

El Cerrito



February 10, 2017

Hercules

El Cerrito City Councilmembers
El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Councilmembers
Hercules City Councilmembers
Pinole City Councilmembers
Richmond City Councilmembers
San Pablo City Councilmembers

Pinole

Richmond

RE: West County High Capacity Transit Study Update and Presentation

Dear Councilmembers:

San Pablo

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee's progress on its West County High Capacity Transit Study. The study is nearing completion and we are seeking stakeholder and public opinion on the initial draft findings from the study. Your staff have invited us to give presentations to your Councils on the West County High Capacity Transit Study's highlights and gather community feedback.

Contra Costa
County

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

In the spring of 2015, WCCTAC launched its West County High Capacity Transit Study. A team of transportation consultants working with the WCCTAC Board and its Technical Advisory Committee and staff developed study goals and objectives and evaluated existing and future transportation networks, land uses, and travel markets. The study's consultants analyzed this information then developed an initial set of alternatives that then underwent a technical evaluation that considered travel time improvements, access to regional transit centers, transit market potential, service to low-income areas and markets lacking major transit connections, etc.

AC Transit

BART

Throughout this study process, community outreach efforts have been on-going. A study-dedicated website (www.WestCountyTransitStudy.org) provides the public with opportunities to check on the study's status and review presentations and technical memos. In November 2015, WCCTAC and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) held a joint telephone town hall, which attracted 2,045 total attendees, with 700 callers at its peak and an average of 150

WestCAT

attendees over sixty minutes. Then in April 2016, the study hosted an online survey and three West County community workshops. Based on the input received, the WCCTAC Board agreed to reduce the original eight alternatives to five. Afterwards, the five remaining alternatives were further refined, though still at a conceptual level, and evaluated even further.

Now WCCTAC is undertaking the next step in the study's outreach plan and we are seeking input on the study's findings and potential recommendations. This step includes six council presentations in West County and an online survey, all of which are occurring February 21-March 26, 2017. These outreach efforts are supplemented by public information display posters placed throughout West County, e-blasts to the community, public announcements, and a study fact sheet that like the online survey is available in English, Spanish and Chinese.

WCCTAC staff (John Nemeth, Executive Director and Leah Greenblat, Project Manager) and the study's consultant project manager (Rebecca Kohlstrand, WSP-Parsons Brinckerhoff) plan on attending your Council meeting and presenting study highlights. We seek the Council's and public's feedback on the study.

Why this Study?

Interstate 80 is the most congested corridor in the Bay Area, and the Richmond BART line often reaches full capacity during commute hours. Expanded transit options and additional transit capacity would provide West County residents, including those located away from major corridors, with more convenient and comfortable access to employment centers in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and Emeryville, as well as the greater Bay Area job market.

What is High Capacity Transit?

High-capacity transit provides substantially higher levels of passenger capacity with typically fewer stops and higher speeds than local public bus services. It is the type of transit that people often use for their daily commute to work. High-capacity transit can include specialized bus services, including express buses and bus rapid transit, BART, commuter rail like Capitol Corridor (AMTRAK), ferry services, as well as other options.

What will this presentation be about?

The presentation provides an additional opportunity for WCCTAC to share the information garnered from the study and to hear back from communities and members of the public on what they think about it. WCCTAC's study consultant will provide a summary of the work to date and highlight key findings. The presentation will include an explanation of the five alternatives currently under consideration and offer some opportunities for next steps. WCCTAC and the study consultant will be available to answer questions.

How may I find out about the five alternatives currently being considered?

At the six council meetings occurring throughout West County, the study consultant will present the five alternatives. The public outreach materials such as the enclosed study fact sheet also include summaries of the alternatives. For in depth information about the alternatives, the study's Technical Memorandum #11: Alternatives Refinement is available on the study's website: www.WestCountyTransitStudy.com

What timeframe are we looking at?

This study evaluates short (1-5 years), medium (5-15 years) and long-term (15+ years) alternatives. While different alternatives have varied timeframes for reaching full completion, there are intermediate steps that may be taken. For example, an improvement such as adding a new express bus route could begin rather quickly; but the supporting infrastructure that will allow it to run with maximum efficiency will take longer to implement. Similarly, an alternative like a BART extension may not be operable until the long-term; however, much preliminary work would need to occur in the short and middle timeframes to ensure long-term operation.

Where would the funds come from for these improvements?

The study includes an analysis of potential funding including federal, state, local, existing and new sources of revenue. While future changes may occur to existing transportation funding, it is clear that a combination of funding sources will be needed including significant contributions from the Bay Area and local agencies. A key to accessing federal, state and regional funding sources is documenting the significant national, state and regional economic impact that the I-80 corridor holds. Determining these benefits is a potential next step that could increase West County's competitiveness when seeking a variety of funding.

Who is WCCTAC?

WCCTAC is one of four Regional Transportation Planning Committees (RTPCs) in Contra Costa County and represents the West Contra Costa sub-area. The Committees were created in 1988 to guide transportation projects and programs included in the Measure C, a ½ cent, transportation sales tax approved by Contra Costa voters. Measure C was succeeded by Measure J in 2004.

WCCTAC aims to improve the transportation system in West Contra Costa through the development and coordination of transportation plans, projects, programs and policies for the West Contra Costa area.

WCCTAC is a public agency, governed by a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement between the following member agencies: the cities of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo; Contra Costa County; and the transit operators, AC Transit, BART, and WestCAT. WCCTAC's operating

revenues are derived from dues paid by member agencies as well as from numerous grants.

Where can I find more information?

A study factsheet, attached, explains the five alternatives currently under consideration. All past presentations to the WCCTAC Board and the finalized technical memos to date are posted on the study's website: www.WestCountyTransitStudy.com. This website also includes a link to the current online survey available in English, Spanish and Chinese. Leah Greenblat, WCCTAC Project Manager for this study, is available to respond to questions at LGREENBLAT@wcctac.org or 510.210.5935.

Again, I look forward to sharing with you more details about this study and hearing from you and your constituents about these possible new approaches for improving transit commuting.

Sincerely,



John Nemeth
Executive Director

Enclosure



RETHINK YOUR COMMUTE!

WEST COUNTY HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT STUDY

The I-80 corridor is one of the most congested in the Bay Area. Better transit options could provide West County residents with more convenient, reliable, and faster access to destinations throughout the Bay Area.

The West County High-Capacity Transit Study is evaluating options for potential transit improvements along important transportation corridors where people live and travel now and will in the future. The options include Express Bus, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Capitol Corridor/Amtrak, and BART.

WHAT IS HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT?

High-capacity transit provides substantially higher levels of passenger capacity with typically fewer stops and higher speeds than local bus service.

EXPRESS BUS



Express Bus Service: Potential routes and stops

Express Bus service makes a few stops to pick up passengers and then travels non-stop to its final destination. The Express Bus alternative would offer service between the Hercules Transit Center and Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland. On its way, the Express Bus would stop at the Richmond Parkway Transit Center and at a potential new transit center near Macdonald Avenue and San Pablo Avenue in Richmond.

Express Bus Benefits:

- » Fast, direct service between West County and San Francisco, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland
- » Buses every 10 to 12 minutes during commute hours and every 30 minutes during non-commute hours
- » New, direct access to carpool lanes to bypass freeway congestion

Timeline:

1 – 5 YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » More frequent service » New service to Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland » Bus priority improvements (such as signals and “queue jumps” to let buses move through intersections more quickly)
5 – 15 YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » More parking at Richmond Parkway and Hercules Transit Centers
15+ YEARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Freeway ramp improvements for buses at transit centers so buses can get on/off freeway faster » Transit center at Macdonald Avenue and I-80 so riders can transfer between Express Buses and Bus Rapid Transit service

BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)



Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a specialized service that lets buses move through congested streets more quickly. It gives priority to buses at traffic signals, can include bus-only lanes, and makes it faster for passengers to get on and off buses.

Other improvements can include sidewalk extensions or more visible sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrian safety. Changes can be made quickly and customized to local needs, so riders get benefits sooner.

BRT on San Pablo Avenue and Macdonald Avenue

This alternative includes two branches of BRT service that would run on San Pablo Avenue between El Cerrito and Hercules and on Macdonald Avenue between Point Richmond and El Cerrito. Both of these routes also include service to San Pablo and Pinole. The service is similar to AC Transit’s existing Route 72R and is consistent with AC Transit’s future plans for San Pablo Avenue in Alameda County.

BRT on 23rd Street

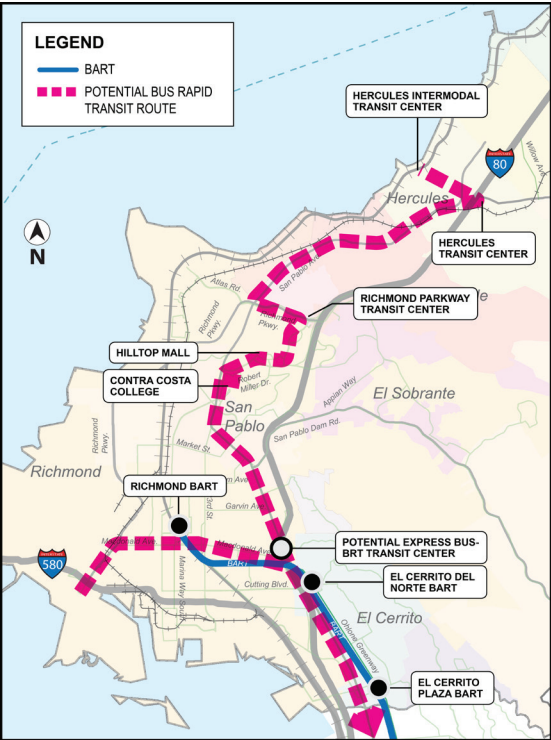
This alternative would provide BRT service on 23rd Street in Richmond to Contra Costa College and Hercules via San Pablo Avenue. This alternative would connect the new Richmond ferry service and the UC Berkeley field station with the Richmond BART station, Contra Costa College, Hilltop Mall, Pinole, and the Hercules Transit Center.

BRT Benefits:

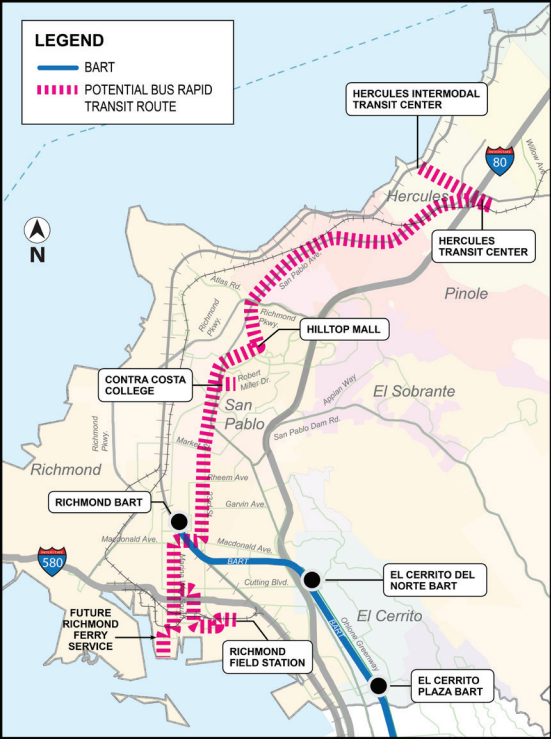
- » Faster travel time and greater reliability due to priority at traffic signals and bus-only lanes
- » Provides more bus stops for access to more destinations
- » Changes can be made quickly and customized to local needs, so riders get benefits sooner
- » Frequent service – every 10 minutes throughout the day
- » State-of-the-art buses for a more comfortable ride

Timeline:

1 – 5 YEARS	5 – 15 YEARS	15+ YEARS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Bus priority treatments (such as signals and “queue jumps”) to let buses move through intersections more quickly» Bus-only lanes in limited locations» Improvements extended to Richmond Parkway Transit Center (BRT on San Pablo Avenue/ Macdonald Avenue only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» More bus-only lanes and priority treatments» Improvements extended to Hercules Transit Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Improvements extended to new Hercules Intermodal Transit Center» Bus-only lanes between 23rd Street and Richmond Parkway Transit Center» Transit center at Macdonald Avenue and I-80 so riders can transfer between Express Buses and Bus Rapid Transit service (BRT on San Pablo Avenue/Macdonald Avenue only)



Potential route: BRT on San Pablo & Macdonald Ave.



Potential route: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on 23rd St. & San Pablo Ave.

BART



BART provides faster travel time because it runs on its own track. Passengers also get more direct access to Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, and soon Santa Clara Counties. But it is expensive and would take a long time to build.

This BART alternative would extend service from the existing Richmond BART station to a new station near the I-80 and State Route 4 interchange in Hercules. There are two potential routes, each with the possibility of one to two stations in between. Potential station locations include: Contra Costa College, Hilltop Mall, Richmond Parkway Transit Center and Appian Way.

Route Option #1 runs along the northern segment of Rumrill Boulevard. It has stations at Contra Costa College and the Richmond Parkway Transit Center. This option serves the city of San Pablo and supports city plans for new housing development in the vicinity of Contra Costa College. It could allow for BART stations at Hilltop Mall and Appian Way. In total, only one to two stations between the existing Richmond BART station and Hercules would likely be built.

Route Option #2 shows BART stations at Hilltop Mall and Appian Way. Hilltop Mall is a viable site for transit oriented development. This option reduces the potential impacts along Rumrill Boulevard, but would not allow a BART station at Contra Costa College. This option could accommodate a BART station at Richmond Parkway Transit Center. In total, only one to two stations between the existing Richmond BART station and Hercules would likely be built.

BART Benefits:

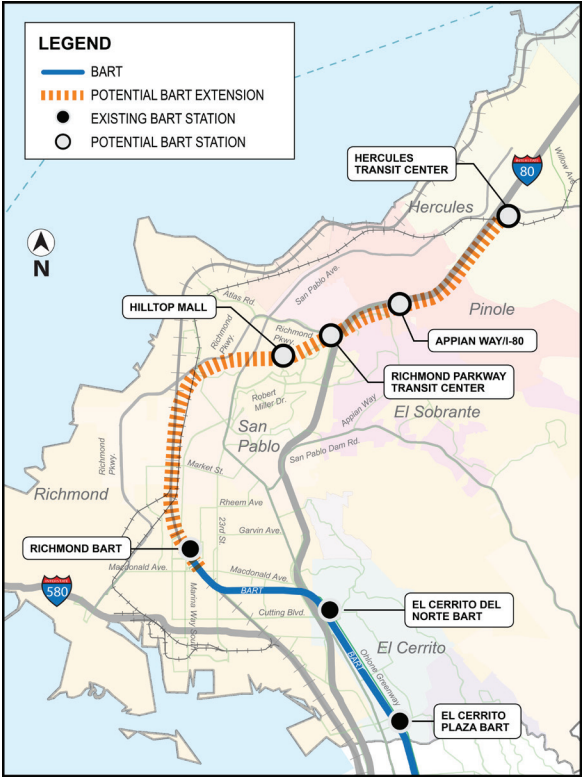
- » Faster travel time and greater reliability due to dedicated trackway
- » More direct access to other parts of the greater Bay Area, such as Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties

Timeline:

1 – 5 YEARS	15 – 25+ YEARS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Preliminary engineering design and environmental review to select alignment and potential station locations» Early right-of-way acquisition (with environmental clearance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Final design and construction



Potential BART extension and stations for Route Option #1. Only one or two stations would be constructed.



Potential BART extension and stations for Route Option #2. Only one or two stations would be constructed.

CAPITOL CORRIDOR FARE SUBSIDY

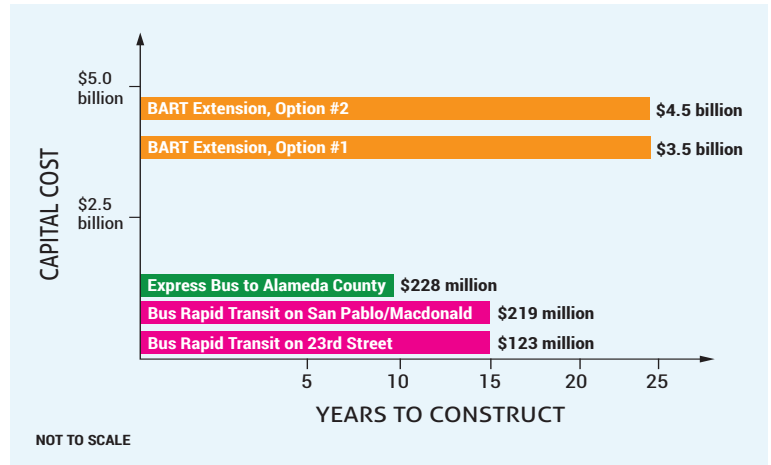
Commuter rail offers transit between downtowns/city centers and areas outside of these cities, such as suburbs or other locations that draw large numbers of daily commuters.

Amtrak provides commuter rail service on its Capitol Corridor route serving the Bay Area between San Jose and Sacramento, with stops in Richmond, Martinez, West Berkeley, Emeryville, and Jack London Square. Due to dedicated track, trains can provide a quicker trip than congested roadways, but rail is not currently priced competitively for local travel.

This study is looking at a potential three-year pilot to subsidize fares on the Capitol Corridor route. This subsidy would reduce train fares by 50 to 75 percent for West County travelers. For example, with a 75 percent subsidy, one-way travel from Richmond to Martinez could be reduced from \$12.00 to \$3.00.

CONSTRUCTION COST AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINES

Big changes in transportation take time and money. Improvements require making choices that balance trade-offs between various options. The chart below shows (1) how long the alternatives may take to build and (2) cost estimates to build them.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

We want to know how *you* would prioritize transit improvements to best suit your current and future travel needs.

- » Take our quick online survey at <http://westcountytransitstudy.com/>
- » Scan the QR code to the right to access the online survey
- » Attend a council presentation*



- » Submit a formal comment at <http://westcountytransitstudy.com/contact-english/>
- » Visit WestCountyTransitStudy.com to check out what we've learned:
 - » How West County residents and employees get around
 - » What are the most common destinations for West County residents and employees
 - » What transit options were studied

CITY	DATE	TIME	ADDRESS
Richmond	Tuesday, February 28	6:30 PM	City Hall 440 Civic Center Plaza
San Pablo	Monday, March 6	7:00 PM	City Hall 13831 San Pablo Ave
Pinole	Tuesday, March 7	7:00 PM	City Hall 2131 Pear Street
El Sobrante	Wednesday, March 8	6:00 PM	El Sobrante Library 4191 Appian Way
Hercules	Tuesday, March 14	6:00 PM	City Hall 111 Civic Drive
El Cerrito	Tuesday, March 21	7:00 PM	City Hall 10890 San Pablo Ave

*Check your local council agenda to confirm meeting date and time

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

If you need language assistance services, please call (510) 464-6752.

Si necesita servicios de asistencia de idioma, llame al (510) 464-6752.

如需語言協助服務，請致電 (510) 464-6752。

Kung kailangan mo ang tulong ng mga serbisyo ng wika, paki tawagan ang (510) 464-6752.

Nếu quý vị cần dịch vụ trợ giúp về ngôn ngữ, xin vui lòng gọi số (510) 464-6752.

통역이 필요하신 분은, 510-464-6752 로 문의하십시오.

WCCTAC is an association of cities and transportation agencies in West County and one of four Regional Transportation Planning Committees in Contra Costa County. WCCTAC serves the residents of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo, and unincorporated areas of West County. Find out more about WCCTAC at WCCTAC.org.

