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

**GM Memo No. 02-190**

Meeting Date: July 11, 2002

**Committees:**

Executive Committee   
External Affairs Committee

Operations Committee   
Planning Committee

**Board of Directors**

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**SUBJECT:**

Berkeley-Oakland-San Leandro Major Investment Study Project Update

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

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**Fiscal Impact:**

None at this time.

**Background/Discussion:**

In August 2001, the AC Transit District Board of Directors selected Bus Rapid Transit as the preferred alternative for the Telegraph/International/E. 14<sup>th</sup> corridor with an early implementation on an Enhanced Bus-type system. Since that decision was made, and before official start of the Phase II study, District staff has been working with regional funding agencies and local jurisdictions to keep the project moving forward. This memo summarizes the progress that has been made for the following major milestones:

- Funding
  - Phase II Study Negotiations and Work Plan
  - Early Scoping
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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 \_\_\_\_\_, 2002.

Rose Martinez, District Secretary

By \_\_\_\_\_

- Phase I study wrap-up
- Cities' Cooperation

## Major Milestones

### Funding

*Metropolitan Transportation Commission.* In cooperation with MTC, the District's BRT and Enhanced Bus projects are now included in the Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Transportation Expansion Program. As part of this process, potential funding sources for capital improvements were also identified. As of December 2001, the Telegraph/International/E. 14<sup>th</sup> project is now a fully funded Tier 1 project for \$151 million.

District staff has been using Phase I study findings regarding capital and operating costs and ridership forecasts to refine the District's vision for other "major corridors" and to develop a streamlined study approach for the other corridors. The work has begun of refining the definition of other major corridors for regional funding agencies. Due to the work completed in the Berkeley-Oakland-San Leandro Major Investment Study, other corridors were also included in the RTP/RTEP, including Foothill/MacArthur. An additional \$90 million will be available for other AC Transit major corridors. The MIS corridor is also included in the Alameda Countywide Transportation Plan.

*ACTIA (Measure B).* The District has recently secured Measure B funding to permit both completion of the Phase II study and construction of some elements of the project such as signal priority and stop relocation. The ACTIA Board recently voted to approve \$20 million in Measure B funds for the project.

The early years of receipt of Measure B funds are expected to be the most constrained due to the drop in sales tax revenues. Nevertheless, between 2003 and 2004, there will be \$2.7 million (in escalated \$) available to complete the Phase II study. In addition, money for capital projects will be available beginning in FY 2005/06. If STIP funds become available at the same time to complete the study, Measure B funds may be used for Enhanced Bus-type improvements in the corridor instead.

In May 2002, a draft agreement was developed in cooperation between ACTIA staff and District staff. District staff was responsible for developing a capital expenditure plan, engineering cost estimates and other technical materials. On June 14, 2002, the ACTIA Work Program Committee unanimously approved the draft agreement. This is only the second project to come before ACTIA following reauthorization of Measure B in 2000.

The full ACTIA Board unanimously approved the project-specific agreement on June 27, 2002. The agreement now moves to signature process and review by ACTIA and the District's legal departments. The master funding agreement approved by the Board in June

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2002 (Resolution No. 2060) authorizes the General Manager to sign this and all other project-specific agreements.

### **Phase II Study Negotiations & Work Plan**

In December 2001, District staff met with the Phase I study consultants to develop a strategy to complete Phase II of the Major Investment Study. The strategy that emerged was to seek full environmental clearance for the BRT project through preparation of a joint NEPA/CEQA Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report. To permit the quick implementation of Enhanced Bus-type improvements, and prior to completion of the EIS, a second environmental document would be prepared for a traffic signal priority system throughout the corridor. Based on the anticipated impacts, a Categorical Exclusion (CE) was determined to be the most appropriate document. The cost estimates associated with the CE would be completed in 6 months and the full document completed in 9 months. The consultants returned in March 2002 with a draft contract amendment to meet the needs of the District.

On May 1, 2002, the proposed approach was presented to the project's Policy Steering Committee. The Committee approved this approach that will complete the study of the full BRT project but also put in place near-term Enhanced Bus improvements (See Attachment A). Their resolution specified an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to clear the full BRT project and a Categorical Exclusion (CE) for traffic signal priority.

Now that funding will be available to complete the study either through ACTIA or STIP, negotiations for the Phase II contract amendment can take place.

### **Early Scoping**

Formal project scoping is the first step in the preparation of the EIS. The purpose is to allow the public and government agencies to provide meaningful input on project definition at the outset. The input is intended to get every reasonable option for study on the table during the project definition step. This input may include new alternatives for analysis or variations on options already studied in the MIS. Formal scoping is expected to begin in Fall 2002.

However, public input continues to be received in the interim. Various comments from individuals will be incorporated into the Phase II public involvement record. In addition, alignment requests have been received from the University of California and from Oakland City Councilmember Henry Chang. These options will be evaluated along with any others that are brought forward during formal scoping.

Staff has also been actively soliciting public input as well. For example, the District, in cooperation with the City of Berkeley, conducted a survey of Telegraph Avenue shoppers to assess the mode of access, shopping behavior and auto use patterns on the street. Over

400 persons were interviewed in a two week period. The results of the survey are included as Attachment B. The instrument created for this survey and its database are designed to be flexible enough for use on other future Phase II project-related surveys.

Staff continues to make presentations to local jurisdictions and community groups after conclusion of the Phase I study and to gather public input. For example, presentations have been made to the Berkeley Telegraph Business Improvement Association, Berkeley Planning Commission, San Leandro South Area Advisory Committee and the San Leandro Redevelopment Advisory Committee/Joint Project Area.

### **Phase I Study Wrap-up**

The Phase I study is complete and final reports are being readied for posting on the District web site. In addition, printed copies will be distributed to staff, Board members, elected officials and local libraries. The technical appendices of the study are currently undergoing administrative review.

Work has begun on a full-color promotional brochure to launch the Phase II study and promote the project. The brochure is intended for distribution to local funding agencies, Congressional delegates and others. It is to be timed for release at the launch of the project scoping process in Fall 2002.

### **Cities' Cooperation**

The MIS process has enabled the District to forge closer, more cooperative ties with the cities of Berkeley, Oakland and San Leandro. Each of the three corridor cities has embraced the project, passed supportive council resolutions or attempted to integrate the Bus Rapid Transit project into their general plans, transportation and development strategies and to coordinate with individual city-sponsored projects. Similar to the San Pablo Avenue project, the cities have shown a willingness to partner with the District to implement a traffic signal priority system.

*City of Berkeley.* Discussions have begun with public and city officials on design of Telegraph Avenue and implementing "Transit First" ideas. The District has written a letter of support for the city's application for a Transportation for Livable Cities (TLC) grant to redesign the downtown transit center.

*City of Oakland.* There are several ongoing city projects that may affect the project. The city is in the process of preparing a downtown circulation plan which aims to smooth traffic flow, facilitate bus operations and encourage bus use in general. The plan will help the city focus on transit supportive policies on major streets. A separate study, the Lake Merritt Master Plan, may help determine the corridor alignment between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Broadway.

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Various streetscape projects are underway in the Oakland portion of the corridor. The District should take care to insure that these sundry projects do not cause a deterioration in transit service in the corridor, on other bus lines or preclude capital improvements. Staff intends to continue to work with city staff to improve ongoing and future projects.

*City of San Leandro.* The South Area Redevelopment district intends to integrate BRT stations into its redevelopment plans. Stations could become a locus for development, the new infrastructure being used to attract additional investment. Traffic signal controllers are currently being upgraded and will permit signal priority for buses. The District has written letters of support for the city's application for a TLC grant.

**Prior Relevant Board Actions/Policies:**

Resolution No. 2018 (August 2001)

Resolution No. 2060 (June 2002)

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Proposed Approach for Phase II BRT Study & Rapid Implementation

Attachment B: Telegraph Avenue Shopper Survey Results

**Approved by:** Rick Fernandez, General Manager  
Kathleen Kelly, DGM Service Development  
Tina Konvalinka, Manager Long Range Planning

**Prepared by:** Jim Cunradi, Senior Transportation Planner

**Date Prepared:** July 2, 2002