

Transportation Commission

January 27, 2016

Item 5E - Action

Recommend City Council Approval of the AC Transit Service Expansion Plan's Buena Vista Avenue/Line 19 Alternative

Background

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) developed a District-wide Service Expansion Plan (SEP) amounting to \$25.4 million annually. The SEP aims to improve the existing service network by trying to better meet demand and by providing frequent and reliable service to the densest residential and commercial neighborhoods. City staff attended AC Transit's October community meeting in Alameda and incorporated comments from community members who attended the meeting. The City Council provided comments to staff on AC Transit's SEP at the November 3, 2015 City Council meeting where the Interim City Manager announced that staff would send a letter consistent with those comments under City Manager Communications agenda item.

At the November 11, 2015 public hearings, the AC Transit Board received oral and written comments from community members. The outreach effort for the public hearings exceeded the minimum requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and AC Transit Board policy. Staff received and discussed SEP comments from the Transportation Commission's (TC) Transit Committee, which includes Commissioners Miley, Bertken and Schatmeier (Exhibit 1). Staff requested and reviewed the electronic SEP outreach comments received by AC Transit on Alameda routes (Exhibit 3).

Staff presented and discussed staff's SEP recommendation at the Interagency Liaison Committee between AC Transit and City of Alameda representatives on October 14, 2015 and January 6, 2016, which included Mayor Spencer and Councilmember Daysog in October and Vice Mayor Matarrese and Councilmember Daysog in January. At the January 6, 2016 Inter-Liaison Committee between the City of Alameda and AC Transit, AC Transit extended the deadline for the City of Alameda from January 13 to March 1, 2016 for the TC and the City Council to select a recommended expansion route alternative.

At the January 13, 2016 AC Transit Board meeting, the AC Transit Board voted to proceed with the SEP except for City of Alameda alternatives as shown below:

- **Postpone the Alternatives Recommendation (SEP Alternatives #1, 2 and 3):** Allows Alameda time to obtain TC and City Council approvals on a recommended alternative. AC Transit only has funding to implement one of the following three new bus routes in the City of Alameda (Figures 1-3):
 - Alternative #1: Shoreline area (Main Street Ferry – Fruitvale BART)

- Alternative #2: Encinal Avenue (Main Street Ferry – Fruitvale BART)
- Alternative #3: Buena Vista Avenue / Restore Line 19 (Downtown Oakland – Fruitvale BART)

Figure 1: Alternative #1 – Shoreline (Main Street Ferry – Fruitvale BART)

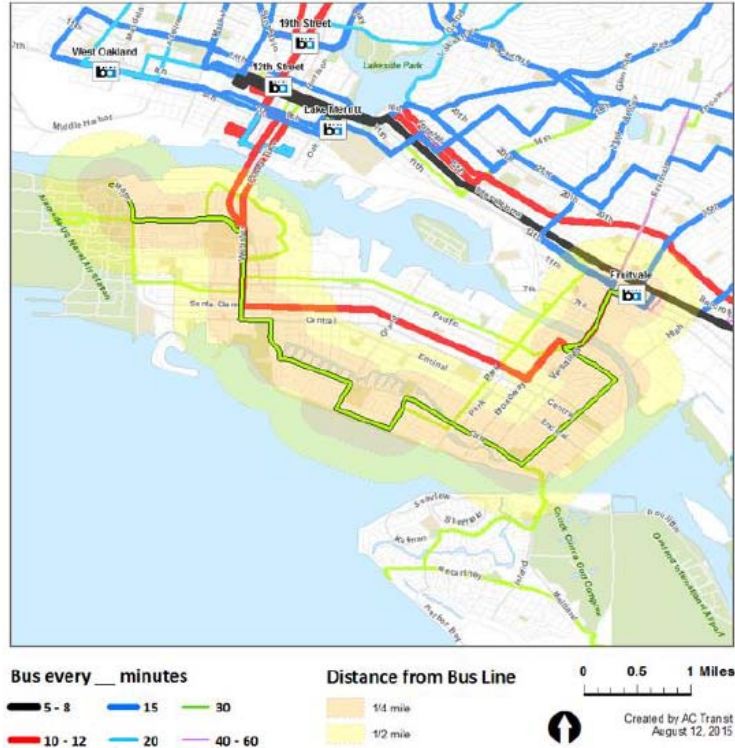


Figure 2: Alternative #2 – Encinal (Main Street Ferry – Fruitvale BART)

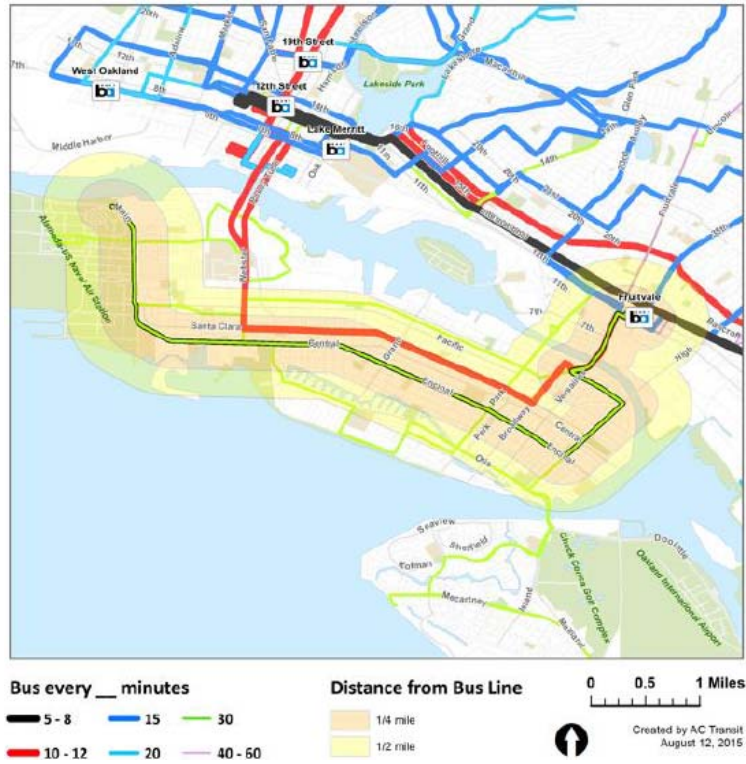
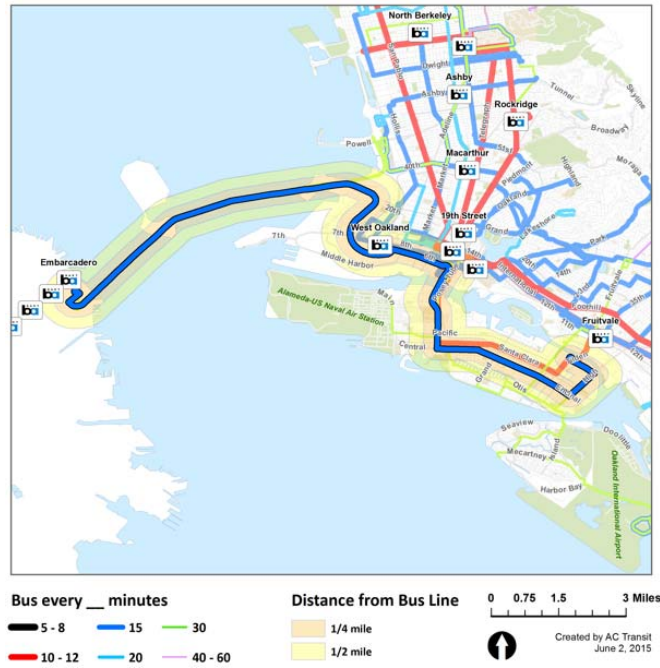


Figure 3: Alternative #3 – Buena Vista (Downtown Oakland – Fruitvale BART)



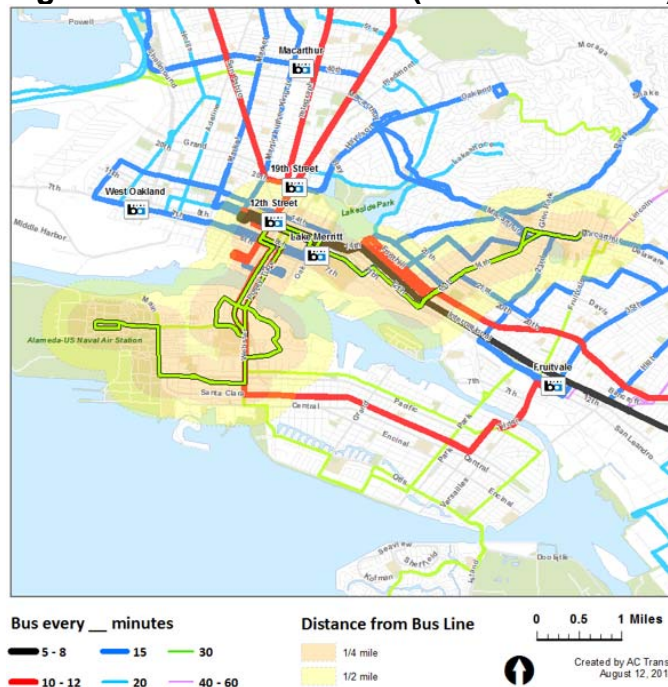
- **Maintain Existing Line O:** Based on comments received from the public and City of Alameda staff, the AC Transit Board did not proceed with the T1 proposal, and will maintain the Line O in its existing condition, which terminates at the Fruitvale BART station and travels along Santa Clara Avenue (Figure 4). Though there are merits to the proposal to have the route terminate on the Alameda side of the estuary and to travel along Encinal Avenue, the impacts of this change need to be taken into consideration, especially breaking the connection from the east end of the island to the Fruitvale BART station and moving the route off of Santa Clara Avenue, which is the central crosstown spine for Alameda.

Figure 4: T1 – Encinal (Broadway & Blanding – San Francisco)



- **Modify Line 31 (L28 14th Avenue):** Provides new direct service between the College of Alameda and Laney College/Lake Merritt BART station after traveling through downtown Oakland (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Modified Line 31 (L28 14th Avenue)



The next steps involve the TC and City Council approving a recommended alternative on January 27 and February 2, 2016, respectively. The AC Transit Board will be requested to approve the recommended alternative in Spring 2016. Implementation of the additional bus service will occur either in Summer 2016 or December 2016.

Discussion

AC Transit has requested that the City of Alameda select one of the three alternatives as shown in Table 1 as the recommended additional bus service to be provided as part of AC Transit's SEP since AC Transit only has funding to implement one alternative. Even though all three alternatives are important, City staff and the TC's Transit Committee recommend restoring AC Transit Line 19 (SEP Alternative #3), which would serve the Northern Waterfront Priority Development Area (PDA), as the highest priority for the City of Alameda. Alternative #3 (Buena Vista Avenue/Restored Line 19) has more potential to relieve congestion than the other two alternatives. A restored Line 19 along the Northern Waterfront would serve Fruitvale BART and downtown Oakland, which would provide both BART and AC Transit connections to locations throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. The TC's Transit Committee recommendation is shown in Exhibit 1, and the City staff recommendation is summarized in a draft letter to AC Transit in Exhibit 2. City staff also requests that AC Transit consider altering the proposed route to include Marina Village, increasing the service frequency to every 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 Line 19 as soon as possible. An opportunity exists to pursue a partnership between AC Transit, the City of Alameda and the Northern Waterfront PDA developments whereby the developments would provide an operating funds for the line to increase frequency to 20-minutes 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 development-sponsored shuttles running services parallel to a restored Line 19. The 20-minute frequencies during peak commute periods are important to mitigate project-related traffic during these more congested times of day. Additionally, this Northern Waterfront 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.

City staff requests that AC Transit continue to commit staff resources to plan a cross island connection to the Main Street ferry terminal (SEP Alternatives #1 and #2) in partnership with the City and the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA). The City, WETA and AC Transit need to identify potential revenue sources, a cross island route based on community consensus and cost-efficient ways to implement the service as soon as possible.

Table 1: Alternatives Comparison

	Alt #1 (Ferry-Shoreline)	Alt #2 (Ferry – Encinal)	Alt #3 (Line 19 – Buena Vista)
Frequency	30 minute	30 minute	30 minute
Span	6 a.m. to 10 p.m.	6 a.m. to 10 p.m.	6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Activity Centers	Alameda Landing, Webster St, South Shore Center	Park Street	Webster Street, Park Street, Marina Village
Major Transit Hubs	Main St. Ferry, Fruitvale BART	Main St. Ferry, Fruitvale BART	12 th Street BART, Fruitvale BART
Low Income/Density Served	West Alameda, Shoreline multi-family units	West Alameda	West Alameda, Northern Waterfront
Past Service	Segments similar to Line 63	Segments similar to Line 63	Line 19
Impact to Tube Traffic	Reduces San Francisco commuters	Reduces San Francisco commuters	Reduces San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley commuters
Schools Served	College of Alameda, ASTI, Wood Middle School	Encinal High School, Junior Jets, Alameda High School	College of Alameda, College of Alameda Annex, Argosy University
Potential Financial Partnership Opportunity	Alameda Landing, WETA	WETA	Northern Waterfront, Marina Village

Budget Considerations/Fiscal Impact

There is no impact to the General Fund. The transit operations are funded by AC Transit. The City of Alameda will pay for the costs of restoring the bus stops and making them accessible. This expense could be paid for using Measure B or BB - Alameda County's transportation sales tax.

Environmental Review

AC Transit evaluated the environmental impacts of the SEP, and prepared the

appropriate draft environmental document under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). AC Transit concluded that the SEP would have no significant impact on the environment, as set forth in a Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration. An initial Title VI analysis concluded that the SEP would not have a disproportionately high and adverse impact on minority or low-income communities.

Recommendation

The City staff recommendation addresses input from the City Council, TC and the community at large, and recommends City Council approval of the AC Transit SEP's Buena Vista Avenue/Line 19 alternative as stated in the staff letter to AC Transit (Exhibit 2) and summarized as follows:

- Restore AC Transit Line 19 (SEP Alternative #3), which would serve the Northern Waterfront PDA, as the highest priority for the City of Alameda.
- Continue the partnership with AC Transit and WETA to provide a new cross island service to the Main Street Ferry Terminal (SEP Alternatives #1 or #2) by identifying potential revenue sources, routing preferences based on community consensus and cost-efficient ways to implement the service as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator

Exhibits

1. Transportation Commission's Transit Committee Memo
2. City of Alameda Draft Letter to AC Transit
3. Compilation of Comments Received by AC Transit for the City of Alameda Bus Lines in the SEP