



City of Alameda California

November 5, 2015

Michael Hursh
General Manager
AC Transit
1600 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: AC Transit Service Expansion Plan

Dear Mr. Hursh:

The purpose of this letter is to express appreciation for your efforts at completing a draft AC Transit Service Expansion Plan (SEP) and also to provide you with City of Alameda staff recommendations on how to proceed.

Support: Restoration of Line 19 – Northern Waterfront (SEP Alternative #3)

Restoration of AC Transit Line 19 serving the Northern Waterfront Priority Development Area (PDA) is the highest priority for the City of Alameda and we strongly support SEP Alternative #3. Nevertheless, we request that AC Transit staff consider altering the proposed route to include Marina Village, increasing the service frequency to every 15 or 20 minutes during peak hours, and sharing bus stops in Oakland with Line 51A to allow riders to have multiple options to Alameda. With several new transit oriented residential developments under construction in the Northern Waterfront PDA, it is important to restore the line as soon as possible. An excellent opportunity exists to pursue a partnership between AC Transit, the City of Alameda and the Northern Waterfront PDA developments whereby the developments provide an operating subsidy for the line in return for 15 to 20 minute minimum bus frequency during the peak commute periods and access to AC Transit EasyPasses, which are group discount transit passes. A partnership would benefit AC Transit and the future Northern Waterfront transit users, and would provide a better transit alternative than multiple independent project-sponsored shuttles running parallel services with a restored Line 19. The 15 to 20 minute headways are important because the project entitlements establish a 20 minute headway as the minimum necessary to mitigate project related traffic. In the absence of the 20 minute headway on the Line 19, the developments will be obligated to run their own 20 minute commute hour services. This partnership also could encompass the existing Estuary Crossing Shuttle services, ridership and funding, and would benefit existing Northern Waterfront residents who tend to be lower income than other Alameda residents.

Office of the City Manager

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Support: Main Street Ferry Connection (SEP Alternatives #1 or #2)

City of Alameda staff requests that AC Transit fund a bus route connection to the Main Street ferry terminal as a phased approach, and understands that this Service Expansion Plan only would be able to fund one of the three alternatives. These Main Street ferry terminal bus routes would connect the Main Street ferry terminal with other parts of the island. City staff requests that AC Transit continue to commit staff resources to providing a cross island connection in partnership with the City and WETA by identifying potential revenue sources and cost-efficient ways to implement the service as soon as possible.

Support: Modified Line 31 (SEP's L28 14th Avenue – Alameda Point to Dimond District)

City staff requests that AC Transit pursue the modified Line 31 in that it would provide new service between the College of Alameda and Laney College/Lake Merritt BART station after traveling through downtown Oakland. Estuary Crossing Shuttle riders who currently travel between the College of Alameda and Laney College would take a modified AC Transit Line 31. This modified route also would improve coverage within Alameda Landing, and could consider altering the proposed route to not cover Marina Village if Line 19 were to provide bus service in this area.

Oppose: Modified Transbay Line O to Encinal Avenue/Central Avenue (SEP's T1 Encinal – Broadway & Blanding – San Francisco)

City staff requests that AC Transit *not* pursue changing Transbay Line O to Encinal Avenue/Central Avenue, which would terminate at Bridgeside Shopping Center on Blanding Avenue for the following reasons:

- Line O, which currently runs on Santa Clara Avenue, offers service to both the Northern Waterfront and central Alameda – all within about a one-half mile walk – whereas south shore currently is covered by Transbay Line W. A more southerly route along Encinal Avenue/Central Avenue would require a greater walking distance for the Northern Waterfront, which is a priority development area for the City of Alameda and has residents with lower incomes than the rest of the island.
- Santa Clara Avenue is a more reliable corridor than Central Avenue and Encinal Avenue, which have more traffic signals, and also are further into the island so would increase the route time.
- The new Line O would require a transfer to go to Fruitvale BART because it would no longer terminate at Fruitvale BART as it does today.
- The new Line O would require entirely new bus stops, which would eliminate parking in places where a bus stop has not occurred in the past.
- The new Line O would conflict with Alternative #1 in the Service Expansion Plan - local service along Central Avenue and Encinal Avenue between Main Street ferry terminal and Fruitvale BART, which is desirable to help better connect the island.

Outreach: Alamedan Comments

City of Alameda staff reviewed the comments received by AC Transit on the draft Service Expansion Plan. Several parents of students going to charter schools in west Alameda requested improved bus service and preferred Alternative #2 – Encinal. In the short term, AC Transit staff is in the process of improving coordination with charter schools. City staff supports improved service to schools throughout the City of Alameda, and will continue to work with AC Transit on this topic. In general, community members were supportive of bus service to the Northern Waterfront area and the Main Street ferry terminal, and they lacked support for moving Transbay Line O to Central Avenue/Encinal Avenue. Furthermore, the above staff recommendations are consistent with the transit sub-committee of the Transportation Commission.

Next Steps: Citywide Transit Plan

City of Alameda is in the process of developing a *Citywide Transit Plan and TDM Plan*, which will build on AC Transit's Service Expansion Plan efforts. As part of this effort, the City will focus on implementing transit-related services and infrastructure by directing funding and by continuing the coordination with transit providers such as AC Transit, WETA and BART in their near- and long-term route planning and expansion activities. Some of the high-priority issues to resolve are to restore bus service to the Main Street ferry terminal and to improve bus service throughout the City of Alameda. City staff will work closely with AC Transit and WETA to identify sources of funds and cost-effective ways to fund these services. Furthermore, this planning effort also will include a public opinion survey to ask Alamedans what would motivate them to use transit, carpool, bicycle or walk instead of driving their automobiles for their commutes, especially for off-island commutes during peak times. This statistically significant survey information will be used to develop the projects, services and priorities that will be recommended in this planning effort.

Thank you for all your efforts on the Service Expansion Plan. In combination with the Line O increased morning service to ten minute frequency starting this December and with the recent Line 51A improvements such as the extended bus queue jump lane and improved bus stops, these additional service expansions also will help serve Alamedans.

If you have any questions, please contact Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator, at (510) 747-6892.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth D. Warmerdam
Interim City Manager

EDW:JO:mk

cc:

Mayor Trish Herrera Spencer
City Councilmembers
Transportation Commissioners
Kevin Connolly, Water Emergency Transportation Authority
Austin Lee, AC Transit