

**BERKELEY-OAKLAND-SAN LEANDRO
BUS RAPID TRANSIT
POLICY STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC)**

**AC TRANSIT
1600 FRANKLIN STREET
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA**

MEETING SUMMARY

November 20, 2009, 3:00 PM

ROLL CALL: At 3:09 PM, Executive Administrative Assistant Kim Vazquez called the roll.

PSC MEMBERS PRESENT: AC Transit Director Elsa Ortiz; AC Transit Director Greg Harper (Acting Committee Chair); AC Transit Board President Berkeley Councilperson Kriss Worthington; Berkeley Mayor and MTC Commissioner Tom Bates; Oakland Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan; San Leandro Councilmember Michael Gregory; San Leandro Councilmember Joyce Starosciak; Caltrans District 4 Director (Caltrans Ex Officio) Bijan Sartipi.

PSC MEMBERS ABSENT: Rocky Fernandez (Committee Chair); Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley; Oakland Councilmember Larry Reid.

AC TRANSIT STAFF: Deputy General Manager Jim Gleich; Deputy General Manager for Service Development Nancy Skowbo; BRT Project Manager Jim Cunradi; Transportation Planning Manager, Cory LaVigne; Executive Administrative Assistant Kim Vazquez.

ITEM 1: GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Director Harper explained that Chair Rocky Fernandez would not be attending the meeting and that he had asked Director Harper to chair the meeting.

ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments of the public contained in the minutes are the opinion of the speakers, and there is no guarantee of their accuracy.

None

ITEM 3: ADOPTION OF MINUTES FOR THE October 16, 2009 MEETING

Motion to accept the May 15 Meeting Minutes, moved by Ortiz, seconded by Gregory; passed unanimously (Fernandez, Miley, Bates, Worthington and Reid not present).

ITEM 4: CHAIR'S REPORT:

Director Harper said since he was filling in for Chair Fernandez, there would be no Chair's report. He recognized Councilmember Worthington's arrival at 3:10pm.

ITEM 5: PERTINENT ACTIONS OF THE AC TRANSIT BOARD – STANDING ITEM

Director Harper said that the AC Transit board reached an agreement with MTC on Wednesday, November 18 on the conditions that MTC required before they would consider allowing AC Transit to divert CMAQ funds to District operations. MTC Committee and full Commission approval, as well as FTA approval are still required for the funds diversion request.

ITEM 6: FUNDING TASK FORCE

Director Harper said there was some discussion as to the responsibilities of the Task Force, and that the Board had agreed to continue this item. AC Transit staff was directed to come back to Board with recommendations for a Task Force to review the issue of financial sustainability. The PSC will be provided with updates on future Board actions with respect to the Task Force.

ITEM 7: CMAQ FUNDS DIVERSION UPDATE

Capital Development, Legislation & Grants Manager Kate Miller said that in the last month, staff from AC Transit, FTA and MTC met to discuss the diversion of \$35 million in CMAQ revenues from the BRT Project to operations. MTC supports the diversion of the funds as long as their requirements are met. The Board approved these requirements on Wednesday, November 18th. MTC would also like AC Transit to show that the project being proposed is eligible for CMAQ funds. Staff is now working with FTA staff directly. A letter has been developed, and the air quality modeling has been completed. A draft was sent to FTA and they requested a few revisions, and told us that Region 9 staff would be very supportive of the proposal in Washington, which is where the decision will be made. A final letter to Leslie Rogers from Mary King will go out on Monday, November 23.

Director Harper requested the PSC get a copy of the letter when it goes out.

Councilmember Kaplan asked how soon we should expect to know whether or not the proposal has been approved.

Kate Miller explained that MTC is scheduled to take action in the middle of December. FTA understands we have a timing issue and that we need to know that the funds will be in hand by March 2010, when we are scheduled to implement service adjustments.

ITEM 8: BUS LANE OPERATIONS

BRT Project Manager Jim Cunradi began by explaining that there are three basic scenarios for bus lane operations. The focus for this discussion will be two larger topics:

1. Why do we only have three scenarios?
2. What would any of the scenarios look like in the real world as opposed to in a technical study?

The three types of bus lanes are:

1. Dedicated
 - a. Exclusively used by buses
 - b. Cars not allowed to use
 - c. Emergency vehicles are allowed to use
 - d. Protocols must be followed when an emergency vehicle is using the lane
2. Mixed Flow
 - a. Every type of motor vehicle shares the lanes
 - b. What is currently in use today
3. Shared Bus Lanes
 - a. Typically used on one-way streets
 - b. Bus lane next to parking or bike lane
 - c. Motorists can't use unless making right turns or parking
 - d. Motorists can't use the lanes to drive through intersections

There are three reasons why the scenarios for bus operations are limited:

1. Simplicity/Ease of Use – Motorists and bus drivers need to know and understand and follow the laws and conditions of use. The more different scenarios, makes it more difficult for all drivers.
2. It is easier for police to enforce the restrictions.
3. Ease of use and clarity makes it safer and more reliable.

In the real world there are things beyond our control, i.e. double parkers, delivery trucks, accidents, etc., that will impact the way that dedicated bus lanes are used, and for which we need to have policies in place. For example, in a traditional dedicated bus lane there may be an island or curb that keeps other vehicles from ever using the lane. However, in order for a dedicated bus lane to work in the real world for this project, we would designate the dedicated bus lanes with road markings or tactile bumps or maybe even a small change in the height of the pavement. This type of lane designation alerts drivers they are in a bus only lane illegally, but also allows for temporary use of the lane to bypass a double parked car or delivery truck. It also allows buses to use the adjacent traffic lane should there be road or signal work being done that affects the bus lane.

Director Ortiz asked if we knew yet, where along the corridor we would implement dedicated bus lanes. And if so, what percentage of the corridor would have dedicated bus lanes.

Jim Cunradi said from the Small Starts Submittal a year ago, we had 85% of the project as dedicated bus only lanes. However, through the process of working with the cities that number will probably be a bit lower. It will still be a robust and reliable project.

There are places we aren't proposing bus lanes, such as downtown San Leandro, because the streets are too narrow. We've also opted not to have dedicated bus lanes on Broadway because there are already over 100 buses per hour. There are also places that the cities have chosen not to have them.

Director Harper questioned why, on Broadway where we have a bus every 90 seconds we aren't implementing bus only lanes.

Jim Cunradi said that in the Small Starts Application, there is an assumption on the frequency of the service, so there is a BRT bus going one way or the other every 2.5 minutes. We commissioned a study early on with Nelson Nygaard that determined that a single bus lane can accommodate 40 buses per hour per lane. So, to accommodate more than twice that amount of buses or 100 buses per hour, we'd need more bus lanes. This seems too much to demand. Also, on Broadway, the buses need to be able to position themselves in one lane or the other as they go down the road. Having a single bus lane doesn't work for that. We can optimize signal timing to improve times for buses.

Joyce Starosciak asked what the physical difference is between shared bus lanes and mixed flow lanes. Jim replied that the two are physically identical. However, in a shared bus lane on a one-way street, cars can only use the right lane to make a right turns, or to park. They can't use it to drive through an intersection.

Councilmember Kaplan asked why we wouldn't use the shared bus lanes on more of the corridor. Jim replied that they really only work well on one-way streets because typically there are only right turns being made by cars every other block. On a two way street, there could be cars in the shared lane on every block which would slow the buses.

Councilmember Kaplan said that for all scenarios, enforcement is going to be 90% of the plan's success. She asked that at another meeting the PSC talk about automated cameras on the buses. The alternative is paying a lot for police enforcement.

Director Harper asked who would be responsible for police or sheriff enforcement. Jim said that is up to the cities.

Councilmember Starosciak agreed with Councilmember Kaplan that because of the cost for police enforcement, the committee should talk seriously about alternatives such as cameras on buses.

ITEM 9: LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA) ADOPTION AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT REPORT (FEIS/R) SCHEDULE

BRT Project Manager Jim Cunradi said he wanted to provide an update on recent activities.

1. In San Leandro they have held a series of public meetings, some with excellent attendance and some with sparse attendance. They also held stakeholder meetings, the most recent of which was Friday morning, November 20 with the City Chamber of Commerce. Some issues that came up were Bal Theater parking, and access to the International Market on East 14th Street. Staff will go back to see if these issues can be addressed so that when the proposal goes to the Planning Commission next month, we'll have a strategy to resolve the issues.
2. The City of Oakland has postponed their public meetings, but they have them all scheduled with locations reserved for January. They will be 5 neighborhood oriented meetings, including one large meeting in downtown Oakland for the city as a whole. They are still working internally on getting the LPA vetted through administrative staff. They are on schedule.
3. The City of Berkeley Transportation Commission met on Thursday, November 19. The commission sent recommendations back to staff on how to modify the LPA report.
4. A line item for Caltrans is now on the schedule so people can see its critical path. The first item is the cooperative agreement which AC Transit's legal counsel is reviewing and will return to Caltrans. The other major item is the Project Study Report (PSR). This is the document that Caltrans uses to review the project, and which goes to functional units of Caltrans such as design and environmental. It is tied very closely to the LPA. Once we know what the project is we can draft the PSR.

Councilmember Kaplan recommended that staff go before the Oakland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. It is important that we are aware of how the BRT aligns with bike lanes. Jim said discussion is happening at the staff level but agreed it should also go before the Committee.

Councilmember Kaplan also mentioned that since most folks in Oakland didn't realize at first that we have to run on two separate streets just east of the lake, that we need signage that alerts riders that they will pick up the bus on a different street on their return trip. This may also happen in Berkeley.

ITEM 9: COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Councilmember Starosciak said that at the CMA meeting the budget for funding for the Corridor Enhancement Plan (CEP) came up. She asked if the CMA is still going to proceed with a discussion of this or will the PSC maintain the discussions.

Beth Walukas with ACCMA said they are still trying to get their funding together. They have two applications out for funding; one is for State of California TE funds, and the other is a FOCUS application for visioning work. They met with the jurisdictions of San Leandro, Berkeley and Oakland to discuss whether or not they are going in the right direction.

Councilmember Ortiz requested some clarification of Councilmember Starosciaks' question.

Councilmember Starosciak said at one of the first meetings of the PSC the committee agreed to have the CMA be the lead organization for following through.

Beth Walukas clarified further that the CMA would act by providing a supporting study that looks at land usage along the corridor that supports the BRT system, as well as linkages to the transit project, so that the PSC could focus on the transit portion of the project.

Councilmember Kaplan asked if the land use study would then allow the designation of a priority development area (PDA) for the corridor. Beth said there are already quite a few PDAs in the corridor, and the land use study would look more at the whole corridor and whether it is in itself is a PDA.

Councilmember Kaplan announced that our region is seeking to host the World Cup. She handed out some fliers and suggested everyone go online and encourage World Cup *Futbol* to come here. She also asked when we would be discussing the various fund diversion possibilities. Would it happen after the EIR or before.

Director Harper said that since the project was so heavily pre-funded from the start, that as far as AC Transit is concerned there isn't a serious impingement.

Deputy General Manager Service Development Nancy Skowbo said that at the end of the LPA process we'll know what the project will be and have a clearer idea of the cost.

Next meeting date: January 22, 2010

The meeting adjourned at 3:52 PM.

KV