



## Executive Summary

City of Berkeley staff, at the direction of the City Council, have developed a proposal for a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) of the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit (EBBRT) project proposed by AC Transit. Berkeley's "LPA" is a proposed design showing what BRT might look like in Berkeley, and includes the most detailed design work developed to date.

This proposal is only the first step in the process of developing an LPA for Berkeley. The proposal is not a formal City position, and it is *not final*. Rather, it is a preliminary concept developed by staff to provide a framework for discussion by the community and decision-makers.

Following publication of this report, a series of public meetings will be held to discuss the LPA, including an informational workshop, meetings with stakeholder groups, and meetings of the Transportation Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council.

Only when all of the steps in this process have been completed can the City of Berkeley adopt a Locally Preferred Alternative. This report is designed to serve as a tool for the community to use in deciding, if BRT were to be built in Berkeley, *how* it could be built to best serve the city.

## ES-1 About This Report

This document is the second major publication produced by the City of Berkeley related to the EBBRT project. The first, *East Bay BRT Project - Berkeley Consideration*,<sup>1</sup> summarized the information on the EBBRT alignment and service alternatives analyzed in the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/R)<sup>2</sup> that would be relevant to the City of Berkeley.

Staff from the Transportation Division of the Public Works Department, the Planning Department, and their consultants have developed this preliminary LPA based on their evaluation of the DEIS/R proposals and additional design options developed for Berkeley. Elements of the new options would require additional analysis prior to developing a final preferred alternative.

This report not only includes information about the EBBRT project from the DEIS/R, but information which had not previously been available, including information from AC Transit's "Small Starts" funding application to the Federal Transit Administration<sup>3</sup> and recent studies of Route 1R rapid bus service,<sup>4</sup> as well as detailed plan view and section drawings of the proposed LPA.

This Executive Summary briefly describes the EBBRT project, the staff-proposed LPA, benefits and impacts that have been identified, and proposed strategies to address impacts. Chapter 1 describes the EBBRT project and explains the differences between Bus Rapid Transit and rapid bus service. Chapter 2 describes, in detail, the staff LPA proposals. Chapter 3 consists of frequently asked questions about the project. Chapter 4 addresses project impacts identified by staff, issues remaining to be resolved, and proposed solutions. Chapter 5 outlines next steps in the process. The appendix of this report includes a list of resources where readers can get more information about the project.

## ES-2 Project Overview

The Berkeley-Oakland-San Leandro corridor is one of AC Transit's busiest and most important. The transit agency has been studying improvements to service in the corridor since the mid-1990s.

In 2002, the agency completed a *Major Investment Study* (MIS)<sup>5</sup> recommending high-capacity transit service along Telegraph Avenue rather than College or Shattuck avenues. The MIS also recommended Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) over more expensive light rail and less effective "enhanced" bus service, a concept similar to the rapid bus service since implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> Fehr & Peers Transportation Consultants, "East Bay BRT Project - Berkeley Consideration," Sept. 18, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Alameda Contra Costa Transit District, *AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report*, May 2007

<sup>3</sup> Alameda Contra Costa Transit District, *Fiscal Year 2010 Small Starts Submittal*, September 2008

<sup>4</sup> Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, "International/Telegraph Corridor Rapid Bus Study: Phase IV," April 2009

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge Systematics, et al, *AC Transit Berkeley/Oakland/San Leandro Corridor MIS Summary Report*, Sept. 9, 2002

As part of the MIS process, the Berkeley City Council adopted implementation of BRT in the Telegraph Avenue corridor as official policy of the City of Berkeley, unanimously supporting BRT over the rapid bus alternative. The Council's resolution stated that "increased speed and regular frequency of transit services serves to encourage greater use of public transit" and that "improvements to public transit infrastructure can increase the attractiveness and use of public transit by making it safer, more convenient, and more comfortable."<sup>6</sup>

If built as currently proposed, the East Bay BRT line would be approximately 17 miles long, with approximately 49 stations. Buses would run every five minutes, mostly in their own lanes. This would result in faster, more reliable transit service between downtown Berkeley, the Southside, the Telegraph Avenue corridor, Oakland and San Leandro, and proactively address projected growth in population, employment and traffic congestion. It would also attract thousands of new users to public transportation. However, the project would also have impacts on the City, and some trade-offs would be required. Benefits and impacts for Berkeley are summarized later in this Executive Summary, and detailed in Chapters 2 and 4.

In 2007, AC Transit completed the project's *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report* (DEIS/R),<sup>7</sup> an analysis of potential designs, impacts and mitigations. Publication of the DEIS/R was followed by a public review period. The agency then asked the cities of Berkeley, Oakland and San Leandro to each develop a "locally preferred alternative" (LPA) for BRT in each city. Development of the LPA is not the same thing as approving the project, which could not occur until a later point, after the environmental review process is completed.

Following completion of each city's LPA, AC Transit will evaluate a combined LPA in the project's *Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report* (FEIS/R). Another round of public review will then take place, and only then can a final decision on the project be made by the City Councils of each of the three cities. Construction could not begin until each of the cities issued permits.

### ***ES-3 Proposed Locally Preferred Alternative***

For easier understanding, description of the proposed LPA has been divided into four segments within the City of Berkeley.

#### ***ES-3.1 Telegraph South of Dwight***

In this segment, staff has proposed that the center lanes of Telegraph be reserved for buses, with stops located on islands between the bus and traffic lanes at Ashby Avenue, Derby Street, and between Blake Street and Dwight Way. This would make transit service faster and more reliable, especially in the future, when traffic is expected to worsen with or without the project. It would also "calm" traffic,

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<sup>6</sup> City Council Resolution 61,170-N.S., 2001

<sup>7</sup> Alameda Contra Costa Transit District, *AC Transit East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report*, May 2007

benefitting bicyclists and pedestrians. Bicycle lanes could be extended to the Oakland border (with the exception of one block, between Ashby and Webster Street). However, it would reduce the number of through lanes for cars and trucks in each direction from two to one (plus left-turn lanes at some intersections) and could require removal of more than 100 parking spaces.

### ***ES-3.2 Telegraph North of Dwight***

In this segment, staff has proposed that Telegraph mostly be converted to a two-way street. The southbound lane between Dwight and Durant Avenue would be reserved for buses, delivery, and emergency vehicles, while the northbound lane would be available to both auto traffic and buses; the section between Durant and Bancroft Way would not be reconfigured. Cyclists could use all lanes. While there would be no stop on Telegraph itself north of Dwight, in addition to the stops just south of Dwight, there would be stops just west of Telegraph on Bancroft and Durant. Southbound buses, which currently use Dana Street, would run on Telegraph. No parking or loadings spaces would be lost under this alternative, and auto access and patterns of circulation would be mostly unchanged.

### ***ES-3.3 Telegraph to Shattuck (Bancroft and Durant)***

In this segment, staff has proposed that buses operate westbound on Bancroft and eastbound on Durant in right-side transit lanes. Traffic could enter these lanes to turn right and to access driveways and both off- and on-street parking. Stops would be located on the sidewalk just west of Telegraph. Dedicating lanes to buses would reduce the number of traffic lanes in each direction from three to two, but analysis has shown that with the exception of one intersection, this should not cause significant congestion (see Chapter 4 for a detailed analysis of traffic impacts). Only a few parking spaces would be lost, significantly less than under any of the other proposed alternatives, which are further described in Chapter 2. Bicycles would continue to use these streets as they do now, with a few minor improvements.

### ***ES-3.4 Shattuck***

In this segment, staff is recommending the “no-build” alternative, with no dedicated bus lanes and bus stops on the sidewalk at Kittredge Street and at Center Street. This decision was based on ongoing uncertainty about the design direction of Shattuck in downtown Berkeley, as well as Berkeley staff analysis that found that in the short term, at least, operation of BRT buses in mixed-flow, general-use lanes over such a short distance should have relatively little impact on overall speed and reliability. Staff is recommending further study of other improvements such as raised platform areas at curbside stops and extension of the left-turn lane from southbound Shattuck to eastbound Durant. As these improvements have not yet been developed and the recommendation for Shattuck is essentially “no-build,” Shattuck is not included in the analysis of benefits and impacts below.

## ES-4 Summary Analysis of Benefits and Impacts

Below is a brief summary of proposed LPA benefits and impacts specific to each segment that have been identified by staff. Benefits and impacts are described in greater detail in Chapters 2 and 4.

FIGURE ES-1 PROPOSED LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: SUMMARY OF BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

Area of Analysis	Segment	Summary of Benefits and Impacts
<b>Transit Service</b>	<i>Telegraph S of Dwight</i>	Increased speed and reliability and easier boarding, especially for mobility-impaired; however, removal of local stops
	<i>Telegraph N of Dwight</i>	Southbound service improved by stop next to Telegraph rather than on Dana, dedicated lane; little change to northbound service
	<i>Telegraph to Shattuck</i>	Minor delay reductions from semi-exclusive lane; no stops between Telegraph and Shattuck
<b>Traffic and Circulation</b>	<i>Telegraph S of Dwight</i>	Increased congestion, restricted left turns at some cross streets
	<i>Telegraph N of Dwight</i>	Reduced capacity, but only minor congestion expected; existing circulation patterns and access maintained, with minor turn restrictions
	<i>Telegraph to Shattuck</i>	Little change in congestion with exception of Bancroft/Oxford intersection; circulation patterns, access maintained
<b>Parking and Loading</b>	<i>Telegraph S of Dwight</i>	Significant reduction in curbside supply
	<i>Telegraph N of Dwight</i>	No impact on parking; a few loading spaces relocated
	<i>Telegraph to Shattuck</i>	Very slight reduction in curbside supply
<b>Bicycles</b>	<i>Telegraph S of Dwight</i>	New bicycle lanes from Webster to the Oakland border
	<i>Telegraph N of Dwight</i>	Bikes could use SB transit/delivery lane
	<i>Telegraph to Shattuck</i>	Bus lanes would be made extra-wide to accommodate bikes
<b>Pedestrians</b>	<i>Telegraph S of Dwight</i>	Improvements to pedestrian safety, comfort, although some increased exposure to traffic and other impacts
	<i>Telegraph N of Dwight</i>	New all-way signals, reduced auto-pedestrian conflicts; sidewalk would be narrowed in two places, but would be widened at other locations nearby
	<i>Telegraph to Shattuck</i>	Increase in sidewalk space near Telegraph; new signals on Bancroft at Dana and Ellsworth
<b>Streetscape</b>	<i>Telegraph S of Dwight</i>	Fewer lanes of traffic, more pedestrian-oriented
	<i>Telegraph N of Dwight</i>	Little change from existing; new landscaping and street furniture possible with redesign of Dwight Triangle
	<i>Telegraph to Shattuck</i>	Little change from existing
<b>Economic and Community</b>	<i>Telegraph S of Dwight</i>	Mixed impact on businesses & residents – more foot traffic from transit users, but less parking

Area of Analysis	Segment	Summary of Benefits and Impacts
	<i>Telegraph N of Dwight</i>	Auto and delivery access maintained; limited spillover traffic; pedestrian conditions and transit access improved
	<i>Telegraph to Shattuck</i>	Little change from existing

## **ES-5 Summary of Proposed Mitigations and Improvements to the Project**

In developing the LPA proposal, City staff identified numerous impacts which must be addressed before the project can go forward. Some impacts were already addressed in the DEIS/R, and are summarized here. Staff also developed additional strategies to alleviate impacts beyond the measures proposed by AC Transit. Impacts are summarized in Figure ES-1 on the previous pages. Below is a brief summary of mitigations proposed by AC Transit and additional project improvements proposed by Berkeley staff.

### **ES-5.1 Mitigations Proposed by AC Transit**

In order to reduce impacts on traffic congestion at four intersections, AC Transit proposed in the DEIS/R to adjust traffic signal timing or provide turn lanes at four Berkeley intersections: Bancroft and Fulton Street/Oxford Way (the street's name changes at Bancroft), Adeline Street and Ashby, Adeline and Alcatraz Avenue, and College and Ashby. It is important to note that all traffic analysis will be updated as part of the FEIS/R process, and that these mitigations may be adjusted according to the Final EIS/R analysis.

In order to reduce impacts on parking availability, AC Transit also proposed in the DEIS/R to convert 65 to 70 residential parking permit spaces on cross streets just off of Telegraph south of Dwight to metered use. Meters would be added only at spaces alongside commercial, and not residential, properties.

### **ES-5.2 Improvements Proposed by Berkeley Staff**

Staff has identified a range of possible measures to alleviate project impacts beyond those proposed by AC Transit. These include:

- *Transit Service:* AC Transit has proposed to eliminate local bus service along the alignment; while staff is not recommending that BRT make additional stops, stops might be added with community support. Analysis by AC Transit found that even with removal of stops, 87 percent of Berkeley Routes 1 and 1R riders would not have to change stops.<sup>8</sup>
- *Traffic and Circulation:* In addition to the intersection mitigations recommended by AC Transit, staff proposes additional analysis of potential for traffic diversions, a “neighborhood traffic monitoring program,” additional transportation demand management measures, and traffic signal system upgrades.
- *Parking and Loading:* Staff is proposing study of removal of proposed left-turn lanes on Telegraph at Blake, Stuart, and/or Russell streets, as

<sup>8</sup> Information provided to City of Berkeley by AC Transit. Stop locations in analysis may have been slightly different from those in the proposed LPA.

well as implementation of a number of “parking demand management” strategies, such as expansion of carsharing programs, changes to meter policies and “market-rate” parking pricing, parking cash-out and parking unbundling ordinances.

- *Bicyclists and Pedestrians:* Study of the potential for increased traffic on bicycle boulevards is recommended. Also, where sidewalks would not be “buffered” from traffic by parked vehicles or bike lanes, trees, bollards or other street furniture should be added.
- *Economic and Community:* While staff hasn’t yet developed additional measures, it recommends that AC Transit more fully explore strategies to reduce the impacts of construction on businesses. Proposed locations for bus “layovers” in downtown Berkeley should also be identified and analyzed.

In addition to measures to reduce negative impacts, staff has developed a number of recommendations that might increase project benefits. These include:

- *Economic and Community:* Purchase low-emission buses
- *Comprehensive Planning:* Staff is proposing that AC Transit help fund supplemental BRT studies, including a “Corridor Enhancement Project” led by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, to identify and evaluate potential enhancements to the basic BRT project. These studies would be separate from the BRT planning process, and would identify funding sources separate from those used to fund BRT. They might address issues including:
  - Streetscape improvements
  - Street maintenance
  - Land use planning
  - Multimodal mobility

