

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 1/22/2020

Staff Report No. 20-074

TO: AC Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
SUBJECT: Bus-only Lane on the Bay Bridge

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Consider adoption of Resolution 20-010 supporting a Bus-only lane on the Bay Bridge. [Requested by Vice President Ortiz]

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service
Initiative - Service Quality

A bus-only lane on the Bay Bridge could greatly increase the reliability of AC Transit Transbay service. It will allow more frequent, reliable and faster service, contributing substantially to the quality of Transbay service.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

Implementation of a bus-only lane on the Bay Bridge will have an undetermined capital and maintenance expense but could save the District in Transbay operating costs. The resolution itself has no fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Proposals for bus-only/transit lanes on the Bay Bridge have come up repeatedly over the life of the AC Transit system, especially when major changes to the Bridge are implemented. Proponents have pointed to the effectiveness of the bus-only lane approaching the Lincoln Tunnel into New York City as an analogous facility. The Express Bus Lane (XBL) serves hundreds of buses between New Jersey and the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan. However, no bus-only lane has been implemented on the Bay Bridge despite the increasing level of congestion. Concern about the effect of bus-only lanes on auto traffic have made it impossible to go forward to date.

Now, however, Bay Area elected officials have sparked a new wave of support for a bus-only lane on the Bay Bridge. Assemblymember Rob Bonta solicited legislative ideas from his constituents and one suggested a bus lane on the Bridge.

Mr. Bonta stated that a bus lane "...Would promote greater equity and justice through increased access to public transportation. This is critical as for many residents, including members of vulnerable, disadvantaged,

and poor communities, public transit is the primary means of travel to reach jobs and other life necessities.”

Other elected officials supporting the lane include Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin, the Berkeley City Council, Oakland Councilmember at Large Rebecca Kaplan, Emeryville Councilmembers Ally Medina and John Bauters, East Bay Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, San Francisco State Senator Scott Wiener, and BART Director Rebecca Saltzman (the BART Board will vote on its own resolution next week).

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:

Generally, staff believes that a bus-only lane would be advantageous for AC Transit-as discussed above and in the resolution. However, in the absence of a design for the lane, its effects cannot be completely projected and, therefore, staff cannot identify any disadvantages at this time.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:

As an alternative, the Board of Directors could decide not to take a position on a bus lane on the Bay Bridge. However, with the increased political support for the proposal, a lack of a position from the primary transit provider for the bus lane could be detrimental to the project advancing.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution 20-010

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