



Planning and Development Department
Land Use Planning Division

STAFF REPORT

DATE: February 4, 2010
TO: Members of the Transportation Commission
FROM: Elizabeth Greene
Senior Planner, Planning and Development Department
SUBJECT: BRT Draft Locally Preferred Alternative

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Transportation Commission:

1. Review this report and the attached matrix and graphics; and
2. Make a recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding the draft LPA.

Background Information

At the December 9, 2009 meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed the draft LPA developed by staff and a recommendation from the Transportation Commission, and heard public comment. The Planning Commission voted to request additional alignment options, information regarding the tradeoffs between the different alignment options, and to request that specific information be studied by AC Transit in the FEIS/R (see Attachment 1 for the complete motion).

The Commission directed staff to amend the LPA to show the following alignments:

- Two-way traffic on Bancroft and Durant, with bus lanes on Bancroft;
- Center-running BRT bus lanes downtown on Shattuck;
- Two-way traffic on Telegraph; and
- Bus stops at Ellsworth.

The Planning Commission also requested that two variants to these alignments be included in the LPA:

- Bancroft and Durant one-way with dedicated bus lanes on each street (the September 2009 LPA version); and

- Southbound BRT buses run in dedicated lanes on Dana between Bancroft and Dwight, instead of Telegraph.

New Documents

Based on the Commission direction, staff developed the following documents:

Alternatives Matrix (Attachment 2)

The matrix compares the BRT alignment options to the existing conditions (the “no-build” option). The matrix is broken into three segments rather than four; the Telegraph North of Dwight segment and the Telegraph to Shattuck segment have been combined because many of the revised options and variants affected the connection between the two segments. Description of the categories used are at the end of the matrix document.

For the purpose of comparison, the matrix includes more options than shown in the LPA alignment drawings. The options studied include those in the September draft LPA, and those recommended by the Planning Commission at the December 9th meeting. In cases where two alternatives would achieve the Planning Commission direction, such as the different parking options in the downtown, both alternatives are studied.

Some of these options have areas with particular issues or features that are important to consider:

- Segment 2: Right turn from Bancroft to Telegraph (Option 1)
- Segment 2: Southbound intersection of Telegraph and Dwight (Options 1, 1a and 2)
- Segment 2: Location of bus stops on Bancroft (All options)
- Segment 3: Parking configuration options (Options 1 and 2)

These features were considered when developing the matrix scores. See Attachment 3 for more details about these features and for descriptions of the alignments studied in the matrix.

Revised Alignment Graphics (Attachment 4)

The new graphics show how the BRT alignment would run based on the Planning Commission’s changes. The last three pages of graphics (pages A, B and C) show how the BRT options could run between downtown Berkeley and Telegraph Avenue. The Bancroft/Durant couplet variant is not shown in this packet; graphics for that option are shown in the September 2009 draft LPA document.

The alignment has two modifications to the Planning Commission direction. These changes are suggested based on the information presented in the matrix:

- The “two-way Bancroft” and “two-way Telegraph” option should in the revised plans would require significant cub modifications at the corner of Bancroft and Telegraph. In order to keep the Commission’s goal of southbound buses on Bancroft and Telegraph, staff has shown the alignment with a right turn onto Dana, a left-turn onto Durant, and a right-turn onto Telegraph to avoid the

Bancroft-Telegraph corner. This option is shown on page B of the revised plans.

- The Dana option, shown on page C, shows the buses running in mixed-flow lanes rather than dedicated lanes. This is because staff believes, based on DEIS/R traffic analysis, that mixed-flow operations would not slow buses significantly in this segment, and thereby the loss of a travel lane or approximately 30 parking spaces could be avoided.

Recent Community Contacts

Since the December 9th Planning Commission meeting, staff has had the following discussions or correspondence regarding the LPA:

Stakeholder meeting with the Downtown Business Association (DBA) – 1-20-10

In light of the Planning Commission's recommendation to have dedicated lanes in the downtown, staff met with representatives from the DBA to discuss the changes. Much of the discussion focused on parking loss, the impact of the BRT on the character of the downtown and the need to have community involvement in the design phase of the project to ensure a high quality urban landscape downtown.

Additional Public Comments

Written comments received after December 9th are included in Attachment 6 of this report. Correspondence received prior to or at the December 9th Planning Commission meeting are located in the Planning Commission's website, under the agenda for the 12-09-09 meeting:

<http://www.cityofberkeley.info/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=47194>

Next Steps

The LPA process will go through the following steps:

- The Planning Commission will review the alignment options, take public comment and recommend an LPA to the City Council.
- The City Council will review the work to date, and make a decision on an LPA. This final LPA would be sent to AC Transit by April 2010 for study in the FEIS/R for the BRT project.

Once the FEIS/R is complete, the City Council will review the findings and hear additional community input. The Council will determine at that time whether to allow AC Transit to implement BRT in the City of Berkeley.

Conclusion

Using the information in this report, the LPA document and public comment, the Transportation Commission should make a recommendation on the draft LPA to forward to the Planning Commission.

- Attachments:
1. Motion from 12-9-09 Planning Commission meeting
 2. Evaluation Matrix of segment options
 3. Description of alignments studied in the matrix

4. Revised graphics based on Planning Commission direction
5. Drawing of corner of Bancroft and Telegraph
6. Correspondence received at or after the 12-9-09 Planning Commission meeting