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Nancy M. Skowbo

Deputy General Manager, Service Development

October 14, 2009

Mr. Daniel Marks
Director of Planning and Development
City of Berkeley
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704


Dear ~~Mr. Marks:~~

I am sending this letter to clarify AC Transit's position with respect to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) planning process currently underway. As you know, city staff and staff at AC Transit have been working together on this process, and have made a good deal of headway. Staff has developed a timeline that calls for the completion of an administrative draft of the Final Environmental Statement/Report (FEIS/R) by the late spring of 2010.

However, I am sure that you are also aware that AC Transit has been experiencing more than its share of financial challenges. As a result of projected deficits, the District is contemplating diverting a significant amount of capital funds originally committed to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in order to stave off service cuts necessary to balance its budget. The District recognizes that these actions may have created some confusion with its stakeholder partners regarding its intent to plan and implement the BRT project. At this point, there are a number of unanswered questions with respect to the proposed diversion of funds, and the impact on the BRT project. However, the AC Transit Board approved completion of the FEIS/R, which will provide answers to some of the questions.

As mentioned above, staff is on track to complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/R), which is based on the Locally Preferred Alternatives (LPA) that each city will be submitting for public review. Decisions made by the individual cities will affect the overall cost of the project, and thus, it is important that the planning process continue.

Large scale projects often experience funding challenges during the planning stages and this BRT project is no different. And, while AC Transit recognizes that the funding diversions were not anticipated, the District also believes that it needs to maintain the momentum of the project development process in order to be ready to implement a project within its funding constraints.

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As such, AC Transit urges the City of Berkeley to proceed with the public outreach schedule that was originally anticipated in order to adopt an LPA in the spring. The District regards the LPA development process as integral to understanding what the City of Berkeley wants in the BRT corridor, regardless of any present or future funding constraints. Berkeley's LPA will inform not only the FEIS/R, but will help the District better understand what may be possible within its budget, as well as frame future fund requests.

As you know, AC Transit is funding consultant and staff time for each of the cities in order to facilitate the completion of the LPA per the schedule that has been positively received by the BRT Policy Steering Committee (PSC). Accordingly, it is AC Transit's intention and expectation to continue with the planning work, and to complete the FEIS/R in the spring of 2010. Please feel free to contact me directly with any follow-up questions or comments you may have.

Yours truly,



Nancy M. Skowbo
Deputy General Manager Service Development

NS/kv

Cc: Christine Daniel, Deputy City Manager
Beth Greene, Senior Planner