

Transportation Commission

May 25, 2016

Item 5A - Action

Approve Proposed Bus Stop Locations for the Restored Line 19

BACKGROUND

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) developed a District-wide Service Expansion Plan (SEP) amounting to \$25.4 million annually. The SEP aims to improve the existing service network by trying to better meet demand and by providing frequent and reliable service to the densest residential and commercial neighborhoods. Via many AC Transit and City of Alameda meetings, the SEP alternatives for new bus service in Alameda were discussed and evaluated. Ultimately, the AC Transit Board and the City Council approved the Line 19 alternative, which will mainly run along Buena Vista Avenue.

AC Transit and City of Alameda conducted outreach for the SEP in late 2015 and early 2016. AC Transit conducted a community workshop in Alameda on October 21, 2015. At the November 11, 2015 public hearings, the AC Transit Board received oral and written comments from community members. The outreach effort for the public hearings exceeded the minimum requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and AC Transit Board policy. City staff received and discussed SEP comments from the Transportation Commission's (TC) Transit Committee. Staff requested and reviewed the electronic SEP outreach comments received by AC Transit on Alameda routes.

Staff presented and discussed staff's SEP preliminary recommendation at the Interagency Liaison Committee between AC Transit and City of Alameda representatives on October 14, 2015 and January 6, 2016, which includes the Mayor and Councilmembers. At the January 13, 2016 AC Transit Board meeting, the AC Transit Board voted to proceed with the SEP except for the City of Alameda alternatives, to provide the City with more time to select a preferred alternative from the three presented by AC Transit.

AC Transit presented three alternatives for new routes in Alameda. Even though all three alternatives presented are important, City staff and the TC's Transit Committee recommended restoring AC Transit Line 19 to serve the Northern Waterfront Priority Development Area (PDA), as the highest priority for the City of Alameda. This Buena Vista Avenue/Restored Line 19 alternative has more potential to relieve congestion than the other proposed routes. A restored Line 19 along the Northern Waterfront will serve Fruitvale BART and downtown Oakland, which will provide both BART and AC Transit connections to locations throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. City staff also requested that AC Transit consider altering the proposed route to include Marina Village.

After taking public input, the Transportation Commission and the City Council approved the Buena Vista Avenue/Line 19 alternative on January 27, 2016 and February 2, 2016, respectively, with the one modification of routing the line along Atlantic Avenue through

Marina Village instead of along Buena Vista Avenue west of Sherman Street. The AC Transit Board approved this alternative on March 9, 2016.

DISCUSSION

To begin service, AC Transit and the City have to select bus stops (new, restored or existing) where the new line will run, and the City must install these bus stops, including making accessibility improvements that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Evaluation of Bus Stops:

The City began discussions of bus stop locations with AC Transit immediately after the AC Transit Board recommendation to restore Line 19. Both AC Transit staff and City staff visited the possible locations for bus stops. Staff and AC Transit used multiple factors and criteria in determining which stops to recommend, including:

- Must have enough space for the bus wheelchair ramp to deploy and must be in compliance with ADA.
- Must provide the necessary clearance for the bus to enter the stop and pull out.
- Preference for farside bus stop locations because they are more efficient and safe. Farside stops mean that buses clear the intersection and then drop-off/pick-up passengers, thus not having to wait unnecessarily at the traffic signal. This allows motorists to make right turns unimpeded by the bus. In a nearside situation, a bus stops before the intersection causing additional delays for both the motorists following the bus and for the bus, which could be impeded unnecessarily by the traffic light. In addition, with a nearside stop, motorists attempting to turn right could pull out and turn right in front of the bus, but not see pedestrians crossing in front of the bus.
- Stops spaced about 800-1200 feet apart, which is typical for a local line such as Line 19. Stops that are more closely spaced mean the bus will stop more often, extending the time of passengers' trips. Stops spaced further apart make a bus line less accessible and discourage people from taking the bus.
- Site bus stops in pairs with one stop on either side of the street traveling in the opposite direction, to make it easier for passengers to use the bus.
- Minimize parking removal.
- Minimize impacts to auto traffic circulation.
- Serve major commercial and other key destinations.

- Serve new residential developments, which would otherwise be paying for a shuttle service.

A *preliminary* list of 28 new and existing bus stops was developed, with several alternatives for some locations that needed further study. This list was sent in a public notice to all properties and property owners within a 300 foot radius of the proposed bus stops and bus line on April 28th (Exhibit 1). AC Transit did a test run of the route, using the preliminary list of bus stops, with the alternative stop options, to determine the feasibility and accessibility of the stops. Based on results of this test run, further AC Transit and City staff evaluations and discussions, and public input received, staff developed the list of 26 recommended bus stops in Exhibit 2. Further details on which stops were selected or eliminated and why, with a map and photos, are included in Exhibit 3.

The City created the following web page for the Line 19 project: www.alamedaca.gov/public-works/line-19. The public notification stated that this staff report and a *recommended* list of bus stops would be posted on this web page, and that community members also are encouraged to attend the May 25th TC meeting, if interested.

Public Input:

As of the writing of this staff report, 15 community members had submitted comments. These comments included enthusiastic support for the new bus line, requests for minor changes to the bus stop design, requests for removing or moving specific bus stops, recommendations for extending the route of the bus line, and requests to move the bus line completely onto another street. Overall:

- **8 commenters** were either in support of the new bus line, the new bus stops as proposed or, the new bus stops but with *minor* changes suggested; and
- **7 commenters** would like to see removal of one or more bus stops, or re-routing of the bus line off of Buena Vista Avenue.

Comments were received on **ten** specific proposed bus stops: numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13, all of which are on Buena Vista Avenue, except for number 1, at Broadway/Blanding. No specific comments were received on the remaining locations.

A summary of the comments, with staff response, is shown in Exhibit 4.

Next Steps:

The restored Line 19 is scheduled to begin service in December 2016 to coordinate with AC Transit's roll-out of new service across their district.

The City is leading an effort to develop a partnership between AC Transit, the City of Alameda and the Northern Waterfront PDA developments whereby the developments would provide operating funds for the bus line to increase frequency to 20 minutes during

the peak commute periods. Such a partnership would benefit AC Transit and the future Northern Waterfront bus users, and would provide a better bus alternative than multiple independent development-sponsored shuttles running services parallel to a restored Line 19. The 20-minute frequencies during peak commute periods are important to mitigate project-related traffic during these more congested times of day.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS/FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the General Fund. The bus operations are funded by AC Transit. The City of Alameda will pay for the costs of restoring the bus stops and making them accessible. This expense will be paid for using Measures B and BB - Alameda County's transportation sales tax.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

AC Transit evaluated the environmental impacts of the SEP, and prepared the appropriate draft environmental document under the provisions of the CEQA. AC Transit concluded that the SEP would have no significant impact on the environment, as set forth in a Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration. An initial Title VI analysis concluded that the SEP would not have a disproportionately high and adverse impact on minority or low-income communities.

RECOMMENDATION

City staff recommends that the Transportation Commission approve the list of 26 bus stops included in Exhibit 2, for the restored Line 19 service.

Respectfully submitted,
Virendra Patel, Transportation Engineer

By:
Rochelle Wheeler, Transportation Planner

Exhibits

1. Public Notice for Line 19 Bus Stops, dated April 28, 2016
2. Summary List of Recommended Bus Stops
3. Details of Recommended Bus Stop Locations with map and photos
4. Summary of Public Comments
5. PowerPoint Presentation