

## **Bob Hope Airport in Burbank aims to improve links to bus, trains with transit hub**

By Dakota Smith, Staff Writer LA Daily News

Posted:

DailyNews.com

When Thousand Oaks resident Ilona Sterkin flies out of Bob Hope Airport in Burbank, she usually takes a shuttle or gets a ride from a relative to the airport. | See photo gallery.

She's never considered taking a bus - not when she'd have to walk from a bus stop outside the airport to her terminal.

"I don't like hauling my luggage," said Sterkin, 58.

Hoping to woo travelers like Sterkin, the Burbank airport is building a "transit hub" that will offer closer and easier connections with buses and trains.

The airport broke ground Friday on a 520,000-square-foot Regional Intermodal Transportation Center that will replace a parking lot. The bulk of the project is a three-story garage to house rental cars.

Bob Hope Airport must move its existing rental car area by 2015 after the Federal Aviation Administration deemed the site too close to the runways.

But the ground floor of the building will include bus stops, moving them significantly closer to the terminal than the existing bus stop at Hollywood Way and Empire Avenue - about a third of a mile from the terminal.

The entrance to the hub is also closer to the existing Amtrak and Metrolink train station. Currently, travelers have to walk 400 yards from the station to the terminal along the sidewalk.

About 200 bus and 260 train riders use the airport stops daily.

The new hub will include an elevated, covered walkway with a moving sidewalk to connect the terminal with the transit hub.

Scheduled for completion in 2014, the project highlights officials' push to expand rail and bus lines throughout the region.

It is part of a larger goal of creating "an airport you can get to without a car," Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich said during Friday's groundbreaking.

That's rare in L.A., where fliers who don't want to pay for long-term parking have to rely on friends for rides, or take a patchwork of bus and shuttle lines to get to the airport.

At Los Angeles International Airport, Metro officials are still planning various options - such as a shuttle or rail - to get people all the way to their terminals. Currently, travelers on the Green Line have to transfer to a bus to reach the terminal.

At Ontario International Airport, riders need to transfer to a bus line after taking a rail line.

With its new transit hub, Bob Hope Airport, built in the 1930s, is outpacing its competitors, transit experts said.

"Bob Hope Airport is on the cutting edge," said Bart Reed, executive director of The Transit Coalition, who credits local politicians and Bob Hope Airport executives for pushing the transit hub concept.

"It's unique that the Valley has shown the way in this case."

Speaking at the groundbreaking Friday, Antonovich pressed for more changes, including extending the Orange Line

and Red Line to Bob Hope Airport, and a new Metrolink station on the north side of the airport, serving travelers from Santa Clarita and northern communities.

"The region is facing critical transportation challenges," said Antonovich, adding the new hub "would promote the use of public transportation."

But who will fund the costs of more such hubs remains to be seen. The transit hub, which costs \$112.6 million, will be paid for with bonds and other fees. Some of the cost will be covered by existing rental car and ticket fees, said airport spokesman Victor Gill.

Michael Kodama, executive director of the Orange Line Development Authority, a joint powers authority of 13 cities and Bob Hope Airport (unrelated to the Orange Line busway in the Valley), worked on the transit portion of the new hub. As the economy picks up, he believes that traffic around the region will worsen as people begin to travel more.

Alternatives such as Bob Hope Airport's transit hub are likely to look more attractive to fliers, he said.

"A lot of people are saying it's about time," said Kodama. "Anyone who tries to drive to Santa Clarita from (Burbank) knows what the traffic is like. The folks at Bob Hope Airport are thinking ahead." Update: This article incorrectly stated Antonovich is seeking a new Metrolink station on the south side of the airport. He would like to see a station built on the north side.

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