



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Ryan Russo
Director, Oakland
Department of
Transportation

SUBJECT: AC Transit Rapid Corridors Project

DATE: March 11, 2022

City Administrator Approval 

Date: Apr 5, 2022

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Execute A Cooperative Agreement With The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) For The Rapid Corridors Project And Adopting Appropriate CEQA Findings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AC Transit has received regional, state, and federal funding for the design and implementation of the Rapid Corridors Project (Project). The Project will make bus stop improvements, traffic signal improvements, including installation of transit signal priority (TSP) equipment, along West Grand/Grand Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and Telegraph Avenue. On West Grand/Grand Avenue and Telegraph Avenue, the project relocates some bus stops. AC Transit seeks to implement the Project and provide significant investments to the City's road and transit network that will result in more efficient use of streets for all users at minimal direct cost to the City. The Project is depicted in the Location Map provided as **Attachment A**.

Approval of the proposed Resolution will allow the City Administrator to execute the Cooperative Agreement with AC Transit for the Rapid Corridors Project. Generally, the Cooperative Agreement provides that the City will review and coordinate with AC Transit during design and construction of the Project, and after construction by AC Transit, AC Transit will transfer ownership of all improvements in Oakland to the City. The City will assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the new traffic signal and communications equipment installed as part of the Project, except for the TSP equipment, which will be maintained by AC Transit. The Cooperative Agreement is provided as **Attachment B** and spells out in more detail the roles and responsibilities for AC Transit and the City.

City Council
April 19, 2022

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The AC Transit Major Corridors Study, approved by the AC Transit's Board in 2016, recommended short and long-term infrastructure and operational improvements on 11 high ridership corridors, including West Grand/Grand Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and Telegraph Avenue. This Rapid Corridors Project is the first step towards implementing the short-term recommendations on the Telegraph Avenue, San Pablo Avenue and West Grand/Grand Avenue corridors.

The Rapid Corridors Project also helps implement the Transit Action Strategy, a collaborative plan completed by the City of Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) and AC Transit in 2020. The Transit Action Strategy can be understood as a "to-do list" for OakDOT and AC Transit. The strategy outlines different types of actions that will help improve transit in Oakland. Some actions are relatively minor, like expanding red curb zones to ease bus pull-in and pull-out movements or refreshing crosswalks near bus stops to facilitate passengers crossing the street. Other actions may be invisible, like retiming traffic signals so buses (and motorists) do not get caught at consecutive red lights. Additionally, other actions are long-term, such as creating community plans for major transit streets. Together, it all adds up to progress for Oaklanders who ride the bus.

AC Transit has completed a similar project to improve transit speed and reliability along the AC Transit Line 51 in 2015 (Resolution No. 84648 C.M.S.), which runs from the City of Alameda, through the Posey Tube to Oakland Chinatown and then up Broadway and College Avenue in Oakland before continuing into Berkeley. The project increased overall travel speed and improved the reliability of service. These included interconnection of traffic signals with fiber optic cable, new signal controllers, transit priority equipment and bus stop improvements and relocations.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The Project consists of making traffic signal improvements, installing TSP equipment, improving bus stops and relocating some bus stops along West Grand/Grand Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and Telegraph Avenue, consistent with the Transit Action Strategy recommendations. TSP equipment allows bus detection at signals to keep buses moving on-time and at a steady pace, reinforcing the City's priority to build vibrant, sustainable infrastructure.

Approving the proposed Resolution to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with AC Transit to implement this Project represents a significant investment in the City's transit network at minimal direct cost to the City of Oakland. The Cooperative Agreement provides that AC Transit will design and construct the Project. Upon completion of the design and construction of the Project by AC Transit, AC Transit will transfer ownership of all improvements in Oakland to the City, and the City will assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the new traffic signal

and communications equipment installed as part of the project, except for the TSP equipment, which will be maintained by AC Transit. Coordinating with our regional transit provider to deliver improvements for Oaklanders is an example of responsive, trustworthy government, another City priority.

Not adopting the resolution to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with AC Transit would delay transit speed, reliability and access improvements along the West Grand/Grand Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and Telegraph Avenue corridors. It may also leave the City to shoulder the financial and staff resource costs of upgrading signals, improving signal timing, and improving bus stops. The Cooperative Agreement provides clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of design, construction, and maintenance. A lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities may lead to unpredictable and inefficient maintenance and operations.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact on the City's traffic operations and maintenance is expected to be minor, with maintenance of traffic signal and communications equipment absorbed within existing operations. AC Transit will hire a contractor to operate and maintain all TSP equipment deployed by the Project within the City.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

In Spring 2021, AC Transit conducted extensive stakeholder outreach activities, providing information to community members in multiple formats and languages, including English, Spanish, and Chinese. The goal of this phase of outreach was two-fold:

1. To gather stakeholder (e.g. AC Transit riders, businesses, residents, community organizations, elected officials) input and disseminate information to ensure broad community awareness and encourage stakeholder feedback
2. To provide a range of public input opportunities regarding the proposed improvements prior to moving the project into the detailed design and engineering phases to result in better project outcomes.

AC Transit utilized the following mechanisms to achieve these goals:

- Notification letters in English, Spanish and Chinese
- AC Transit website project pages in English, Spanish and Chinese
- E-Newsletters email notifications in English, Spanish and Chinese
- Social Network Service posts - Twitter (@rideact) and Facebook (@rideact)
- Public input survey in English, Spanish and Chinese (for Grand/West Grand Avenue and Telegraph only)
- Virtual community meetings in English, Spanish and Chinese (for Grand/West Grand Avenue and Telegraph Avenue only)
- Outreach in coordination with stakeholder agencies and organizations to amplify messages, such as University of California, Berkeley, the Temescal-Telegraph Business Improvement District, the Telegraph Business Improvement District, 2x5x Neighborhood Council, Hoover Foster Resident Area Council, and Prescott Neighborhood Council
- Corridor walk/canvassing by AC Transit and other staff

Generally, community members supported improvements to transit improve reliability and to reduce transit travel times. Community members expressed concerns from adjacent businesses and residents about how new bus stops may affect parking and service access to businesses, may create noise, or may block visibility to businesses. As a result of stakeholder feedback, AC Transit modified the proposal, opting to not relocate the bus stops at Telegraph & 55th Street and Telegraph & Alcatraz Avenue. Many people expressed concerns with requiring pedestrians to actuate a signal, rather than having signals on fixed cycles with automatic and predictable pedestrian signal phases. OakDOT and AC Transit are working to ensure pedestrian signal timing modifications both improve transit reliability and speed, without inconveniencing pedestrians. AC Transit also heard requests for improved pedestrian lighting. Please see **Attachment C** for a more detailed discussion of outreach activities and outcomes.

COORDINATION

OakDOT consulted and coordinated with the City Attorney's office and Budget Bureau in the writing of this report and the content.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Execution of the Cooperative Agreement supports the development of an efficient transit system, which is an essential part of the City's transportation infrastructure. Making transit more reliable improves Oaklanders' ability to get around and expands the number of good jobs and services accessible to Oaklanders. Street improvements for transit riders can also help our businesses thrive, keep the local economy local, and make sure the needs of daily life are within walking and transit distance of every neighborhood.

Environmental: The goal of the Project is to improve transit reliability and efficiency, using tools such as traffic signal coordination interconnect, bus stop improvements, and transit signal priority. These tools will help make transit a more attractive transportation option, thereby leading to a reduction of vehicle emissions and reduce exposure to emissions-related pollutants.

Race & Equity: AC Transit's riders are majority people of color, low and no-income, people with disabilities, seniors, and youth. Transit improvements benefit vulnerable populations, providing better access to education, healthcare, and jobs will serve the people who need it most.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

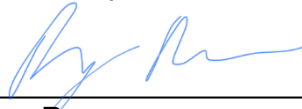
This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the following CEQA Guidelines Sections: Section 15162 and 15163 (no further environmental review required); Section 15060(c)(2) (no direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment); Section 15061(b)(3) (no significant effect on the environment); Section 15183 (projects consistent with a community plan, general plan, or zoning), Section 15301 (existing facilities), Section 15302 (replacement or reconstruction), each of which provides a separate and independent basis for CEQA clearance and when viewed collectively provide an overall basis for CEQA clearance.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Approve A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Execute The Cooperative Agreement With The Alameda – Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) For The Rapid Corridors Project And Adopting Appropriate CEQA Findings.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Emily Ehlers at eehlers@oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments (3)

- A: AC Transit Rapid Corridors Project Location Map
- B: AC Transit Rapid Corridors Cooperative Agreement
- C: AC Transit Outreach Summary

