

BRIEFING ITEM

AC TRANSIT DISTRICT
Board of Directors
Executive Summary

GM Memo No. 03-339

Meeting Date: December 3, 2003

Committees:

Executive Committee
External Affairs Committee
Operations Committee

Finance Committee
Paratransit Committee
Planning Committee

Board of Directors

SUBJECT:

Telegraph/International/E. 14th Bus Rapid Transit Project: Update on Project Activities and Funding

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Information Only Briefing Item Recommended Motion

Receive Report

Fiscal Impact:

Receipt of Measure B funds could be programmed earlier to fund implementation of Telegraph/International Rapid Bus Improvements.

Background/Discussion:

Funding. Discussions have begun with the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) to advance Measure B funds to accelerate implementation of the *Rapid Bus* phase of the project. We do not know at this point if an amendment to the Measure B

BOARD ACTION: **Approved as Recommended** [] **Other** []
 Approved with Modification(s) []

[To be filled in by District Secretary after Board/Committee Meeting]

The above order was passed and adopted on _____, 2003.

Rose Martinez, District Secretary
By _____

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plan would be necessary to advance the funds. If so, ACTIA staff will request the amendment in 2004.

The Telegraph/International Boulevard (E 14th Street) BRT project is designed to be implemented in consecutive phases as funding becomes available. Each phase will build upon the previous phase.

Phase I for this project will implement Rapid Bus Service along the corridor. The key features of the Rapid Bus phase would be traffic signal work with priority for buses, shelters and Nextbus signs. The Rapid Bus phase of the project has been cleared through a Categorical Exclusion, submitted to Caltrans in November, 2003.

The initial schedule for this project estimated that the *Rapid Bus* phase would be completed by FY 08/09. If our request to accelerate receipt of the Measure B funds is approved by ACTIA, the Rapid phase of this project could be up and running as early as December 2006. Funding to operate increases in service, however, would have to be funded by the District and are not currently included in the District's budget projections.

Once the proposed Bridge Toll increase been approved, the District will have sufficient funding to begin work on the BRT phase of this project. Funds to operate service in the corridor are also included in the toll increase beginning in FY 2007/08. Measure B and Bridge Toll Funds can provide leverage in obtaining federal funds to complete the project.

Developing Options for Study.

Important progress has been made in developing detailed BRT options for inclusion in the environmental document.

As part of the Major Investment Study (MIS), conceptual designs were developed to evaluate the performance of different technologies (Light Rail, Bus Rapid Transit, Enhanced Bus). The level of design undertaken at that time permitted only a cursory evaluation of environmental impacts. The intent was to identify differences between modes so that a policy decision could be made on the project's general direction.

The current design effort involves the preparation of detailed engineering drawings and architectural renderings that can help identify all impacts on a block-by-block level and give decision-makers a sense of how the project might look and how it may affect their streets. Parking and traffic impacts would be the project's major impacts.

Using the conceptual designs developed in the MIS as a starting point, District staff and consultants have taken the general comments received from the public during the project scoping period in Spring 2003 and modified the designs accordingly. Our approach is to then take the detailed plans to city and other agency staff for further review. Their review helps "bracket" the options that will be studied in the Environmental Impact Statement in three ways:

1. Removing options that would be the poorest performers from further consideration
2. Improving or refining options developed by staff and consultants
3. Identifying new options for study

City staff will thoroughly review the options that will be presented to decision-makers and the public. Work in each city is proceeding at its own pace. Below is a summary of the status of this work in each city and the recommended next steps to politically move the project forward. The general approach is as follows:

1. Public Scoping
2. Agency Review
3. Public Review
4. Local Policy Review
5. AC Transit Board Approval

Berkeley

We have recently completed a series of meetings with University of California and City of Berkeley staff to identify the BRT options for study. The agency review period is complete and we are ready to present the options for study to the public and elected officials. The design options are described in *Attachment A: Berkeley and San Leandro Design Options*.

Based on recommendations from city staff, the options will be reviewed by both the Berkeley Planning Commission and Berkeley Transportation Commission. The Planning commission will review the options at their January 14, 2004 meeting. Their evaluation will then be

forwarded to the Transportation Commission for review and they, as the lead commission, will make a formal recommendation to the City Council. The Transportation Commission meeting will be held on January 22, 2004. The City Council will likely review the recommendations in February or March 2004.

San Leandro

Staff review of the design options is complete. We have modified the early designs to reflect local concerns regarding traffic, parking, landscaping and redevelopment plans in the southern portion of the city. The design options will be reviewed by Mayor Shelia Young and Councilmember Orval Badger, San Leandro Policy Steering Committee members, on December 1, 2003. Their comments will then be incorporated into the designs. We intend to present the revised designs to the public in early 2004.

Oakland

We have just begun the work in the Oakland portion of the corridor. Initial discussions have taken place with city staff on the 20th Street Transit Center. In addition, we have scheduled preliminary meetings with city staff in early December to review design options for the corridor as a whole. Several staff meetings are anticipated before the design options can be finalized due to the length of the corridor within Oakland and the large number of council districts affected. The refinement and screening of design options will begin in early 2004. We are scheduling a meeting with Council member Jane Brunner to discuss the project and approval process.

Next Steps

Once a range of design options have been developed for each city, the detailed environmental evaluation can begin for those corridor segments. A Draft EIS is targeted for completion in Fall 2004. Release of the DEIS will begin another round of agency and public review.

Prior Relevant Board Actions/Policies:

GM Memo 03-291: Update on Berkeley-Oakland-San Leandro Bus Rapid Transit Project

Attachments:

Attachment A: Berkeley and San Leandro Design Options

Approved by: Rick Fernandez, General Manager
Kathleen Kelly, Deputy GM Service Development

Prepared by: Jim Cunradi, Sr. Transportation Planner

Date Prepared: November 24, 2003

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