

ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 8/5/2020

Staff Report No. 20-271

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.

BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:

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

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

This report summarizes transportation and land use planning processes led by other agencies, which affect AC Transit. This report focuses primarily on long-range planning activities rather than project level implementation. AC Transit participates in and tracks multiple external planning processes at multiple levels. A list and summary of these planning processes is included as Attachment 1.

This report covers activities in the period between early April and early July 2020. The county and state Covid 19 pandemic Shelter-in-Place orders have been in effect, in some form or another, throughout this period. Nonetheless, transportation and land use planning have continued in the Bay Area. In person meetings have all but ceased, with meetings conducted through various on-line platforms. Agency staffs have typically worked from home. In this way, the business of agencies has continued, although some activities have been deferred.

The Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force was initiated by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in this period. The Task Force is made up of transit agency leaders, including AC Transit General

Manager Michael Hursh. It was initially charged with allocating CARES Act funding. It is then turning its attention to recovery strategies for transit agencies, most of which have suffered severe losses of ridership and revenue. It will then consider longer term improvements for transit-in chair Jim Sperling's words, to make transit "leaner, cleaner, faster, easier, friendlier, better connected, and more affordable."

The Blue Ribbon Task Force is working in parallel with the long range regional plan effort by MTC/ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments)-Plan Bay Area 2050. AC Transit has been an active participant throughout the history of this plan.

This period has seen the emergence of street closure/restriction efforts, known as "open streets" or "slow streets" or by similar names. Cities have closed street to provide safer bicycling routes, safer walking/playing spaces, and to provide space for outdoor restaurants given that indoor restaurants are prohibited (in Alameda County). Cities have also wished to take the opportunity provided by reduction in car traffic. Cities have closed travel lanes and parking spaces to provide street space. Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Alameda and Hayward have closed streets or developed plans to. Oakland instituted the largest program. AC Transit has been supportive of these efforts. Our concern is that street closures not interfere with bus stops or routes-to date they have not, with cities generally focusing on secondary streets.

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 20-184, External Planning

ATTACHMENTS:

1. External Planning Tracker

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