

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 11/10/2021

Staff Report No. 21-469

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Quarterly Report on District Involvement in External Planning Processes

BRIEFING ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider receiving the Quarterly Report on the District's involvement in external planning processes.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Strong Public and Policymaker Support
Initiative - Service Quality

External planning activities develop public and policymaker support by facilitating dialogue and consensus between cities, AC Transit, and other stakeholders about their proposals affecting transit. The District's participation in these activities is generally designed to improve or maintain service quality. Proposals by cities and other entities can improve operating conditions for AC Transit service or degrade them if not monitored closely.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct budgetary/fiscal impact associated with this report.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

AC Transit's operations and service are affected not just by our own planning, but also by the planning of governmental agencies at multiple levels-state, regional, county, and city. Our district includes 13 cities and portions of 2 counties. Actions of these agencies can affect AC Transit positively or negatively in funding, policymaking, roadway design, transit performance and land use. Therefore, the District seeks to monitor and affect other agencies' plan-making on an ongoing basis. Resources permitting, the District seeks to take an active role in these planning processes. Activities include participating on Technical Advisory Committees, submitting comments on plans, designs and other documents, and speaking before staff and governing bodies. These activities are reflected in the recently adopted Board Policy 522 supporting transit-oriented development and occur in other contexts as well.

This report summarizes transportation and land-use planning processes led by these other agencies, which affect AC Transit. This report focuses primarily on long-range planning activities rather than project level

implementation. A list and summary of these planning processes is included as Attachment 1. The report covers planning activities from mid-July to early October 2021.

Plan Bay Area 2050 is the largest scale planning document for the Bay Area. It is scheduled for adoption on October 14 by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The Plan is the third regional plan jointly adopted by the two agencies. The Plan also serves as the Sustainable Communities Strategy required by state law. The adoption will also include the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the Air Quality Conformity Strategy, the Transportation Improvement Plan, and the Implementation Plan.

The Plan is the result of a three-year planning process which included development of broad future scenarios for the Bay Area in the Horizon Process. The Plans are adopted every four years. The Plan incorporates 35 strategies for transportation, land use, the environment, and the economy in the nine county Bay Area. Many people of course participated in the development of the Plan; Dave Vautin the Plan's project manager for MTC, played a vital role.

The Plan notes a number of new features in this year's plan. It notes that equity has been considered a vital part of all strategies from the beginning of their development. It laid out a roadmap of what would be required to tackle the intractable housing crisis. It identifies near term implementation actions for all 35 strategies. It was also the first plan to be developed by a joint ABAG/MTC planning staff.

Transportation is a major element of the Plan. The Plan does not provide new funding, but indicates how funding should be used. It can be thought of as a "hunting license." It estimates that through 2050, \$468 billion in revenues will be available for transportation. An additional \$110 billion will be needed to implement the Plan's funding proposals, though this gap is smaller than other areas, such as the environment.

The Plan sets out three themes for transportation:

- Maintain and optimize the existing system;
- Create healthy and safe streets;
- Build a next generation transit network

AC Transit is largely satisfied with the transportation proposals of Plan Bay Area 2050. We noted this in our comment letter on the Draft Plan (attached to the last External Planning report). We did express our concern about the high proportion of funds slated for high-cost regional rail projects. We also noted that some projects could be strategically useful, while we questioned others, such as Group Rapid Transit.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

External planning processes provide AC Transit with opportunities to influence decisions by cities, counties, and other agencies that affect roadway design, transit and land use. In addition, our participation ensures transit service plans can anticipate and adjust to meet the needs of the community.

The disadvantage is that participation in external planning processes can be time-consuming with no guarantee of positive results for the District.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

Because this report does not recommend an action, there is no alternatives analysis.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

Staff Report 21-356, External Planning

ATTACHMENTS:

1. External Planning Tracker

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