

# ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



## STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 2/9/2022

**Staff Report No.** 22-024

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**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. It 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 October 2021 to mid-January 2022.

Planning in late 2021 and early 2022 was affected by the resurgent COVID pandemic in various ways. Almost all meetings, both staff level and public, were conducted on line. Some agencies have experienced staff shortages which impeded their ability to carry out planning processes. Work often slows down during the winter holiday season, as well.

Many agencies have found that on-line attendance at public meetings exceeded the previous in-person attendance at similar meetings (agencies generally provided additional forms of access). On-line attendance was easier for some members of the public. Some legislators have suggested that agencies should be required to maintain on-line meeting access even after in-person public meetings have resumed. However, some argued the quality of participation and discussion had suffered, despite the agencies' efforts. Nonetheless, significant planning efforts continued and were even initiated during this period.

Plan Bay Area 2050 is the largest scale planning document for the Bay Area, addressing transportation, housing, the environment and economic development in all nine Bay Area counties. The plan was adopted on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 by a unanimous vote of 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. It 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. See Report 21-469 and previous reports for more details on Plan Bay Area 2050.

Another completed (and therefore deleted from the tracker) project is the Alameda County Transportation Commission's development of guidelines to implement SB 743. SB 743 is state legislation which requires cities to change their California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) traffic analyses from the Level of Service method--often viewed as anti-urban--to an analysis of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The University of California Berkeley has completed its Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), considered to be analogous to a General Plan for the Berkeley campus. MTC's Fare Coordination and Integration Study also wrapped up in the fall with a number of recommendations, some of which MTC hopes to implement later this calendar year.

A major new effort is emerging around the Interstate 580 corridor, from Oakland through Castro Valley and out into the Livermore Valley. The I-580 Sustainable Corridor Strategy will, in the words of sponsor Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), focus on goals of "reducing vehicle miles traveled, implementing complete corridors, improving multi-modal safety, improving transit performance and advancing equity." Expansion of express bus service is anticipated to be part of the plan. An early implementation effort will create a westbound three-person High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV-3) lane from the I-980/I-580 interchange to the Macarthur Maze.

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is expanding its planning efforts. The Authority is preparing, along with the West Contra Costa County Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC), an Action Plan for routes of regional significance. Similar efforts are underway for the other sub-areas of the county. The plan will identify routes, goals and policies and actions for roadway, transit, and bicycle routes of regional significance. Previous action plans only considered roadways. The plan is intended to be a major element of the

Countywide Transportation Plan, which would in turn form the basis of a future tax measure. Bus routes which connect more than one city are considered routes of regional significance. Almost all AC Transit routes in West County are therefore considered regional, as they serve two or more cities.

CCTA is also initiating an effort to develop an “Integrated Transit Plan” for the multiple transit operators serving the county. The plan would seek to optimize the transit network in Contra Costa County through improved service, schedule, and technological coordination. This strengthened network would serve as the foundation for future service improvements. Unlike many Bay Area counties, Contra Costa County does not have a single primary bus/surface transit operator. This plan will be reflected on the tracker as it develops further. This effort would also need to be coordinated with the larger regional coordination effort that MTC is taking on in the Bay Area. For this effort, MTC will conduct a business case analysis to determine what type of governance structure would be best to oversee regional coordination among the 27 transit operators in the region.

#### **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 21-469, External Planning

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. External Planning Tracker

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