

Virginia Street BRT Extension
Reno, Nevada
Small Starts Project Development
Information Prepared September 2014

The Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) proposes to construct a 1.8-mile extension to its existing RAPID bus rapid transit line in the Virginia Street corridor from the current 4th Street Station in downtown Reno to the University of Nevada-Reno (UN-R). The project includes four stations (two in each direction), traffic signal priority, a one-mile exclusive bus lane near the UN-R campus, off-board fare collection, level boarding, and real-time bus arrival information at stations. The project also includes the purchase of three 60-foot diesel-electric hybrid articulated buses; construction of two roundabouts at intersections to improve bus turning movements and enhance traffic operations and safety; and sidewalk and crosswalk improvements to improve walkability and visibility. The project's current estimated capital cost is \$60 million. RTC is seeking \$30 million (50 percent) in Small Starts funds for the project.

Virginia Street is the historic north-south spine of the region, linking downtown Reno, the UN-R, the Midtown District, the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, major resorts, and regional shopping centers. The existing RAPID line on Virginia Street does not directly connect to the UN-R. The extension is intended to enhance regional connectivity by providing improved accessibility to UN-R. The UN-R area has a heavy concentration of low-income students and low-income households with limited English proficiency. According to RTC, approximately 30 to 40 percent of households in the UN-R area live below the national poverty level and spend nearly 20 percent of their income on transportation costs.

RTC completed the Virginia Street Corridor Study in 2013, and selected a locally preferred alternative (LPA) that was adopted into the region's fiscally-constrained long range transportation plan in April 2013. The project entered Small Starts Project Development in September 2014. RTC plans to reaffirm the LPA, including any design refinements, following the completion of the environmental review process in spring 2016. RTC expects to receive a Small Starts Grant Agreement in 2017, and start revenue operations in 2018.