East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Quarterly Update

Budgetary/Fiscal Impact:
No fiscal impact at this time.

Background/Discussion:
This memo provides a summary of activities related to the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit project. Included are schedule changes, an update on technical work and a summary of public outreach efforts.

FEIS/R Schedule
The cities delayed selection of their locally preferred alternative (LPA) from April until May. This resulted in a delay to the review and adoption by the Board, which acted in June and issued a revision in September. The two month delay has added two months to the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/R) schedule. Consequently, the delivery of the Administrative FEIS to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is delayed from October until December. Release of the FEIS to the public is expected in early 2011; again, approximately two months later than last reported to the Board.

Technical Work
The following is a summary of the technical work performed in the last quarter:
✓ Transportation demand modeling is complete
✓ Traffic analysis is complete for the entire BRT route and other intersections identified by the cities and Caltrans
✓ Historic resources assessment complete
✓ Ridership, engineering and cost updates complete
✓ Noise & vibration, air quality, seismic and other technical work products are substantially complete

The schedule for the FEIS/R also assumes that continual coordination with the local jurisdictions will occur during the development of the technical work products to ensure that issues are discussed throughout the process and delays can be managed. Staff has already begun meeting with the City of Oakland, who will be reviewing the greatest volume of technical work.
Outreach
Staff and consultants have prepared updated public outreach materials on subject areas such as the environment and economy, as well as updates of general information on the project in English, Spanish and Chinese. English examples are provided, attached.

In addition, staff has met with several community organizations to confirm their support for the project and address any outstanding issues that were voiced during the outreach conducted by the local jurisdictions. To date, staff has met with the Unity Council, La Alianza de Fruitvale, St. Bertrand’s Church, Oakland Community Organizations, Urban Habitat, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Oakland Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement Districts of Fruitvale and Temescal, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, Asian Health Services, parents and teachers at Havenscourt campus and La Clinica. Stakeholder outreach will include dozens of organizations throughout the corridor and is expected to continue through the remainder of the year.

FTA Coordination
District staff and consultants have been in close coordination with FTA regarding the project. FTA has hired an outside consultant to act as the District’s Project Management Oversight firm (PMO). The PMO is an agent of FTA, responsible for helping the District ensure that the project will be implemented successfully. The consultants will provide an update of the Project Management Plan (PMP) which guides project implementation and develop an overall project schedule.

Small Starts Update
District Staff submitted its original application for Federal Small Starts funding in fall 2008. Every year, the FTA requires Small Starts project sponsors to update any information that has changed since the last Small Starts update. In October, 2010 a small starts update was submitted to FTA. The update included a revised project definition based on the Locally Preferred Alternative definitions approved by the cities. In addition, revised construction costs and operating and maintenance costs were developed. FTA will review the submittal and rank the project based on the information submitted.

Prior Relevant Board Actions/Policies:
Resolution No. 10-033 selecting the Locally Preferred Alternative for East Bay Bus Rapid Transit for study in the Final Environmental Impact Statement

Attachments:
Attachment: Draft outreach materials

Approved by: Mary V. King, Interim General Manager
Reviewed by: Tina Spencer, Director of Service Development and Planning
Prepared by: Jim Cunradi, Manager of Special Projects
Date Prepared: November 8, 2010
**Traffic**

The East Bay is growing and so is traffic congestion. Transit experts across the US and world have identified BRT as a cost-effective way to improve transit, increase ridership and provide a more equitable transportation system.

**Effects to Traffic and Circulation**

BRT involves trade-offs between using our surface roads to move people and passengers, or to move cars and trucks. Although improving transit will slow down car travel speed, transit allows more people to travel along the same road.

**What if we don’t build BRT?**

- **Traffic and congestion will get worse** unless we can encourage new people to take transit.
- **Unless our buses are upgraded to work more like light rail**, the bus systems on busy roads will get worse as traffic increases.
- **If the bus system gets worse**, all bus riders will suffer from delays and inconveniences.
- **If the bus system gets worse**, many existing bus riders will choose to drive and increase car traffic even more.

**Addressing Traffic congestion impacts**

- **Because BRT dedicates one lane of existing car traffic in each direction to the bus**, in some areas the car traffic will be more congested. The road will still meet city standards for congestion.
What is BRT?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a transportation technology being implemented across the US and internationally. AC Transit has designed East Bay BRT to bring its transit benefits to Oakland, Berkeley and San Leandro.

An upgraded form of transit, BRT is essentially light rail without the tracks. Service will reliably run every 5 minutes on weekdays from 6 am to 7 pm.

Addressing Traffic flow impacts

- **BRT will build new medians** in some locations that will prevent some left turns.
- **With fewer left-turns, there will be fewer car accidents.** New medians are a common traffic safety improvement.
- **Because buses can carry so many more people than cars,** BRT will dramatically increase the overall capacity of the road without making the road wider.
- **Some drivers may decide to take other streets instead of the BRT corridor.** However, BRT will not significantly increase traffic on side streets.
- **If a car breaks down in the traffic lane,** regular drivers will be able to briefly enter the BRT lane to go around.
- **BRT would improve police and ambulance response time** by giving emergency vehicles access to the dedicated lane (buses would pull over).

Contact the BRT Project Team: by web: www.actforme.org; by phone: Jim Cunradi - (510) 891-4755 or planning@actransit.org; Oakland - (510) 238-3792 or brt@oaklandnet.com; Berkeley - brt@cityofberkeley.info; San Leandro - (510) 577-3371

- **Upgraded buses**
- **Dedicated, bus-only lanes**
- **Traffic signal priority**
- **Step-free, level bus entry**
- **“Proof-of-payment” fare system (similar to CalTrain)**
- **Real-time arrival information**
**Environment**

The East Bay is growing and so is traffic congestion. Transit experts across the US and world have identified BRT as a cost-effective way to improve transit, increase ridership and provide a more equitable transportation system.

**Effects on the Environment & Our Community**

BRT provides a healthy transportation alternative that helps our vibrant East Bay communities to grow more sustainably. As the only transportation method approved by the Kyoto Protocol, BRT will help the East Bay achieve their goals to reduce emissions and air pollution.

**Helping our environment**

- Berkeley, Oakland and San Leandro have all created Climate Action Plans requiring GHG emissions reduction, and BRT will help meet those goals.

- Oakland has explicitly included BRT in its Climate Action Plan, and San Leandro has included BRT in its plans for transit-oriented development.

- BRT will bring multiple benefits to our communities:
  - reduce fuel consumption in the corridor by 210,000 gallons/year
  - decrease the production of greenhouse gases by 1,900 tons/year
  - reduce automobile trips by 9,300 trips/day
  - improve air quality and reduce noise and other pollution from street traffic.

**Examples of East Bay BRT at Key Locations**

- International Blvd. & 82nd Ave.
- Telegraph Ave. & 24th St.
- Telegraph Ave. & 31st St.
- International Blvd. and 98th Ave.
Encouraging pedestrians and bikes

- **BRT will calm speeding traffic and install new crosswalks** and pedestrian islands, making crossing the street much safer.

- **BRT will widen sidewalks** in some neighborhoods, add sidewalk bulb-outs at some corners, and add sidewalk curb cuts (crosswalk ramps) where needed.

- **BRT will implement bike lanes** throughout much of Oakland, creating safe, healthy and family-oriented transportation choices.

- **BRT will install new benches**, bus stops and lighting to create safer transit stops.

Building community spaces

- **By encouraging walking** and putting more “eyes on the streets,” our streets will become safer for everyone.

- **Many communities place a high value on their street medians, and AC Transit does too.** We’re funding new medians and working to make minimal impacts on existing medians.

- **BRT is particularly useful to youth** as it provides access to hundreds of churches, schools and youth centers along the corridor.

- **BRT will improve police and ambulance response time** by giving emergency vehicles access to a traffic-free dedicated lane (buses will continue to pull over to allow emergency vehicles to pass).

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BRT will make it safer and easier to get around town by increasing bus speed and reliability. Although the plan increases walking distance between some existing 1 Line bus stops, the overall transit benefits support youths, seniors and disabled people that choose not to drive, cannot drive, or cannot afford to drive.

Effects on Seniors and Accessibility

BRT will make it safer and easier to get around town by increasing bus speed and reliability. Although the plan increases walking distance between some existing 1 Line bus stops, the overall transit benefits support youths, seniors and disabled people that choose not to drive, cannot drive, or cannot afford to drive.

Getting to the BRT

- **Eighty percent of riders will use the same stops they use today.** BRT will combine the 1 and 1R Lines. There will be more bus stops than the 1R currently has, but fewer stops than the 1 currently has.

- **Getting to the stop will be more pleasant.** Car traffic will be a little bit slower, the sidewalk will be wider and repaved in some areas, and there will be new crosswalks and benches at every stop.

- **Crossing the street will be easier.** Median bus stops create “pedestrian islands” for people that need more time to cross, and bus stops will have new, high-visibility crosswalks.

- **Pedestrians will be safer from cars.** BRT will reduce the number of car lanes, which discourages speeding and reduces dangerous driving.

- **In general, BRT stops will be four to five blocks apart.** Because some stops will be removed, some people will need to go a little farther to get to a bus.

Examples of East Bay BRT at Key Locations

- International Blvd. & 82nd Ave.
- Telegraph Ave. & 24th St.
- Telegraph Ave. & 31st St.
- International Blvd. and 98th Ave.
At the BRT stop

- **Getting on and off the bus will be faster and easier.** Raised bus stop platforms mean that people with wheelchairs and strollers can roll into the bus without using a ramp or navigating stairs. Ticket machines at every BRT stop will allow riders to purchase tickets without feeling rushed.

- **For new BRT stops in the median,** riders will cross just one lane of traffic at a time, eliminating the need to cross four lanes of traffic.

- **All BRT stops will have shelter, seating and lighting for security.**

- **The dedicated lanes will eliminate bus “bunching.”**

Riding the BRT

- **BRT bus fare will cost the same as regular local bus fare.**

- **The BRT will arrive every 5 minutes on weekdays,** from 6 am – 7 pm. It will arrive less often during the evenings, late at night and on weekends.

- **Riders will arrive at their destinations more quickly.** Although the bus will still follow regular speed limits, it will stop at fewer red lights and get stuck behind fewer cars.

Improve Emergency Response Time

- **BRT will improve police and ambulance response time by giving emergency vehicles access to a traffic-free dedicated lane** (buses will continue to pull over to allow emergency vehicles to pass).

- **In an emergency such as a traffic accident,** the dedicated lane will be available for use by drivers if needed.

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BRT will provide a sustainable transportation method that will attract more travelers to this vital East Bay commercial corridor. Although some parking will be impacted, BRT will prioritize moving more people rather than more cars, all while encouraging increased foot traffic in front of local shops.

Parking impacts

- In some locations, BRT will reduce the on-street parking supply to make room for dedicated bus, bike and left-turn lanes.
- Even after parking reductions, there will be street parking for customers within about a block of your business.
- AC Transit is actively working with representatives from local businesses and community organizations to find smart ways to mitigate parking impacts.
- Some unmetered spaces may be converted to metered spaces, creating continually shifting parking for local business customers.
- Some people that currently drive will take BRT instead, reducing the demand for parking to some degree.
Increasing foot traffic

- **BRT will invest in attractive new benches, bus stop shelters, lighting and sidewalk curb cuts** to make the sidewalk more pleasant.
- **BRT will calm speeding**, creating a safer neighborhood destination.
- **BRT will improve aesthetics** with a new median in some places and repaved streets.
- **Two-thirds of local merchants reported increased foot traffic** when similar pedestrian elements and street amenities were implemented along Valencia Street in San Francisco.

Addressing small business impacts

- **BRT will create new business delivery zones** so that delivery drivers won’t be ticketed.
- **BRT will implement bike lanes**. Bicyclists are more likely to shop locally.
- **The primary construction impacts would occur when AC Transit repaves the streets**, a project that is desperately needed and otherwise unfunded.
- **The secondary construction impacts would occur during the bus stop construction**. AC Transit would work with small business owners to minimize impacts.

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Why BRT?

The East Bay is growing and so is traffic congestion. Transit experts across the US and world have identified BRT as a cost-effective way to improve transit, increase ridership and provide a more equitable transportation system.

BRT Breaks the Traffic Cycle

We’re trapped in a traffic congestion cycle. As population grows and more drivers are on the road, traffic gets worse. This makes the bus less reliable and creates unsatisfied customers, which causes some riders to switch to driving. This adds more cars to the road, which increases traffic and makes the bus even less reliable. This creates more unsatisfied bus riders... and so on.

BRT breaks this cycle by giving the bus its own lane. This ensures that the bus is a reliable option for people that cannot or do not want to drive, preventing ridership from going down. In fact, BRT systems have been proven to attract new riders to sustainable transportation.

Avoiding Gridlock, Building Community

BRT asks East Bay drivers to make a few changes today so that we can all help avoid gridlocked streets tomorrow. In addition, the project provides other enhancements that will encourage pedestrians and promote community development.
Community Benefits

- **Upgraded Sidewalks**: New curb cuts (intersection ramps)
- **Safer Crosswalks**: Fewer traffic lanes, new crosswalks and new pedestrian islands
- **Better Bus Stops**: All stops have benches, lighting and NextBus signs
- **Healthier Businesses**: Adequate street parking and more foot traffic
- **New Delivery Zones**: No need to double-park
- **Greener Medians**: AC Transit will support development of new medians
- **Safer Driving**: AC Transit will repave potholed streets
- **Fewer Car Accidents**: Slower traffic and fewer lanes
- **Faster Emergency Response**: Ambulances and police can use traffic-free bus lane
- **Safer Bicyclists**

The “Complete Streets” approach is a way of creating streets that are a community resource for everyone that uses the road. The approach enables safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. This encourages more activity on the street, including pedestrians and bicyclists, which stirs local business development.

For example, when parts of San Francisco’s Valencia Street were modified to follow the Complete Streets model, two-thirds of local merchants reported that increased foot traffic and street amenities improved their business and sales.

BRT helps to create Complete Streets in the East Bay by implementing strong transit and pedestrian elements, including new lighting and crosswalks, in connection with existing roads. By making it easier for everyone to use the public sidewalks and streets, BRT will encourage thriving community development along the corridor.

**What Will Change?**

- **Pedestrians**: New and safer crosswalks, pedestrian islands at crosswalks, fewer potholes in crosswalks, safer and more accessible sidewalks, slower car traffic, new medians with planted trees/greenery, new lighting
- **Bus riders**: Buses every five minutes, faster travel, bus stops one or two blocks farther apart, level or “step-free” bus boarding, ticket machines and NextBus signs at every stop, benches and shelter signs at every stop
- **Drivers**: One less lane of traffic in each direction, increase in traffic congestion during peak commute hours, relocated parking areas, new delivery zones along the corridor, some restricted left turns due to new medians