

AC TRANSIT DISTRICT
Board of Directors
Executive Summary

GM Memo No. 03-079

Meeting Date: March 6, 2003

Committees:

Executive Committee
External Affairs Committee

Operations Committee
Planning Committee

Board of Directors

SUBJECT:

Update on Telegraph/International/E. 14th Bus Rapid Transit Study

RECOMMENDED ACTION: **Information Only** **Recommended Motion**

Fiscal Impact: No impact to project schedule or scope.

Project	Cost	Source
Phase 1 (completed)	\$1.5 M	FTA (CMAQ)
Phase 2 Study	\$3.5 M	FTA (CMAQ)--\$1.2 M; Measure B--\$2.7

Background/Discussion:

This memo covers three topics

- Upcoming project scoping process and updated 6-month project schedule
- Update on project funding
- Clarification of the “shelf life” of Environmental Impact Statements under NEPA (Requested by Director Peeples)

Project Scoping & Project Schedule. The environmental and engineering consultant contract with Cambridge Systematics was signed February 25. The District can now

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 _____

proceed with project scoping, the first task in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). By March, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) will be issued that will open the public and agency outreach and involvement. Staff will begin initial discussions with local jurisdictions and agencies this month. The formal outreach process for agencies and the public will begin in March and the first round of public meetings will be held as early as April. Below is a project schedule for the next 6 months. The entire Phase 2 project is anticipated to be completed within 2 years.

Month	Task / Milestone
February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant contract signed 2. Project kickoff meeting 3. Begin agency outreach
March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project scoping begins 2. NOP Issued 3. Agency outreach (TAC & PSC meetings)
April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin traffic studies 2. Initial scoping sessions (1-4)
May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finish initial scoping session 2. Begin other environmental studies 3. Begin conceptual designs
June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agency outreach (TAC & PSC meetings)
July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin neighborhood-level meetings

Project Funding. Due to a severe shortfall in Measure B sales tax revenues, the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) has been approaching all project sponsors about postponing expenditures or reorganizing project schedules. ACTIA is in the process of developing a strategic plan to cope with anticipated revenue shortfalls. Even though ACTIA has requested that the District divide our initial FY 2002/03 allocation into two years, we do not anticipate any delays to the project; the multi-year allocations will still accommodate our anticipated cash-flow needs.

Under proposed State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding, the BRT project was to have received \$2.7 million in FY 2004/05 for design or construction of improvements in the corridor. Financial problems at the state level may delay the availability of these funds. The Alameda Congestion Management Agency will be analyzing the impacts of reduced STIP levels to determine the best course of action for the projects currently programmed beyond FY 2002/03. At the very least, the District's request may be moved to

the outer years of the STIP (FY 05/06 or 06/07) or until there is capacity in the STIP program. This may require that the District seek other sources of funds for either design and construction which could include Measure B or future toll bridge funds.

The District is also seeking a federal earmark of \$25 million for Telegraph Avenue and \$25 million for International Boulevard/East 14th Street through the reauthorization of TEA-21. In addition, the District has also submitted the project to be included in the future bridge toll increase proposal that is being initiated by Senator Don Perata.

Shelf Life of an EIS. It is anticipated that the District will complete the Final EIS and issue a Record of Decision (ROD) by Fall 2005. Once this milestone is reached, the National Environmental Policy Act specifies that a sponsoring agency has up to three years to initiate the next phase of project development. This means that within three years of the issuance of the ROD, the District must begin one of the following actions:

- Receive authority to enter into final design
- Receive authority to acquire right-of-way or
- Begin the environmental and construction permitting process

If the District were not ready for these next steps by the end of the 3 years, the EIS would still be valid. However, we would be obliged to perform updated technical analysis for any conditions that may have changed in the meantime (e.g. traffic). FTA calls this step Re-Evaluation. This regulation has been in place since 1987. As long as the District is actively engaged in environmental clearance, design, permitting or otherwise moving forward toward construction and operation, the EIS remains valid and we remain in the running for future capital funding.

If the District were to postpone the EIS in anticipation of either delays or funding shortfalls in the future, it could put future funding at risk and reduce the overall readiness of the District to proceed with construction and operation of the Enhanced Bus or the BRT project.

Prior Relevant Board Actions/Policies:

GM Memo No. 03-015 Changes to the Policy Steering Committee

GM Memo No. 02-322 Update on BRT Project Schedule and Near Term Improvements

Attachments: **None**

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

Prepared by: Jim Cunradi, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner

Date Prepared: February 11, 2003