

**BRIEFING MEMO**

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

**GM Memo No. 04-288**  
  
Meeting Date: September 1, 2004

**Committees:**

- |                               |                                     |                              |                          |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Planning Committee            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Finance Committee            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| External Affairs Committee    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Operations Committee         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Student Pass Committee</i> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <i>Paratransit Committee</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Board of Directors</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>Financing Corporation</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**SUBJECT:**

**Consider staff's initial proposal and process for the West County Service Plan**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

- Information Only     Briefing Item     Recommended Motion

**Fiscal Impact:**

Staff's proposed Phase 1 of the plan will have no fiscal impacts on the District. Staff's proposed Phase 2 is projected to cost \$1.75 million annually in operating costs.

**Background/Discussion:**

With the economic fluctuations over the past 10 years, bus service in West Contra Costa County (West County) has similarly expanded and contracted to meet increasing service demands or District budget constraints. Whether the District has increased or reduced service, service design has been driven by finances rather than an overall

**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 on \_\_\_\_\_, 2004.

Rose Martinez, District Secretary  
By \_\_\_\_\_

plan. Most recently, the District had to cut service in West County in effect leaving a basic route network in response to a large AC Transit budget deficit.

The District now has an opportunity to restructure West County's route network to meet the area's needs. In October of 2003, planning staff began initial work on the West County Service Plan (WCSP). The WCSP is a transit plan for West Contra Costa County which includes, but is not limited to:

- restructuring the route network
- examining runtimes and schedules
- addressing the needs of riders and the public in the area

Staff identified additional service improvement opportunities in areas of Berkeley and Albany, which are proposed to be studied in the WCSP. Thus far, staff has completed the following steps in the process of creating the WCSP:

**Goals & Objectives (*Attachment A*)** – Using AC Transit's *Short Range Transportation Plan* and *Strategic Vision* documents as the basis for a service plan study, staff drafted a plan to restructure service in West Contra Costa County.

**Scope of Work (*Attachment B*)** – The Scope of Work is an outline and rough schedule of staff's work and efforts toward the WCSP. It outlines the major necessary tasks to complete the WCSP including data collection, analysis, recommendations, and implementation.

**WCSP Technical Advisory Committee (WCSP TAC)** – Through the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee, staff created the WCSP TAC to oversee the study. The TAC includes staff from WCCTAC, City of Richmond, City of San Pablo, City of El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, WestCAT, and BART. In addition, representatives from AC Transit's Drivers' Committee are also members of this TAC. The initial meeting of the WCSP TAC occurred on January 8, 2004. TAC meetings are scheduled on an "as-needed" basis when AC Transit staff has progress to report on the plan.

**Community Meetings** – Staff regularly attends the following meetings to get an idea of the community's transit needs:

- Richmond-area Community-based Transportation Plan Transportation Action Committee
- Richmond Marina Area Shuttle Task Force
- Parchester Village Neighborhood Council
- City of Berkeley Transit Sub-committee

**Service Quality Meetings** - Service Development staff schedules regular internal meetings at the operating divisions, as an additional source of comment and information. With respect to the WCSP, staff participated in the following:

- AC Transit Emeryville Division Service Quality Meetings
- AC Transit Richmond Division Service Quality Meetings

From these meetings and the community meetings, staff has received input on where and how AC Transit's service in West County can be improved (*Attachment C*). Although it is difficult to consider each piece of input, staff did extract a number of ideas for recommendations in the WCSP.

**Data Collection** – From January to March of this year, staff collected automatic passenger counter (APC) data for all Richmond Division local routes, and a number of Emeryville Division routes serving Berkeley and Albany. The APCs collected data on ridership, load factor, running times, and schedule adherence. On average, data was collected on each bus trip about three times in order to receive accurate information.

**Data Analysis** - From the APC data, staff conducted an extensive route segment analysis for all local transit lines in West County and parts of Berkeley and Albany. The segment analysis examined the transit ridership on street segments where there is AC Transit service. From this analysis, staff evaluated route segment productivity, using the information to recommend appropriate levels of service and route structure. For the most part, ridership in West County was equally distributed along the routes throughout the entire route network. However, the segment analysis did reveal some unproductive segments in Point Isabel, Hilltop Green, and portions of Route 376. The segment analysis also revealed productive segments along the San Pablo and Macdonald Corridors. Staff used the information extracted from this segment analysis to assist them in proposing the initial recommendations.

**Recommendations** – Based on the comprehensive data analysis, input from community stakeholders, and various studies including the Richmond-area Community-based Transportation Plan, staff has made initial recommendations for the WCSP. These recommendations are preliminary and will need to be further examined and reviewed prior to implementation.

Phase 1 (*Attachment D*) – Under Phase 1, unproductive segments are eliminated and extra running time on existing routes is reallocated to create a more streamlined route network. In addition, some bus lines are rerouted for more productive service and some discontinued routes are brought back due to community demand. More routes are proposed to terminate at the Richmond Parkway Transit Center (RPTC) in order to create a new transit hub at this future high-capacity facility. Finally, staff proposes to create timed-transfer points for buses and trains at Downtown Berkeley BART Plaza and the Richmond BART Station. Staff believes that Phase 1 can be implemented without any additional operating costs because service hours are reallocated rather

than added on. Pending Environmental Review and further evaluation, staff plans to implement Phase 1 in March 2005.

Phase 2 (Attachment E) – Phase 2 meets future service demand and improves service on the San Pablo and Macdonald Corridors. In addition, Phase 2 extends service on the San Pablo Corridor to the RPTC to further establish the facility as the major West County transit hub. Staff is currently working with the City of Richmond and Golden Gate Transit (GGT) to reroute GGT's Line 40/42 so that it travels along Macdonald Avenue rather than Cutting Boulevard after coming off of the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge. This reroute would provide additional service to the Macdonald Corridor. In addition, GGT's Line 40/42 is eligible from Regional Measure 2 capital improvement funds. These funds could potentially be used to partially pay for the Macdonald Corridor Streetscape Improvement Project at major transit nodes. This project is not fully funded at this point. In addition to these changes, staff proposes to shift the timed-transfer point from the Richmond BART Station to the RPTC in order to meet WestCAT bus lines. Staff estimates Phase 2 to cost approximately \$1.75 million annually to operate. Although there is no definite schedule or funding to implement Phase 2, there is potential to start the proposed Richmond Marina service sooner with funds from Richmond Marina agencies such as Department of Health Services, University of California, and Campus Bay.

**Review Process** – Thus far, Planning's initial recommendations have been internally reviewed by Richmond Division bus drivers at the regular Service Quality Forums. In addition, the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Drivers Committee reviewed the plan on August 4, 2004. Here are the comments from these two groups in response to planning's initial WCSP recommendations:

- Do not transfer bus service from one bus division to another; any service hours saved in a bus division should be used for service to come out of the same bus division (i.e. Line 52 savings used to extend Line 71 and Line 76).
- Make sure there are adequate bathroom facilities at bus endpoints, particularly at Downtown Berkeley/UC Loop, UC Village, and RPTC.
- Decrease the frequency on Line 376 rather than eliminate segments of the route in order to get service hour savings.
- Do not split line on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and force riders to transfer at the Richmond BART Station.
- Do not isolate Macdonald Avenue service. There are a number of riders who travel from bus stops along Macdonald to areas of Berkeley and Downtown Oakland along the San Pablo Corridor and Line 72M.
- Do not bring Golden Gate Transit service onto Macdonald Avenue and use it as a supplemental service to AC Transit. This idea has been brought up and turned down before and GGT's service and buses are not accessible by AC Transit passengers.

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On September 9, 2004, the WCSP TAC will review these initial recommendations and provide comments. Invitations to this TAC meeting will be extended to community stake-holders including City of Berkeley staff, City of Albany Staff, Richmond Marina Employers, the Richmond-area Community-based TAC, and the Parchester Village Neighborhood Council. Staff will continue to accept comments from the community, drivers, and the Board of Directors until the recommendations are finalized.

**Next Steps** – Staff will continue with the review process for its initial recommendations. Staff will also further analyze the recommendations in terms of available space at route endpoints, schedule feasibility, and restroom availability for drivers. Staff will work with other staff from the local jurisdictions when conducting the further analysis. In addition to the analysis of the route changes, staff will begin to preliminarily draft bus schedules for the timed-transfer points in Phase 1. The Board of Directors will be regularly informed of staff's progress on the plan.

**Prior Relevant Board Actions/Policies:**

None

**Attachments:**

**Attachment A** – AC Transit West Contra Costa County Service Plan Goals & Objectives

**Attachment B** – AC Transit West Contra Costa County Service Plan Scope of Work Outline

**Attachment C** – West County Service Plan Community & Drivers Input

**Attachment D** – Draft WSCP Phase 1

**Attachment E** – Draft WCSP Phase 2

**Approved by:** Rick Fernandez, General Manager  
Nancy Skowbo, Deputy General Manager of Service Development

**Prepared by:** Robert del Rosario, Transportation Planner

**Date Prepared:** August 19, 2004