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SBCTA Board accepts Boring Co.'s qualifications, authorizes next steps in the development of the Ontario Loop project

Plans for an underground transit loop between the Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink station and Ontario International Airport (ONT) took a giant step forward on Wednesday when the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) Board authorized negotiations to begin with The Boring Company, founded by Elon Musk.

Boring was the only company to respond to a recent Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to build the nearly four-mile tunnel, which will connect Metrolink's busiest line with the nation's fastest-growing airport three years running. The subterranean transit system would shuttle thousands of passengers per day between the Rancho Cucamonga station and ONT using zero-emission vehicles.

Wednesday's action follows last month's awarding of a contract to HNTB for construction management services. Completion is expected within 48 months.

"The Ontario Airport Loop project represents an innovative, cost-effective and sustainable approach in meeting the mobility needs of one of the most robust population and economic centers in the United States," said Curt Hagman, Chairman of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors.

It was Hagman's vision for a tunneling project that led SBCTA to investigate the feasibility of such a project and, ultimately, to issue the RFQ.

"ONT is one of the aviation industry's greatest success stories and a critical economic driver for our region. We need to take steps now to ensure that we can adequately handle our continued long-term growth and avoid the kinds of congestion issues that have become a significant problem for other airport communities," said Alan D. Wapner, Mayor pro Tem of the City of Ontario, President of the Ontario International Airport Authority Board of Commissioners and a Past President of SBCTA.

SBCTA has projected total costs of the project around \$85 million – a fraction of what it would cost to build an above-ground rail or light rail connection.

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“Along with the possibility of higher-speed rail service into the Rancho Cucamonga station, the Loop project provides vital transit connectivity between Los Angeles County and San Bernardino County,” said SBCTA President Frank J. Navarro, Mayor of Colton. He noted that the Rancho Cucamonga station is a hub for Metrolink’s heavily traveled San Bernardino Line, which is about to get another boost with development of the Arrow line between Redlands and the City of San Bernardino. “Creating new connections at Rancho Cucamonga is a win-win for commuters and cities across our region.”

Stephanie Wiggins, Chief Executive Officer for Metrolink, concurred with that assessment: “This is one of the most important transportation corridors in all of Southern California. The Ontario Airport Loop creates tremendous opportunities to create convenient access to ONT from LA County, eastern San Bernardino County and, really, the region as a whole. We’re thrilled to see this project move a step closer.”

Carrie Schindler, SBCTA’s Director of Transit and Rail, described the project as “transformational for our region: “By improving mobility and reducing traffic congestion, the Ontario Airport Loop not only will have a significant positive impact on the environment, but create new economic opportunities as well,” Schindler said.

U.S. Rep. Pete Aguilar, who represents California’s 31st District, praised SBCTA for its leadership in bringing innovative multimodal transportation options to the Inland Empire and Southern California.

“SBCTA is not just looking at local solutions, but solutions that benefit the entire region and serve as a model for communities across the country. This type of investment in our infrastructure will help bring new jobs to our region and help us to continue growing the Inland Empire economy,” Aguilar said.

Ontario Mayor Paul Leon said the project will be a boon to the city’s vital hospitality industry. “With the 2028 Olympics right around the corner, this kind of additional transit connectivity – at such a reasonable cost – will position Ontario and the San Bernardino County-San Gabriel Valley Corridor as a true destination,” Leon said.

Dennis Michael, Mayor of Rancho Cucamonga, said he too is looking forward to the project coming online.

“For our city and others throughout this corridor, the addition of a vibrant, clean transit connector to Ontario Airport opens up incredible opportunities and helps to make this an even more desirable region to live, work and play,” Michael said.

The Boring Company, headquartered in the Los Angeles area, has built two tunnels nearly a mile long underneath the Las Vegas Convention Center.

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