. It is essential that areas surrounding the Orange Line be eligible for incentives and CEQA exemptions to ensure housing development is maximized near transit. Additionally, as the Orange Line has moved out of Warner Center to be replaced by a Circulator, it is essential that the definitions of Transit Priority Area and Major Transit Stop be adapted to account for areas that are well served by high quality transit including Circulators.

AB 1560:

Defines “Bus Rapid Transit Line” as a bus line that includes at least two of the following features: peak period or full-time dedicated bus lanes, transit signal priority, branded vehicles or stations, all-door boarding.

Defines “Bus Rapid Station” as: a bus stop served by bus rapid transit line, a bus stop served by a bus line that has a full-time dedicated bus lane extending ½ mile in each direction, or a bus line with all-door boarding at the bus stop.

Defines “Local Circulator” as a bus route that provides transportation service to and from a major transit stop.

Defines “Local serving on-demand transit program” as a site containing either: an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by bus or rail, two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 20 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods, a bus rapid transit station that is served by a local circulator or a local serving on-demand transit program.

This bill is sponsored by the Valley Industry and Commerce Association.

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