

## ABSTRACT

### AC Transit East Bay BRT Project DEIS/DEIR

The Alameda-Contra Transit District (AC Transit), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration, proposes to implement high level bus rapid transit (BRT) improvements along an approximately 17-mile corridor connecting the cities of Berkeley, Oakland and San Leandro in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. The East Bay BRT Project is designed to (a) improve transit service and better accommodate high existing bus ridership; (b) increase transit ridership by providing a viable and competitive alternative to auto travel; (3) improve and maintain the efficiency of transit service delivery; and (4) support local and regional goals to enhance transit-oriented development. The project would substantially increase service frequencies, expand transit capacity, and enhance bus reliability and speeds in a high demand, congested travel corridor with large ethnic minority and low income populations.

BRT improvements include dedicated transit lanes in existing arterials, stations with canopies and passenger amenities, advanced traffic signal priority for buses, and modern safety, security and communications systems. Low-floor articulated buses would stop at raised-platform stations, allowing level boarding and alighting through any door. Self-service, proof-of-payment fare collection would be instituted. BRT service could be operated along with limited local bus service (“Separate BRT and Local”) or without local service (“Combined BRT and Local”).

The project alignment, north to south, begins in downtown Berkeley near the Berkeley BART Station; proceeds along the south side of the University of California, Berkeley, campus and then follows Telegraph Avenue to downtown Oakland. It proceeds through East Oakland primarily along International Boulevard, which becomes East 14<sup>th</sup> Street in San Leandro, to a terminus at either the BayFair BART or San Leandro BART station.

Four Build Alternatives are considered, defined by the terminus in San Leandro and service operating plan:

**Alt 1:** Separate BRT & Local Service to BayFair BART.

*17 miles · 35 stations · 43,750 weekday boardings · 5,320 new transit trips · \$365 million at completion*

**Alt 2:** Separate BRT & Local Service to San Leandro BART

*15 miles · 31 stations · 42,050 weekday boardings · 4,580 new transit trip · \$310 million at completion*

**Alt 3:** Combined BRT & Local Service to BayFair BART

*17 miles · 51 stations · 49,230 weekday boardings · 9,320 new transit trips · \$400 million at completion*

**Alt 4:** Combined BRT & Local Service to San Leandro BART.

*15 mile · 47 stations · 47,540 weekday boardings · 8,020 new transit trips · \$345 million at completion*

**Environmental Impacts.** Five public comment meetings were held in May and June 2003 and one formal public scoping meeting was conducted on February 11, 2004 to obtain public and agency input on project issues. These were followed by over 70 community and stakeholder meetings during preparation of this environmental document. Engineering and technical studies (traffic, air quality, noise, energy, water quality, hazardous materials, cultural resources, socioeconomic, visual and others) were completed to define the scope and environmental effects of proposed project alternatives. Potentially adverse environmental impacts would occur in two areas:

*Traffic:* The project in various locations converts two traffic lanes to transit-only lanes, thereby reducing roadway capacity on the BRT alignment and diverting some vehicles to alternate routes. Of 88 on- and off-alignment intersections evaluated, four to six locations in the a.m. peak and 21 to 26 in the p.m. peak would experience a degradation in operations that exceeds locally established thresholds. All but five locations could be mitigated, however, through physical and operational improvements to not exceed impact thresholds.

*Parking:* The project displaces on-street parking mainly near BRT stations, at signalized intersections, and where the roadway sections are narrow. From 945 to 1,300 curbside spaces would be removed, about 13 to 18 percent of surveyed supply. The project would replace and/or dedicate for commercial use 190 to 310 spaces to achieve adequate spaces so, on average, parking occupancy would not exceed 85 percent of supply.

Other effects include relocations of utilities during construction and realignment or reconfiguration of bike lanes. The overall project would, however, include features to encourage non-motorized bike and pedestrian travel.

**Benefits.** Compared to the No-Build condition, the East Bay BRT Project would increase average express bus speeds 18 to 31 percent, thereby reducing travel times; expand transit capacity by 48 to 55 percent during commute periods; increase AC Transit system ridership and generate 4,580 to 9,320 new transit trips, thereby reducing auto trips; and reduce AC Transit’s operating cost per passenger by \$0.51 to \$1.23 per boarding on express bus service in the corridor. Transit improvements and service would facilitate local community efforts to develop more transit and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.

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