

**BRIEFING ITEM**

**AC TRANSIT DISTRICT**  
**Board of Directors**  
Executive Summary

**GM Memo No. 03-291**

Meeting Date: October 8, 2003

**Committees:**

Planning Committee   
External Affairs Committee

Paratransit Committee   
Finance Committee   
Operations Committee

**Board of Directors**

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**SUBJECT:**

**Update on Berkeley-Oakland-San Leandro Bus Rapid Transit Project**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Information Only     Briefing Item     Recommended Motion

**Receive and discuss report.**

**Fiscal Impact:**

None at this time.

**Background/Discussion:**

This memo summarizes progress on activities related to both the implementation the Rapid Bus improvements and environmental clearance of the full Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in the Telegraph/International/E. 14<sup>th</sup> corridor.

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**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 \_\_\_\_\_

To speed implementation of the first phase Rapid Bus and the longer term BRT projects, each has been put on a separate, yet additive track for environmental clearance, design and construction.

### **Rapid Bus**

The first phase of the BRT project on Telegraph/International/E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street would be the implementation of *Rapid* service, much like that in operation on San Pablo Avenue. In keeping with Board action to define Rapid Bus components, its features will be wider stop spacing, traffic signal priority, Nextbus signs and shelters. Our goal is to complete these items by January or February 2005, so that if operating funds are available, the Rapid Service can begin.

The most promising strategy to speed the *Rapid* implementation is to take advantage of the experience of the multi-jurisdictional San Pablo Avenue project. Based on the tasks outlined in the Semi-annual Review of Major Corridors (GM Memo 03-214a), below is an update on the tasks required to implement a Telegraph/International/E. 14<sup>th</sup> corridor *Rapid* bus project:

1. *Complete Categorical Exclusion (Cat Ex) for signal upgrades, priority and shelter placement*  
This task will be completed within the next month. This will clear the way environmentally for the signal upgrades and bus priority. The Cat Ex will cover both replacement of out-dated equipment and completing interim improvements begun as part of the CMA's Smart Corridor project. District staff is working closely with Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA) staff to determine the content and circulation of the Cat Ex.
2. *Prepare Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) for signal upgrades and priority*  
The cost for PS&E for the entire corridor would be approximately \$1 million and is anticipated to take about 6 months to complete. Unless Measure B revenues are significantly lower than anticipated, funds will be available in FY 04/05 for this work. The work products will be a set of bid documents for the signal improvements.
3. *Locate rapid bus stops, remove redundant local stops*  
This task can begin once the larger BRT study identifies locations for rapid stops on the Berkeley segment of the route, anticipated in late 2003. Work on other route segments can begin once the community workshops for that segment are completed. The entire corridor could be complete by summer 2004.
4. *Install signal controllers, upgrade signals, signal interconnect*  
This task will be done on a pay-as-you-go basis – as money comes in, upgrades can begin on a segment-by-segment basis. Completion of the Cat Ex and having

bid documents ready ensures our ability to construct as funds become available. However, customary fund sources for this use have been lower than expected, potentially delaying implementation of this task. The CMA has agreed to partner with the District to implement these improvements. This work will also be coordinated with the ongoing Smart Corridor work of the CMA.

### **Rapid Bus Schedule at a Glance**

The following schedule for Rapid Bus implementation is based on Measure B funding availability. Tasks highlighted with an asterisk are those contingent upon Measure B funding availability.

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|-----------------|---|
| 1. Fall 03      | Complete traffic signal Cat Ex                          |
| 2. Fall 03      | Issue RFP for traffic signal PS&E*                      |
| 3. Winter 03/04 | Complete traffic signal PS&E*                           |
| 4. Spring 04    | Issue RFP for traffic signals/begin construction*       |
| 5. Summer 04    | Relocate Rapid stops                                    |
| 6. Fall 04      | Finish signal installation and testing*                 |
| 7. Winter 04/05 | Install shelters & limited deployment of Next bus signs |
| 8. Winter 04/05 | Begin Rapid Bus service                                 |

### **Bus Rapid Transit**

The comments received during scoping from the public and from agencies guide the current task of developing detailed BRT options for environmental review. The project scoping period under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was closed after five public meetings were held in May and June. An additional scoping session will be scheduled to accommodate Federal agencies and to deepen our outreach efforts in the Fruitvale neighborhood. This meeting will occur in November.

Design options are being developed for individual route segments, corresponding to a city or city council district. The options are developed in sufficient detail to permit the public, elected officials and agency staff to reach an opinion on the merits and potential impacts of the project before a full analysis is conducted. Consultants are currently working on the following products for community design workshops:

- Visual representations of the project that include plan views and artistic renderings of one or more alignment options and local BRT stations
- Identification of every parking space that may be lost within the corridor
- Preliminary traffic impact analysis including level-of-service, queue length and discussion of traffic diversion

A full analysis of all impacts will be provided in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

### **Consensus Building Approach**

During the Major Investment Study (MIS) members of the project Policy Steering Committee (PSC) were intimately involved in project decision making. For the current studies, PSC members have indicated that the committee should meet only to make major decisions. To accommodate the wishes of the committee and build consensus on the project, the following approach is suggested.

Each corridor city requires a unique approach to building political consensus on the project. Defining the detailed alternatives is the most pressing decision that needs to be made. Discussions should be held with each city's PSC members and other elected officials during the alternatives development stage. These meetings can be scheduled either after the meetings with city staff or after the public workshops (see Current Activities below). The meetings will ensure ongoing engagement of our partner cities and the incorporation of their concerns into the design of the project. Board members will be consulted for availability in order to schedule these meetings. This approach is appropriate for Berkeley and San Leandro where local officials are engaged in the project and have a consistent history of involvement.

For Oakland, engagement of many elected officials may be best achieved using their high-level staff members. District staff are working to schedule a luncheon with the aids of Oakland officials to introduce them to the Telegraph/International/E. 14<sup>th</sup> project and other District projects. We also intend to work with community organizations such as the Unity Council to build support for the project. Finally, Councilmember Brunner has indicated a willingness to help organize the community to support the project in Council District 1.

### **Current Activities**

***Berkeley.*** Based on options recommended by the Berkeley Transportation Commission, District staff and consultants are working with the City of Berkeley and the University of California at Berkeley (UCB) staffs to develop detailed design alternatives for that city. A joint staff level meeting with UCB and the city will be held in October to seek final agreement on the alternatives that should be studied in the EIS. The detailed alternatives will then be taken to the community for review to discuss the likely impacts and benefits of the project and help refine the designs.

### **Berkeley Southside**

In the south side we are considering four alignment alternatives:

- Two-way bus operations on Telegraph with pedestrian & transit mall
- One-way bus operations on Telegraph northbound, Dana southbound
- Two-way operations on Bancroft
- Bancroft westbound, Durant eastbound

### Downtown Berkeley

In downtown there are 3 alignment alternatives:

- Shattuck with UC West Crescent Station as terminus
- Shattuck with Berkeley BART as terminus
- Oxford northbound, Shattuck southbound in loop<sup>1</sup>

Because Shattuck Avenue is the busiest bus corridor outside of Oakland's Broadway corridor, the BRT project should strive to improve operations for all buses and not just optimize one particular route. Specifically, any dedicated bus lanes should be available to multiple routes, and the street design should improve overall bus circulation through this congested area. Several design variations of Shattuck Avenue have been developed in cooperation with the City and the University.

### Shattuck Avenue South of Center Street

The design variations under consideration for the segment south of Center Street include:

- Bus lanes at the side (preserve landscaped median, reduce parking)
- Bus lanes in median (either create new landscaping and reduce parking *or* remove landscaping, preserve parking and lose left-turn pockets)

### Shattuck Avenue north of Center Street:

- Retain Existing Street Design
- Counter-flow northbound bus lane
- Convert southbound Shattuck Avenue from one-way to two-way through traffic. Convert northbound Shattuck to buses and local traffic only

**San Leandro.** The city of San Leandro will be the next route segment for which design options will be developed. The timing of this work will be coordinated with San Leandro's redevelopment plan for the southern portion of the city and the development plans for the Bayfair Mall. A draft redevelopment plan will be released in November or December of this year. The South Area Advisory Committee (SAAC), which oversees this effort, will meet in late October to consider its adoption. The following issues are being considered when developing the design options:

- Station location and treatment downtown
- Areas designated for dedicated bus lanes and areas for mixed flow traffic operations
- Bayfair mall redevelopment and a proposed station within the mall complex
- Landscape treatments
- Service to San Leandro BART

**Oakland.** Oakland is the most challenging city for the public outreach effort. As such, we have chosen to embark upon the two other cities first, allowing us ample time to engage the

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<sup>1</sup> This option has several flaws for bus operations and from a customer service perspective. One purpose of the joint UCB-Berkeley meeting is to see if this option can be dropped from further consideration.

city in this project. Once the Berkeley public workshops are complete, three areas would be ideal choices to begin developing design options and conducting public workshops: Telegraph Avenue, 20<sup>th</sup> Street, and Fruitvale.

#### Telegraph Avenue

Telegraph Avenue is the only alignment under consideration on this route segment. The character of the street lends itself to a uniform treatment, thereby limiting the number of options that may need to be studied. The north Oakland portion of Telegraph Avenue is part of Council District 1 (Jane Brunner) and the portion near downtown is part of Council District 3 (Nancy Nadel).

#### Uptown Transit Center (20<sup>th</sup> Street)

Recently, the City of Oakland released their EIR for the Uptown Project—a medium density residential and mixed-use project located between Telegraph Avenue and San Pablo Avenue. The Uptown Project is an opportunity to creatively integrate a City of Oakland high-priority development with the future BRT, the San Pablo Rapid and other new bus service.

The proposed site for the BRT/Rapid station is on 20<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and Telegraph Avenue. This short roadway segment will eventually carry the 72, 72M, 72R, Rapid and local Telegraph Avenue service, 15 and the new re-aligned N Transbay route. The project is intended to facilitate transfers between buses and BART and to accommodate the passenger activity here.

The working concept is to create exclusive bus lanes for the entire block. The station would use a median boarding platform for one direction and an extension of the sidewalk for the other direction. Another option would place boarding platforms at each side of the street. See Attachment A: *Uptown Transit Center Conceptual Elevation & Plans*. This station could be the “gateway to Uptown”, creating a visual presence within the existing roadway.

An Oakland City Council resolution passed during the MIS, identified 20<sup>th</sup> Street as the preferred alignment of the BRT. District staff has begun discussions with City of Oakland staff, the developer of the Uptown project and the tenants of the I. Magnin building to gain consensus for the station development.

#### Fruitvale

There has been a surge of community-sponsored construction in the Fruitvale District that includes the Fruitvale Transit Village and new medians on International Boulevard. District staff and consultants will be working with the city and the Spanish Speaking Unity Council to determine the constraints and opportunities of the project and to see if BRT designs can support broader community goals for the area.

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The Rest of Oakland

The remaining Oakland route segments include Elmhurst/East Oakland, Downtown and Jack London Square. Work on design options for these areas would proceed following completion of the initial Oakland segments.

**Prior Relevant Board Actions/Policies:**

GM Memo No. 03-214a  
GM Memo No. 03-147

**Attachments:**

Attachment A –Uptown Transit Center Conceptual Elevation & Plans

**Approved by:** Rick Fernandez, GM  
Kathleen Kelly, DGM Service Development

**Prepared by:** Jim Cunradi, Sr. Transportation Planner  
Tina Spencer, Mgr. Long Rang Planning

**Date Prepared:** September 25, 2003