

## City of Oakland – AC Transit Interagency Liaison Committee

### Meeting Notes: September 4, 2024

#### Opening

##### A. Roll Call/Welcome and Introductions

- a. Meeting chaired by Director Syed
- b. City of Oakland: Council Member Noel Gallo, Council Member Rebecca Kaplan
- c. AC Transit: Director Sarah Syed, Director H.E. Peebles
- d. Meeting started 10:01

##### B. Introduction of OakDOT Director Josh Rowan

- a. Josh Rowan: Introducing himself as the new Director of Oakland DOT. Background: graduate of Georgia Tech, introduced to transportation working at Olympics in Atlanta, worked at local transit agency and built transfer facility, contractor, agency-side consultant. Familiar with the challenges of bus operations and interactions between bus operations and local government. Passionate about the impact of safe walkability and transit on people's lives and about the connectivity between local DOT and the operator AC Transit. Sometimes there's a natural friction between streets and transit, but we're committed to creating a culture of putting the people first. City bus is the vehicle of the past, present, and future, so we want to talk about how to make that a safe, pleasant experience.

##### C. Announcements/Public Comments

- a. Council Member Kaplan: Appreciating AC Transit's participation in a celebration of zero emission vehicle efforts recognized by state/federal leaders. AC Transit was the leader of initiating zero emission buses. AC Transit has been instrumental to history of ZEVs in Oakland and to the event on Friday.

##### D. Notes from Previous ILC Meeting

- a. None.

#### New Discussion Items

##### A. EasyPass Coordination as a TDM Strategy for Developments

Presenters: Andy Nern (AC Transit)

**Robert Del Rosario:** This committee has had some interest in some information for TDM for new developments. We are still in discussion with developers but for now wanted to give this committee an overview of EasyPass as a TDM strategy. And then we'll come back to future meetings to hear about the developer spin.

**Andy Nern:** Marketing Manager for AC Transit, here to give a high-level overview of the EasyPass program. Simply put, EasyPass is a transit benefit for large groups. Program provides employers, residential communities, and colleges discounted bus passes for groups of over 100 riders. Helps boost economy, reduce traffic and congestion, improve public health, etc. History: started in 1999 as a universal transit program, since then we've expanded to 50 clients in the Bay area.

Largest clients include UC Berkeley, Alameda Transit Management Association, Peralta Colleges District, and developer groups like EBLADC.

AC Transit works with cities to ensure EasyPass is a known option for parking mitigation enforcement for residential developments. Qualification and pricing depend on client, number of people, and level of service. How can we increase impact in city of Oakland? Increasing communication between AC Transit EasyPass and Oakland city planners. Already have communication through meeting like ILCs, director level meetings, staff meetings, but there can be more. We think that a dedicated city planning contact to ensure developers know EasyPass is an option is key, as well as a commitment from the city to track and enforce parking mitigation requirements.

***Committee Comments:***

**Council Member Gallo:** What is our relationship with opening schools? Like Skyline High School.

**Robert Del Rosario:** There's a student transit pass program so many local schools that have transit service get a student transit pass through the county.

**Gallo:** Would you be able to provide service to take the youngsters on a field trip or to a specific hub?

**Del Rosario:** If it's part of our regular service, we try to provide service to the places that students would go. So, it is common for students with transit passes to use them for field trips, but we don't put out dedicated buses for those field trips.

**Gallo:** We have a lot of senior housing facilities in the city, Unity Council for example. Are we making this service available for seniors that get on the bus? And what about the Native American Health Center?

**Nern:** Yes, we've worked with Unity Council and other senior housing. Not sure about the Native American Health Center, will check on that.

**Gallo:** They (Native American Health Center) are developing across from your bus stop, so we'll be in contact with them.

**Director Syed:** Looking at the requirements for EasyPass (like the residential developments with 100 or more units), are those AC Transit requirements? Do we have regular conversations with City of Oakland Housing and Planning Department?

**Del Rosario:** Regular coordination with OakDOT but not with planning, hoping to do that.

**Syed:** Is EasyPass often written in grant applications? What strategies are we using to ensure this is being incorporated as a best practice?

**Nern:** We work with cities and some grants do include that language. We'll try and increase that.

**Syed:** Can you confirm the new project at Liberation Park is east Oakland. Will that affordable housing include EasyPass?

**Nern:** I can look into that.

**Public Comment:**

**Kevin Dalley:** Brooklyn Basin has continued to be a problem. Could we provide this service to Brooklyn Basin? I know there is a different topic, but EasyPass would be nice too.

**Syed:** Staff will look into Brooklyn Basin more and that's a great idea.

**B. Bus Shelter Maintenance**

Presenters: Michael Ford (OakDOT)

**Ford:** From OakDOT mobility division – manage mobility, street furniture, and particularly bus shelters – providing an update on city's bus shelter program. Bus shelter program goes back about 25 years, AC Transit and the AC Transit-led JPA decided to go different ways in terms of franchise agreement. In 2002, entered bus shelter franchise with Clear Channel, which is now expired. Today we're attempting to put in place a new cleaning and maintenance agreement. In more recent history, OakDOT took over bus shelters from public works. The advertising funded bus shelter program didn't work out as expected.

In current conditions, the two principal problems are graffiti and broken glass. Clear Channel shelters have a lot of glass which provides surface for graffiti. Clear Channel used to replace the glass. Also, shelters are aging, doors of schedule cabinets coming apart. When Clear Channel left, turned off PG&E lighting for the shelters. The shelters are different from shelters in other jurisdictions. For example, Albany shelter with less glass that is easier to maintain. Evolution of bus shelters: many are falling apart, loss of cabinets, breaking of glass, damage/removal because of accidents. Considering proactively removing the glass, no longer necessary given it was designed with the advertising program in mind. Current efforts to improve shelters, we have identified funds and SOW for agreement about cleaning.

14<sup>th</sup> Street safety project includes a new type of shelter that will be installed along the corridor at 8 locations. Kaleidoscope Shelters are very low maintenance compared to Clear Channel. Staff have conducted reviews based on other jurisdictions; first shelters likely won't be installed for 18 months but they are trying to install one sooner for this natural pilot.

**Public Comment:**

**Diego Aguilar:** If we see the problem here with the shelters, I think that even if you try a new kind of shelter, people will find a way to destroy it anyways. I think a better approach is to find out who is damaging shelters and enforce.

**Committee Comments:**

**Director Peeples:** It's obvious from your discussion, but the public and various members of our Board are confused – is it true that all the shelters in Oakland are responsibility of City of Oakland, and not AC Transit?

**Ford:** Yes. There are currently 100 shelters, and they are owned by city, and it is our responsibility to maintain them.

**Council Member Gallo:** The shelters in my district are challenged. If the city is now taking on this responsibility, what department is responsible for cleaning? Right now, my staff members volunteer to clean up the bus shelters. What department within the city currently has a responsibility to power wash, handle graffiti, and clean?

**Ford:** This is a legacy program that was originally handled by Clear Channel. When that ended in April, OakDOT got the responsibility. No one in public works who would be tasked with this. That why we're in the process of standing up a cleaning agreement to address those issues.

**Gallo:** So, within the city we're trying to get District works to help us clean the streets?

**Ford:** Yes, my staff and I have personally gone out and attended to shelters, including replacing AC Transit schedules. They need a dedicated cleaning resource and we're working with District works to set that up. Scope will include removing glass, dealing with illegal issues, Kaleidoscope will be a trial of CPTED, crime prevention through environmental design.

**Gallo:** Last comment about garbage cans, hoping to establish a contract to deal with that. Also may need to remove some bus shelters.

***Public Comment (continued):***

**Kevin Dalley:** Garbage is an important concern; may consider having 2 trash cans and cleaning the area surrounding the stop, not just the immediate shelter.

**Director Syed:** Wanted to apologize to the head of the Diamond Improvement Association, I don't think we notified them of today's meeting, but they were the origin of placing this item on the agenda. Since contract expired in April, we've seen significant public safety issues. Broken glass that was left for 3 weeks – dangerous to be on the street for weeks and risky for city staff to clean. How can we prevent critical maintenance contracts from expiring and leaving the city like this?

**Ford:** My team is usually out there trying to fix issues as soon as possible. This 20-year agreement took a lot of time to put together. I spent 4-5 years working on an attempt to set up a successor program that fell through.

**Syed:** Did the previous shelter program also include benches?

**Ford:** The ad benches are Clear Channel and those are still maintained as part of a legacy program.

**Syed:** How to address the situation when a stop is relocated, and a bus bench is left behind?

**Ford:** Depends on the bench we're talking about. If it's a Clear Channel ad bench, they're still expected to do it. For other benches, requires different collaboration.

**Syed:** What are the pros and cons of removing glass from existing shelters?

**Ford:** Removal of glass is consistent with different, lower maintenance arrangement. No more advertising means no incentive to maintain the glass.

**Syed:** Thinking about multimodal trips, how do we make shelters more of a mobility hub?

**Ford:** OakDOT Parking and Mobility Division has a mobility management team doesn't have a direct program on this right now, but generally work on progressing active transportation and improved shelters.

**Gallo:** Who maintains the median/bus island at the International Blvd center station?

**Rosario:** Combination of AC Transit and contractors. AC Transit only manages BRT downtown.

**Gallo:** Illegal dumping on the median is out of control.

**Salvador Llamas:** Staff conducts daily cleaning and deep cleaning depends on need. Only maintain the platforms themselves, not the medians since those are not AC Transit responsibility.

**Gallo:** Michael Ford put that on your list.

**Syed:** What's the anticipated timeline for district works or some other entity get cleaning of bus shelters?

**Ford:** Don't have a specific time given uncontrollable in procurement process.

## Update on Past Items

### A. Update on Quick Build Program including MacArthur and International Blvd.

Presenters: Wil Buller (AC Transit) and Megan Weir (OakDOT)

**Buller:** Construction improvements to the paving legend being completed this first week of August, 10 signs left of 270. Continuing to monitor improvements and we've only had to replace less than a dozen delineators. It typically takes 3-6 months for driver habits to settle in. For the next phase, we already have a grant and some money set aside, so that should be taking place end of first quarter 2025.

**Weir:** We're also working on the International Blvd speed cushion pilot. There have been ongoing technical meetings including AC Transit, OakDOT, fire marshal, Caltrans, where we're working to align internally on design and placement of the speed cushions. Aiming to install by the end of the year and working with Caltrans for implementation as soon as possible. Oakland secured \$1.35 million in city budget for continued partnership with AC Transit for improvements on International Blvd.

#### **Public Comment:**

**Leticia Chavez:** Business owner in Fruitvale. Very disappointed that on this agenda we don't see the big problem on International in Fruitvale district. People have died because of abuse of the bus lane for speeding. So many people have died, there is very physical damage, and lots of people are afraid to cross the Blvd. Community has requested solutions for years and it is unacceptable. Week by week, speed abuse causes damage, and we have to take care of people. Poles are creating more damage to the community. Please take the situation as seriously as it is.

**Dominic Prado:** Stressing the impact that BRT has on business. Very dense pedestrian area with shopping, schools. We just want to figure out how many speed cushions are being put in. Are we

thinking long term? Is the quick build everything that we need and how can we start conversations now about how to slow down traffic? I also want to highlight the young lady that was killed on International several weeks ago.

**Bryan Culbertson:** Volunteer with Traffic Violence Rapid Response, here to emphasize safety on International. It has been many years of this level of carnage. We know lots of people are working on this, but it is not enough. Bus way inadvertently created a speedway. Every month we wait, more people are killed. Safety can't wait for the perfect solutions. I ask that OakDOT installs speed cushions now and adjust later.

**Public Comment Online:** What community input are you providing for all the businesses that have been impacted by this horrible idea to put the bus lane in the middle? Why is there not a mechanism for public feedback? We all knew the quick band aid that wasn't going to work. Why are we delaying speed cushions and what are you going to do to include community?

**George Spies:** I am also with Traffic Violence Rapid Response, and I want to encourage everyone involved to accelerate the implementation of speed cushions on International Blvd. Controlling speeds is critical. The faster they are put in, the less people die. A 17-year-old died 2 weeks ago from speeding in bus lane. Enforcement is not enough; we need physical infrastructure.

***Committee Comments:***

**Council Member Gallo:** In reference to the hit and run, the reality is the individual who hit her has a history of drunk driving. We used to have cameras on every intersection, but we shut them down because tickets were targeting our communities. We're making investments on Fruitvale, but the questions have come to the speed cushions. In terms of locating cushions on International Blvd, what is the recommendation?

**Weir:** We agree with the public comment that this needs to happen soon. International has unique context specific operations, like the Fire Department, but we are committed to doing this soon. I want to emphasize that we're not waiting for the quick build evaluations to implement the cushions.

**Gallo:** Another question about speed camera enforcement and community concerns.

**Weir:** Oakland is enabled to pilot speed safety cameras that are automated to enforce egregious speeding. We are not allowed to pilot in Caltrans right of way, but International Blvd from 42<sup>nd</sup> west is part of that pilot, and we've requested to have that on a future ILC agenda. The poles have been part of a phased approach to improvements. Evaluation happening in real time and there was expansive outreach to the public before.

**Buller:** We've engaged the community through every phase of design and construction. We have certain standards, and we must proceed carefully so that it is successful. Comments have not fallen on deaf ears, moving as fast as we can.

**Council Member Kaplan:** Reiterate the importance of dealing with the speeding. We know the city has approved speed safety cameras and there is city-approved money for improvements. Is the money sufficient? Is anything holding this up a fiscal allocation? Is there anything that's

needed from us to authorize/direct the speed safety cameras? On the speed cushions, are there any outstanding questions about how/where to do them?

**Weir:** Confirmed that we have the budget allocation needed, so we're just working on the technical alignment on the where, how, placement details. Working to get them in the ground by the end of the year. We will update this forum; this is a high priority item, and we are working to get those cameras in the ground next year.

**Kaplan:** Let us know if there is any need for an additional financial allocation. Is there anything we can do to help with the speed cushion discussions about placement?

**Weir:** Heartened as agencies willingness to give their time to figure this out; at this point we are on track with those discussions.

**Kaplan:** Let's check in about when we would meet again to discuss this.

**Director Syed:** Could you share the rationale for not include curb to curb speed cushions? All lanes vs. just in the bus lane?

**Weir:** That decision is part of the ongoing discussion with technical groups.

**Syed:** When I look at the data on fatalities, I see no rationale for not calming that lane as well.

**Director Peebles:** From I've heard, there are not speed problems in regular traffic lanes. Problem is when someone speeding in bus lane goes into the general traffic lanes. Clearly problem with speeding in the bus lane so they need to see if there's a true problem with general purpose lanes or if it's a spin off.

## **B. AC Transit Realign Update**

**Presenters:** Michael Eshleman and Maria Henderson (AC Transit)

**Henderson:** Maria Henderson, from Legislative Affairs and Community Relations at ACT. Realign project is a comprehensive reassessment of AC Transit service based on pandemic changes. Reviewing public engagement metric highlights. What we heard from public engagement – both positive and negative. People concerned about decreased frequency and lack of weekend service.

**Eshleman:** Highlighting adjustments made based on feedback. Changes: Lines 6, 51A and 51B will not be changed from what's currently on the street today, Line 19 shortened to downtown Oakland, Line 20 extended, Line 21 split, Line 7 terminal in Emeryville at Public Market, Line 29 going to Downtown Berkeley. Improvements to frequency and reliability. Paratransit coming up as a topic as we look for Board approval. Explaining distinctions between Realign, Realign+, and Unconstrained plan. First priorities for Realign+ include frequency and span minimums and certain lines.

**Henderson:** Current place in the timeline and next steps. 4 public hearings happening on September 9, 10, 11. After that, planning staff will make changes to bring back to the Board. Working towards a goal of starting implementation in March 2025. Introduction of new service

standards at the September 25 Board meeting. ACT still receiving feedback until September 11<sup>th</sup> and shared the ways to provide feedback.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Committee Comments:**

**Director Syed:** Impressed by the stats that increased access to the frequent transit network, especially providing more equitable service.

**Director Peeples:** Can the staff comment on the relationship between the Realign process, the run cut process, and the contractually required interaction with the Drivers' Committee and the Union? How is the timing of that going to work?

**Eshleman:** We are in that process right now; the Scheduling team has put together draft schedules. We've accelerated them understanding that March isn't final, but we're doing it 7 months instead of 4 months beforehand so we can make those adjustments.

**C. Upper Telegraph Repaving Project**

Presenters: Josh Rowan (OakDOT)

**Rowan:** Brief verbal update. We'll continue with through the end of the corridor as we've done with earlier portions of Telegraph. Three-lane section and bike lane.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Committee Comments:**

**Director Syed:** Mentioned desire to have a bus lane in the project that was not realized.

**Rowan:** We believe the three-lane section is superior and will work better in the long run. We have the option to include queue jump and improve bus performance.

**Future Agenda Items**

- A. West Oakland Transit Improvements Project – OakDOT**
- B. Transit Corridor Speed Cushion Evaluation – OakDOT**
- C. Broadway Shuttle Update and Downtown Oakland Fare Free Zone – OakDOT/AC Transit**  
[Requested by Council Member Kaplan]
- D. New Residential/Commercial Development Update – City of Oakland**
- E. Slow Street Project Update – OakDOT** [Requested by Director Peeples]
- F. Permit Process to use AC Transit buses in films – AC Transit** [Requested by Council Member Kaplan]
- G. Speed Safety Camera Pilot Program Update - OakDOT**

**Committee Member Comments**

- A. None.

**Proposed Date and Time of Next Regular Meeting**



A. December 4, 2024.

**Adjournment**

A. Adjourned 11:45.