



AC TRANSIT RAPID CORRIDORS PROJECT OUTREACH SUMMARY MEMORANDUM

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TO: Mika Miyasato | AC Transit

FROM: Kendall Flint | DKS Associates

CC: Renee Hurtado, Jim Peters, and David Mahama | DKS Associates
Phil Erickson and Kai Horng | Community Design + Architecture

SUBJECT: Outreach Summary Memo

Project #19142-000

INTRODUCTION

AC Transit's Rapid Corridors Project aims to improve transit reliability and reduce travel time through the Telegraph Avenue and Grand/West Grand Avenue Rapid Corridors Project and the Dana Complete Street Pilot Project. In Spring 2021, AC Transit with support from the Consultant Team conducted extensive stakeholder outreach activities and provided information to the community about the project in multiple formats and languages, including English, Spanish and Chinese.

This memorandum provides the purpose and goals of the Rapid Corridors stakeholder outreach, a summary of outreach activities, an overall summary of the comments for each corridor, and a detailed appendix detailing outreach activities and input received from stakeholders. Stakeholders include business and property owners, residents along the project streets and surrounding neighborhoods, elected officials, institutions along the routes, bus riders who are local to the affected stops as well as those that are riding through the area, advocacy groups, and organizations directly impacted by proposed changes.

OUTREACH PURPOSE AND GOALS

The main purpose of the stakeholder outreach activities was to ensure broad public awareness and gain input regarding the proposed project elements prior to advancing project design. The project elements are aimed at improving transit reliability and travel time, improving safety and accessibility to bus stops, and additional pedestrian and bicycle safety features for Dana Street.

Summary of Public Outreach Goals:

- Gather stakeholder (AC Transit riders, businesses, residents, community organizations, elected officials) input and disseminate information throughout the project duration to ensure broad community awareness and encourage stakeholder feedback.
- 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.

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Stakeholders include business and property owners, residents along the project streets and surrounding neighborhoods, elected officials, institutions along the routes, bus riders who are local to the affected stops as well as those that are riding through the area, advocacy groups, and organizations directly impacted by proposed changes. AC Transit collected input from AC Transit riders along the corridors, potential riders, and people who live and work along the corridors, including business and property owners. Input collection included the provision of translation and interpretation services for stakeholders with a primary language other than English; in particular Spanish and Chinese.

AC Transit with support from Consultant Team conducted public outreach activities in Spring 2021. This was completed through the following actions:

- In-person/virtual meetings with stakeholders
- Notification letters in English, Spanish and Chinese, see Appendices 1.1, 2.1, and 3.1
- AC Transit website project pages in English, Spanish and Chinese, see Appendix 4.3
- E-Newsletters (“eNews”) email notifications in English, Spanish and Chinese, see Appendix 4.4
- Social Network Service (SNS) posts - Twitter (@rideact) and Facebook (@rideact)
- Public input survey in English, Spanish and Chinese (for Grand/West Grand Avenue and Telegraph only), see Appendices 2.2 and 3.2
- Virtual community meetings in English, Spanish and Chinese, see Appendices 1.2, 2.4, and 3.4
- Outreach in coordination with stakeholder agencies and organizations to amplify messages, such as University of California, Berkeley, the Temescal-Telegraph Business Improvement District (Temescal BID), and the Telegraph Business Improvement District (Telegraph BID).
- Corridor walk/canvassing by AC Transit and other staff
- Letters of support, see Appendix 5

Input from the stakeholders was collected via email, phone/voicemail, multilingual public input surveys (for Telegraph and Grand/West Grand Avenue only), and via commentary at the virtual community meetings. Spanish and Chinese interpreters were made available via zoom and phone. Stakeholder input was collected in these same methods, in addition to staff follow ups, meetings

with stakeholders, and corridor walks/canvassing. All input was then synthesized to inform final design of project elements.

The following subsections further describe notification letters, project website and eNews, virtual workshops, and additional outreach meetings and presentations.

NOTIFICATION LETTERS

Multilingual notification letters regarding the project were sent approximately two weeks prior to the Virtual Community Meetings to property owners, businesses, and residents. For the Telegraph Avenue and Grand/West Grand Avenue projects, letters were sent to those within 200 feet of any proposed bus stop changes (removals, improvements, new stops). For the Dana Complete Street Pilot Project, letters were sent to those within 200 feet of the entire project area along Dana Street, and within 200 feet of the proposed bus stop changes on Durant Avenue. The purpose of the notification letter was to inform about the project and invite stakeholders to join a virtual community meeting and submit comments/feedbacks/questions.

Number of letters sent by corridor and recipient type are as follows:

	GRAND/WEST GRAND AVENUE	TELEGRAPH AVENUE	DANA STREET
PROPERTY OWNERS	209	274	54
BUSINESS OWNERS	159	349	47
RESIDENTS	438	717	266
TOTAL	806	1,340	367

Copies of all materials provided are included in Appendices 1.1, 2.1, and 3.1.

PROJECT WEBSITE AND ENEWS

AC Transit created project website pages to promote upcoming virtual meetings, provide background information for the proposed changes to the corridors, project maps, and exhibits, as well as opportunities to provide comments (email) and live links to participate in online surveys regarding the Telegraph Avenue and Grand/West Grand Avenue Corridors. All materials¹ were made available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

Website materials were developed for the overall project and for each individual corridor and can be accessed at <https://www.actransit.org/rapid-corridors>, as well as in Appendix 4.3. As of July 12,

¹ Web materials, survey results, and comments are included in Appendix 4.

2021, in all three languages, the main Rapid Corridors page received 1,469 views, the Telegraph Avenue page received 810 views, the Grand/West Grand Avenue page received 494 views, and the Dana Complete Street Pilot Project page received 510 views.

In addition to the website, AC Transit developed and deployed eNews regarding the projects and posted information and links via its social media channels. AC Transit sent out eNews to 2,958 recipients for the Telegraph Avenue project with a 15% open rate, 5,180 recipients for the Grand/West Grand Avenue project with a 12% open rate, and 2,605 recipients for the Dana Complete Street Pilot Project with a 13% open rate. Recipients were the same targets identified under the Notification Letters section. The eNews are included in Appendix 4.4 to this document.

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Three virtual workshops were held via Zoom webinar:

Thursday, June 27, 6:00 PM
Dana Street Virtual Meeting
29 Attendees

Thursday, June 3, 6:00 PM
Telegraph Virtual Meeting
27 Attendees

Tuesday, June 8, 6:00 PM
Grand Virtual Meeting
7 Attendees

AC Transit provided opportunities for participation with simultaneous interpretation services in Spanish and Chinese at each meeting.

ADDITIONAL OUTREACH MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

AC Transit reached out to various community and advocacy groups, including various neighborhood associations, Telegraph BID, Temescal BID, East Bay Transit Riders Union, Transform, Walk Bike Berkeley, and Bike East Bay. AC Transit also reached out other institutional stakeholders, including University of California, Berkeley Transportation Office, and Lawrence Berkeley National Lab.

Additional meetings and presentations were planned, attended and facilitated by AC Transit's Project Manager and the External Affairs team:

MEETING	DATE	DANA	TELEGRAPH	GRAND/ W GRAND	NUMBER OF PUBLIC ATTENDEES
PRESENTATION					
CITY OF BERKELEY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION	4/15/2021	X			n/a
X2X5 NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL (NCPC) MEETING	6/3/2021			X	6
PRESCOTT NCPC MEETING	6/10/2021			X	34
TEMESCAL BID, DESIGN/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	6/14/2021		X		n/a
CITY OF BERKELEY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION	6/17/2021	X			n/a
TEMESCAL BID BOARD MEETING	6/23/2021		X		n/a
EAST BAY TRANSIT RIDERS' UNION BOARD MEETING	7/7/2021	X	X	X	n/a
DISCUSSION					
LAWRENCE BERKELEY NATIONAL LAB (LBNL)	5/10/2021		X		n/a
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (UC), BERKELEY, OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION	5/12/2021	X	X		n/a
TELEGRAPH BID EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	5/24/2021	X	X		n/a
FIRST CONGRESSIONAL CHURCH OF BERKELEY AND EAST BAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS	5/25/2021	X			n/a
BRIEFING WITH BERKELEY CITY COUNCILMEMBER DROSTE'S STAFF	5/26/2021	X	X		n/a
BRIEFING WITH BERKELEY CITY COUNCILMEMBER ROBINSON	6/3/2021	X	X		n/a
CHURCH IN BERKELEY (2430 DANA ST)	6/4/2021	X			n/a
TEMESCAL BID EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	6/9/2021		X		n/a
TELEGRAPH/55TH BUSINESS OWNERS	6/16/2021		X		n/a
TRANSFORM	6/25/2021	X	X	X	n/a
FIELD MEETINGS					
FIELD MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS BUSINESSES AND PROPERTY OWNERS	May/June 2021	X	X	X	n/a
RECEIVED REPORT					
AC TRANSIT, ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE	5/11/2021	X	X	X	47

OVERALL COMMENT SUMMARY

All comments received as part of this community engagement effort as well as responses to the comments are included in Appendices 1.3, 2.5, and 3.5. This section summarizes key points for each of the three corridors: Dana Street, Telegraph Avenue, and Grand/West Grand Avenue.

Appendix 5 includes seven letters of support from Bike East Bay, East Bay for Everyone, East Bay Transit Riders Union, Genesis, UC Berkeley Parking and Transportation, Northern California Chapter of the Association of Commuter Transportation, and Walk Bike Berkeley.

DANA STREET COMPLETE STREET PILOT PROJECT

The public comment period closed on June 7, 2021 and as of June 8 AC Transit had recorded 32 total individual comments via email, 21 comments via online virtual community meeting during the question and answer (Q&A), and 2 comments verbally. The comments and responses to comments are provided in Appendix 1.3. Public comments received ranged from support for the project, concerns for changes to parking and loading spaces, need for parking and loading spaces on Dana Street in front of their properties, need for clear signage, lane marking and bicycle detection for people riding bicycles, need for a roadway design that accommodates buses, emergency vehicles and large trucks, and concerns about the location of consolidated bus stops and the proposed bus boarding island. A summary of public engagement activities and comments received is Appendix 1 to this report.

In response to comments from UC Berkeley, AC Transit has modified the parking along two student residential properties, Blackwell (Bancroft Way to Durant Street) and Unit 3 (Durant Street to Channing Way). Parking along the frontage of these UC properties has been modified to ensure adequate maintenance, solid waste, and freight access for UC Berkeley facilities operations. Based on comments received from and a field meeting with First Congregational Church (Durant Street to Channing Way), the existing bus stop on Durant Street at Dana Street would be consolidated with the nearby existing bus stop on Durant Street at Ellsworth Street, and this former bus stop location on Durant Street at Dana Street would be converted to a passenger loading zone (white curb) to serve the church and the East Bay School for Boys, which is co-located on the property. To serve this loading zone, AC Transit is proposing to make spot accessibility improvements to the sidewalks on the accessible path of travel to/from this new passenger loading zone to the church's disability access ramp on Dana Street. Based on comments received from and a field meeting with the Church in Berkeley (Haste Street at Dana Street), three existing two-hour time-limited unpriced parking spaces on Haste Street would be converted into a passenger loading zone adjacent to the church's disabled access ramp. Because these new passenger loading spaces face the driver side of parked vehicles, AC Transit would slightly modify the roadway striping in this area, adding delineation for the passenger-side loading area.

The Dana Complete Street Pilot Project was presented to the Berkeley Transportation Commission (TC) on April 17, 2021 for project updates. On June 17, 2021, the Berkeley TC recommended an approval of the conceptual design as well as implementation and evaluation of the project at the City Council meeting. Subsequently, the Berkeley City Council approved the conceptual design and implementation of the Dana Complete Street Pilot Project on July 27, 2021.

TELEGRAPH AVENUE RAPID CORRIDORS PROJECT

AC Transit received 60 emails, 5 phone calls/voicemails, and 32 comments for the Rapid Corridors Telegraph Avenue Project during the commenting period. The comments and responses to comments are provided in Appendix 3.5. There were also 164 survey responses for the Telegraph project. The survey split the Telegraph corridor into seven segments, and survey respondents provided their input by segment and specific stop; proposed changes to the majority of the segments were supported by the majority of respondents; key concerns and resolution of these concerns are discussed below. This input is summarized in Appendix 3.3.

Comments Regarding New Bus Stops

There were three bus stop changes that received many comments from adjacent businesses and residents about how new bus stops would affect parking and service access to businesses and may create noise and block visibility of businesses. Some also expressed concerns about people, who are not bus riders, hanging out in bus shelters. Two of these locations, Southbound 55th Street bus stop and Southbound Alcatraz Avenue bus stop, were proposed to move near side stops to far side locations. Following on-site meetings and exploring a range of alternative bus stop locations and parking and loading mitigations, businesses and residents remained concerned about the new bus stop locations. So, AC Transit has decided to not move the stops and instead make some improvements to the near side stops. The third location at Woolsey Street is still being assessed for parking and loading mitigations by AC Transit and both the Cities of Berkeley and Oakland. They are proposed in this location, because Woolsey Street is the only signalized intersection that provides roughly equal spacing between the stops to the north and south. AC Transit is continuing to work with City of Berkeley to add some parking to mitigate the removal of parking for the new northbound stop.

Comments Regarding Removal of Bus Stops

Other comments were related to the removal of stops near to residents and some destinations along Telegraph Avenue, and related comments about concerns for nighttime safety and having to walk farther to and from bus stops. Bus stops are proposed to be removed for a combination of reasons related to the safety of crossings of Telegraph Avenue, ability to provide bus stop length to facilitate bus access into and out of stops, AC Transit Board policy about rapid bus stop spacing, and other constraints.

Comments Regarding Pedestrian Signal Activation

Several comments were made about the desire to reprogram signals to provide “ped recall”. In other words, this means having the pedestrian walk signal activate automatically rather than requiring a pedestrian to push a button for the walk to be activated on the next signal cycle. Comments regarding ped recall referenced the entire project area, with one comment requesting ped recall specifically at the Alcatraz Avenue and Telegraph Avenue intersection. Signal timing, including pedestrian signal activation, will be discussed with the cities of Berkeley and Oakland during design process.

Comments Suggesting Additional Queue Jump Improvements

Several comments were made asking for additional queue jump improvements at Ashby Avenue and Alcatraz Avenue. Implementing a queue jump operation at Alcatraz Avenue will result in the need to remove on street paid parking stalls. The northbound stop is located at a desired far side location. A queue jump operation cannot be effectively deployed for the existing southbound near side bus stop location due to the site constraints including interference from traffic accessing the ARCO gas station driveway and southbound right-turning traffic. The intersection currently operates acceptably and transit signal priority operation can be programmed to reduce bus travel time at the intersection, therefore the implementation of a queue jump operation is not necessary at the Telegraph Avenue and Alcatraz Avenue intersection. The existing southbound bus stop at Ashby Avenue is proposed to be removed. The southbound approach is constrained with narrow 10-foot lane widths; therefore, there is not sufficient room to use the eight-foot shoulder lane as a queue jump lane with the removal of the southbound bus stop. While implementing a queue jump operation for the northbound approach is technically feasible it is not desirable as it will require a need to restrict parking and remove a healthy and mature tree to maintain bus stop accessibility. The intersection currently operates acceptably and transit signal priority operation can be programmed to reduce bus travel time at the intersection; therefore, the implementation of a queue jump operation is not necessary at the Telegraph Avenue and Ashby Avenue intersection.

Requests for Additional Lighting

Improved lighting is outside the scope of this AC Transit project, and AC Transit will communicate these comments to the cities and is supportive of future improvements to lighting along Telegraph Avenue.

GRAND / WEST GRAND AVENUE RAPID CORRIDORS PROJECT

AC Transit received 37 email and 39 survey responses for the Rapid Corridors West Grand/Grand Avenue project. The comments and responses to comments are provided in Appendix 2.5. The survey split the Grand/West Grand corridor into six segments, and survey respondents provided their input by segment and specific stop; proposed changes to all of the segments were supported by the majority of respondents; key concerns and resolution of these concerns are discussed below. This input is summarized in Appendix 2.3.

Comments Regarding Bus Stops

There were comments about new bus stops on West Grand Avenue, bus stop relocation on Grand Avenue, removal of bus stops between Perkins Street and Euclid Avenue.

In the Grand Avenue segment, four respondents expressed concerns about removal of stops between Perkins Street and Euclid Avenue on the on-line survey. The removals are needed to provide a balance between the travel time and reliability benefits of bus stop spacing and the walking distance to and from bus stops. Some comments asked for more stops to be moved from near side to far side, as this would benefit bus operations. These locations had been studied by AC Transit. The presence of curb bulb outs and large street trees constrain the potential far side locations and make moving the stops infeasible. Several people commented about the desire to improve pedestrian access across Grand Avenue at the Park View Terrace intersection. The desired

pedestrian improvements to intersections are beyond the scope of this AC Transit project and these comments will be provided to the City of Oakland for their consideration.

Two comments were made not supporting the removal of the Staten Avenue stops. While the stop spacing between the remaining Perkins Street and Euclid Avenue stops slightly exceeds the AC Transit Board policy for this type of service, 1,350 feet rather than 1,300 feet, maintaining the Staten Avenue stops would result in a much closer spacing than the minimum defined by the policy.

APPENDIX

The Appendix to the Project Outreach Summary includes the following:

- Cover & Table of Contents
- Appendix 1 – Dana Complete Street Pilot Project
- Appendix 2 – Grand/West Grand Avenue Rapid Corridors Project
- Appendix 3 – Telegraph Avenue Rapid Corridors Project
- Appendix 4 – Collateral Materials
- Appendix 5 – Letters of Support