



Planning and Development Department

Land Use Planning Division

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 18, 2008

TO: Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Jordan Harrison
Associate Planner

SUBJECT: Process for determining Berkeley's preferred alternative for Bus Rapid Transit

Recommendation

Consider the issues, topics and questions noted by staff from the June 11, 2008 joint Planning-Transportation Commission meeting. Provide direction to staff regarding the proposed process for determining Berkeley's preferred alternative for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Background

At the June 11 joint meeting Transportation and Planning department staffs presented a process for the two commissions. The process suggests a series of joint commission informational meetings, which would lead to recommendations to the City Council for a BRT alternative for Berkeley. The proposed process includes a minimum of three more joint meetings, at which Transportation and Planning commissions would learn about and discuss:

- Better understand the range of options for BRT for Berkeley,
- The land use and transportation issues/impacts associated with the various options, and
- Criteria for evaluating the various options (including a "no build" alternative and a "Rapid Bus Plus alternative").

This process is intended to facilitate each Commission's development of a preferred BRT alternative for Berkeley.

On June 11 both the Transportation and Planning Commissioners asked for more information on a number of topics and made suggestions regarding the materials presented by staff. Additionally, the Planning Commission requested discussion of the

staff-proposed process for BRT assessment be placed on the June 25 regular Planning Commission agenda.

Discussion

The topics raised at the June 11 meeting have been divided into two categories: (1) questions/requests for information to be addressed at future joint meetings, and (2) questions and topics to be discussed at the June 25 regular Planning Commission meeting. Planning staff divided the topics as a way to receive clear feedback from the Planning Commission on their issues of concern in each category.

(1) Information to be provided at a future meeting

The Planning and Transportation Commissioners requested additional information about the following issues. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback on this list and indicate if there is need to modify and/or add to the list.

- Explain how transit funding works (operational vs. capital, particular to the requirements of the funds proposed for development of the BRT)
- Refine the evaluation criteria and incorporate land use issues
- Provide a functional explanation and/or simulation of intersection operations
- Provide background and current status on San Leandro and Oakland BRT and AC Transit process.
- Provide information on existing west coast BRT systems
- Clearly identify and describe the interaction among LOS measures for different transportation modes (i.e. pedestrian, bicycle, car, and bus)
- Update the process glossary to include terminology from the “Basic Elements” table and cross reference the terms with the criteria to assure complete coverage
- Report on 1/1R ridership and operations; updated AC ridership info

(2) Topic for discussion by the Planning Commission

The topics below address questions raised by the Planning Commissioners on June 11 about the proposed process. Staff requests the Commission discuss these topics, and provide clarification and direction to staff.

- Does the Planning Commission think that the joint meeting process, as proposed, is effective and does the process fulfill the City Council direction for collaboration between the Commissions by allowing the Planning Commission and Transportation Commission to share information and gain an equal understanding of BRT related issues?
- What options exist for decision-making by the two Commissions? Staff suggests that the Planning Commission and Transportation Commission could complete the series of informational meetings then convene as individual commissions to consider recommendations to the City Council.
- Land use issues related to the BRT project: staff requests further discussion of the land-use related concerns of the Commission for incorporation into the criteria for evaluating BRT.

Next Steps and Conclusion

Staff request the commission provide feedback in the two sets of issues identified above:

- Direction on the process for determining a BRT alternative for Berkeley.
- Other areas of study or information gathering and land use criteria to be taken into account during the process.

Based on direction from the Commission, Planning staff will:

- Work with the Transportation Department staff to schedule future meetings on BRT.
- Collect information as requested and develop a list of Land Use criteria for consideration.