

DOWNTOWN EAST VALLEY POLICY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday, June 12, 2008
9:30 AM

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN MEETING TIME

70 West Hedding Street
Isaac Newton Senter Auditorium
San Jose, California

For Information Contact Board Office @ (408) 321-5680

Board Members

*Nora Campos, Chairperson, City of San Jose
Sam Liccardo, Vice-Chairperson, City of San Jose
Blanca Alvarado, Santa Clara County*

*Dave Cortese, VTA
Pete McHugh, VTA*

REVISED AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**
2. **PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:** This portion of the agenda is reserved for persons desiring to address the Committee on any matter not on the agenda. Speakers are limited to 2 minutes. The law does not permit Committee action or extended discussion on any item not on the agenda except under special circumstances. If Committee action is requested, the matter can be placed on the next agenda. All statements that require a response will be referred to staff for reply in writing.
3. **Receive and file** the Summary Minutes of September 6, 2007.
4. **Receive** status report for Capitol Expressway project. (Verbal Report) (Ronsse)
5. **Receive** status report for Santa Clara-Alum Rock project. (Connolly/Ittigson)
6. **Receive** status report for Santa Clara-Alum Rock project – Median Busway. (Connolly/Ittigson)
7. **ADJOURN**

<p>In compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), those requiring accommodations for this meeting should notify the Board Secretary's Office 48 hours prior to the meeting at (408) 321-5680</p>

DOWNTOWN EAST VALLEY POLICY ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, September 6, 2007

County Government Center
East Wing, Lower Level Conference Room
70 West Hedding Street
San Jose, California

SUMMARY MINUTES

- 1. CALLED TO ORDER at 3:05 p.m.**

ROLL CALL

Members Present

David Cortese
Sam Liccardo, Vice Chairperson

Members Absent

Blanca Alvarado
Nora Campos, Chairperson
Pete McHugh

A quorum was not present and a Committee of the Whole was declared.

- 2. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

There were no Public Presentations.

- 3. The Committee of the Whole deferred the Minutes of June 4, 2007.**

- 4. The Committee of the Whole received a status report on Capitol Expressway Light Rail Activities.**

Staff report highlighted the following: 1) Outline; 2) Overview; 3) Operational Characteristics; 4) Eastridge Transit Center; 5) Community Needs; 6) HOV Lane Removal; 7) Traffic Impacts to Remove HOV Lanes; 8) Upcoming Activities; and 9) Budget Considerations.

- 5. The Committee of the Whole received an update on Santa Clara/Alum Rock Capital and Operating Cost Estimates.**

- 6. The Committee of the Whole received an update on Santa Clara/Alum Rock Transit Corridor Project Fall Public Outreach Activities.**

7. **The Committee of the Whole approved** submitting a recommendation to the Board of Directors to approve the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternative as the preferred near-term development strategy for the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Transit Improvement project, pending environmental analysis.
8. **ADJOURNED at 3:37 p.m.**

BOARD MEMORANDUM

Date: May 28, 2008
Committee Meeting Date: June 12, 2008
Board Meeting Date: N/A
INFORMATION ITEM

TO: Downtown East Valley Policy Advisory Board
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

FROM: John H. Ristow,
Chief CMA Officer

Kevin Connolly
Transportation Planning Manager &
Andrew Ittigson
Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Status of the Santa Clara-Alum Rock Transit Improvement Project

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

This memorandum presents a status report of activities on the Santa Clara-Alum Rock Transit Improvement Project for the period beginning March 2008 and ending May 2008.

BACKGROUND:

The Downtown East Valley Policy Advisory Board (PAB) received a presentation from VTA staff at the September 2007 meeting recommending that the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternative be designated as the preferred near-term development strategy for the Santa Clara-Alum Rock corridor. The PAB, acting as a Committee of the Whole, accepted the staff recommendation and the VTA Board adopted the recommendation at its October 2007 meeting.

The project will have a phased approach with the development concepts allowing for a future conversion to Light Rail (LRT) as BRT would be designed and constructed to Light Rail Standards. As a result the corridor will have a transit improvement in 2012 with BRT being implemented and the option to convert to LRT after the completion of BART in 2021.

The Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is scheduled for release in June 2008. VTA will hold public hearings in July 2008, as the Draft EIR is being circulated.

DISCUSSION:

Sidewalk Width on Santa Clara Street between 1st and 2nd Streets

Staff has been in discussions with the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit (SVRT) design team and the City of San Jose Department of Transportation about the planned width of the sidewalks on the

block of Santa Clara Street, between 1st and 2nd streets in 2018. Currently the sidewalks are 16 feet wide. Plans for the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service include an additional eight (8) feet of sidewalk width for each side of Santa Clara Street between 1st and 2nd streets to accommodate the increased pedestrian and transit passenger traffic generated by the BRT service. In addition, the additional space will help to accommodate the close to 20,000 passengers per day will be traversing these blocks once a BART station opens in downtown San Jose in 2018.

Although the Downtown San Jose Pedestrian Master Plan calls for 16 foot sidewalks, both the SCAR and SVRT projects are recommending wider sidewalks due to the level of pedestrian and transit activity at this location.

A cross section of the proposed street and sidewalk configuration is presented in Attachment A.

Alum Rock Transit Center/ Alexander Avenue Station Alternatives

The BRT conceptual engineering plans have a base alignment and an alternative alignment near the intersection of Alum Rock Avenue and Capitol Avenue. The two alternatives are presented in Attachments B and C.

The base alignment includes a BRT station at the Alum Rock Transit Center and the alternative alignment includes an Alexander Avenue station. A third option which has stations on Capitol Avenue in the outside travel lanes was also explored, however it was deemed infeasible due to right-of-way constraints at the intersection of Capitol Avenue and Wilber Avenue and is not presented in this item. A final decision on the station location will be made after the Board of Directors provides a recommendation for the Capitol Expressway light rail (LRT) extension to the Eastridge Transit Center.

If the Capitol Expressway LRT extension project is delayed, VTA would move forward with the base alternative. The base alternative assumes that the BRT line would stop at the Alum Rock Transit Center providing transfer opportunities at the end-of-line LRT station; however, this would add four minutes to the travel time of the BRT service in the northbound direction. The additional time consists of the signal delay to turn left into the transit center from Capitol Avenue, the travel time within the transit center and the signal delay to turn left from the transit center onto northbound Capitol Avenue. Only minor travel time impacts would occur in the southbound direction.

The alternative alignment assumes that light rail will be extended along Capitol Expressway to the Eastridge Transit Center and the existing Alum Rock Transit Center would no longer function as a primary transfer facility. For this alternative, BRT would stop along Alum Rock Avenue at a newly created station at Alexander Avenue. The westbound stop would be in the median of Alum Rock Avenue and the eastbound stop would be along the south curb of Alum Rock Avenue to enable buses to turn right onto southbound Capitol Avenue. This alternative provides a BRT stop in the vicinity of Capitol Avenue/Alum Rock Avenue without having to add time traveling into and out of the Alum Rock Transit Center. In this scenario, transfers between BRT and LRT would occur at the Story Road Station.

San Jose City Hall Station Alternatives

The BRT alignment plans include an eastbound 6th Street BRT station on the near side of the intersection of 6th Street and Santa Clara Street in front of San Jose City Hall. This location would provide a direct transit link to a major activity center and transit generator. In addition, the station would have no impacts to on-street parking capacity since there are currently no parking spaces in front of City Hall.

Although no official documentation has been received by VTA, City of San Jose staff has stated informally that the City does not support the BRT station in front of City Hall. Instead, the City wants to retain the existing eastbound local stop location between 6th and 7th streets on Santa Clara Street, one block east of the City Hall. However, due to the 180 foot length of the BRT platform, a station between 6th and 7th streets would cause the removal of existing on-street parking. In addition, this scenario would remove driveway access from Santa Clara Street to the retail plaza on the south side of the street. The plaza would maintain access to 6th and 7th streets.

City staff has indicated that VTA will receive a letter from the Director of Transportation stating the City's official stance on the City Hall station location in the near future.

Conceptual engineering plans for both alternatives are presented in Attachments D and E.

King Road and Jackson Avenue Stations

The King Road and Jackson Avenue stations would require widening the right-of-way of Alum Rock Avenue to accommodate the median station platforms. Impacts to adjacent property would be primarily partial acquisitions, where only part of the site is needed and it would not result in displacement of businesses. The BRT alternative would require full acquisition of only one commercial property, a medical office building located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Alum Rock Avenue and King Road.

The two stations are presented in Attachments F and G.

Convention Center and Bird Avenue Stations

The Santa Clara-Alum Rock BRT project description has been updated to include two new stations served by Route 523. The stations will be located at the intersection of West San Carlos Street and Bird Avenue and at the San Jose Convention Center. Existing local bus stops at both Bird Avenue and the Convention Center will be upgraded to accommodate BRT service. On-street parking will not be impacted at either station location.

Coyote Creek Bridge Replacement

In the LRT alternative, trains would operate in shared lanes with automobile traffic from Diridon Station to Alum Rock and 34th Street. Within this segment, the existing 60-foot wide Coyote Creek Bridge (east of 17th Street) would be replaced with an 80-foot wide seismically sound bridge to accommodate the operation of heavier LRT vehicles. This would require the removal of the old bridge during a two-phase approach for construction of a new bridge. Widening of this bridge would result in the permanent and temporary loss of sensitive habitats. The BRT Alternative would not require replacement or modification of Coyote Creek Bridge.

Attachment H displays the Coyote Creek Bridge construction plans.

BOARD MEMORANDUM

Date: May 28, 2008
Committee Meeting Date: June 12, 2008
Board Meeting Date: N/A
INFORMATION ITEM

TO: Downtown East Valley Policy Advisory Board
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

FROM: John H. Ristow
Chief CMA Officer

Kevin Connolly
Transportation Planning Manager&
Andrew Ittigson
Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Status of the Santa Clara-Alum Rock Transit Improvement Project – Median Busway

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

This memorandum presents a status report for the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) median busway on Alum Rock Avenue between 34th Street and Capitol Avenue.

DISCUSSION:

Overview

The Santa Clara-Alum Rock BRT service will include a number of transit improvements to the corridor to provide faster service and enhanced reliability compared to local bus service. A key component of the corridor is the semi-exclusive median busway on Alum Rock Avenue between 34th Street and Capitol Avenue. The busway will separate the BRT vehicles from the general automobile traffic eliminating conflicts and allowing the BRT to travel safely at much higher speeds. It is estimated that the busway will reduce the BRT travel time by 12 minutes. Automobile traffic will also benefit by having fewer buses stopping and dwelling in the right travel lane.

Conceptual engineering plans for the SC-AR corridor include a 26-foot median busway. The configuration of the busway will include two 12-foot bus lanes and two six inch barriers on each side of the busway to separate it from the general traffic. This is consistent with the width of busways in other cities including Vancouver, British Columbia and Eugene, Oregon. It is important to note that 26-feet is also the minimum width needed for conversion to light rail in the future.

Busway Width Comparison

Three alternatives were considered for the width of the busway: 24, 25 and 26 feet. VTA staff evaluated the alternatives based on key right-of-way elements such as sidewalk width, impact to on-street parking, travel lane widths, and ability to convert to light rail in the future. The results showed that a smaller busway, such as 24 feet, would have less of an impact to on-street parking, however it would reduce the width of bus travel lanes to 11 feet creating some safety concerns since the standard VTA vehicle is 10 feet including side mirrors. This alternative would also require rebuilding the right-of-way to convert to light rail in the future. Conversely, 25 and 26 foot busways would provide wider bus lanes, but would reduce the on-street parking capacity on one side of the street. Table 1 provides a comparison of the three alternatives.

Table 1 – Busway Width Comparison

	Convert to LRT in the Future	Sidewalk Width	On-street Parking	Travel Lane Widths	Bus Lane Width
24 Feet	No	9 feet	Both sides of street	10 - 11 feet	11 feet
25 Feet	No	10 feet	One side of street	11 - 12 feet	11.5 feet
26 Feet	Yes	10 feet	One side of street	11 - 12 feet	12 feet

Cross sections of the three alternatives are presented in Attachments A, B and C.

Busway Test

To further assess the advantages and disadvantages of the three alternatives, VTA Operations staff administered a simulated busway test at the Chaboya Bus Yard in February 2008. A simulated right-of-way was created by using cones to distinguish bus lanes and automobile travel lanes. Buses traveled concurrently in the two bus lanes and the adjacent travel lanes to simulate an actual scenario that could occur during regular service operations. After the tests, bus operators concluded that a minimum of 25-feet is needed to operate the buses in the concurrent flow busway; however 26-feet was the minimum preferred to allow for a sufficient buffer between the vehicles and safe operations. Attendees included staff from VTA Operations, Planning and San Jose Department of Transportation.

Based on the evaluation and the busway test results, VTA staff has included the 26 foot alternative in the conceptual engineering plans and the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).