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Oakland Airport Connector Public Participation Summary Report

San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District



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I. Introduction

Purpose

In June 2010, the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) conducted five community meetings to provide updated information about the status of the Oakland Airport Connector Project (OAC) to East Oakland residents and Port of Oakland and Oakland airport employees. The meetings also provided an opportunity for community members to express any questions or concerns they had about the project. This report describes the meetings, reports the comments and questions received, and summarizes community opinion expressed during the meetings. A short survey was also distributed to meeting participants.

San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) is a rapid transit system that travels through 26 cities in San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda and Contra Costa counties. BART's five service lines cover 104 miles, comprising 43 stations, and serve an average weekday ridership of 340,000 passengers. BART provides discounted fares for seniors, persons with disabilities, students and qualified educational groups. Children ages 4 and under ride free.

Opened in 1972, BART is operated by the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, which is governed by a directly-elected nine-member Board of Directors serving four year terms. The District includes three counties: Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco. While San Mateo County is not within the BART District, it is served by six BART stations, and various BART Board members act as liaisons to the County.

The Oakland Airport Connector Project (OAC)

Project Description

Planning for the Oakland Airport Connector project (OAC) began almost 20 years ago. During that time, BART completed significant community outreach activities, conducted numerous planning studies and analyses, and completed an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Required agreements and right-of-way access have been completed and more than \$425 million in funding has been identified. BART has developed a funding plan to address the loss of \$70M in previously anticipated federal stimulus funds. The funding plan components are currently being considered by the various agency funding boards. The loss of stimulus funding is primarily offset through cost savings and other funding

sources. Once funding is secured, the OAC is “shovel ready” and, if started in 2010, the project will be open to serve the public in 2014.

The OAC Project will include an exclusive 3.1 mile Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) extending from the Coliseum/Oakland Airport Station to the Oakland International Airport. The 2002 FEIR projects the OAC will carry 9,300 daily passengers by 2020 and 3.2 million passengers annually. Trains will be scheduled at 4.5 minute intervals, with an approximate 8.5 minute travel time. The estimated one-way fare range for the average passenger is estimated to be \$4.50-\$6.00.

Employment Opportunities

According to BART and the Obama White House Council of Economic Advisor estimates, the project will create between 2,500 and 5,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs during construction and between 25 and 40 permanent jobs during operation. BART has developed a Community Benefits Program specifically for the OAC project to support hiring of local minority residents and to support youth mentoring activities. The Community Benefits Program for the OAC includes the following five strategies:

- 1) Disadvantaged Business Involvement and capacity building
 - a. Construction work:
 - i. 18% will be awarded to Disadvantaged Businesses.
 - b. Design work:
 - ii. 30% will be awarded to Disadvantaged Businesses.
- 2) Local Workforce Development and Project Stabilization Agreement (PSA)
 - a. Partner with Community-based Organizations (CBOs).
 - b. 50% of work will be done by Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, and San Mateo County residents.
 - c. 25% of work will be done by City of Oakland residents.
 - d. 50% of apprentice hours will be worked by City of Oakland residents.
- 3) Compliance and Monitoring
 - a. Oakland-based DBE firm A Squared Ventures will assist with labor compliance and social justice, along with BART Office of Civil Rights.
- 4) Friendly Neighbor Program
 - a. Ensure timely access to project information, schedules and events.
- 5) Mentorship Program

- a. Collaborate with ACE high school mentorship program re: apprenticeship.

II. Process for Providing Information to the Public

In an effort to reach East Oakland community members, Port of Oakland and Oakland airport employees, BART conducted targeted outreach, hosted four community meetings and participated in a meeting hosted within the project area by the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council. BART also distributed a survey at each meeting to solicit additional feedback on the project.

Consistent with the environmental analysis and BART's Public Participation Plan (PPP) completed in May 2010, BART conducted targeted outreach targeted to minority, low income and LEP communities for the meetings using a variety of methods including:

- Multi-lingual flyers (English, Spanish and Chinese) mailed to 8,838 households within 1.5 mile radius from Coliseum station (Hegenberger corridor) and the entire Columbian Gardens neighborhood
- Notices in local ethnic media
- E-mails to community members who provided contact information at April 2010 meetings held in Oakland to develop the PPP
- Coordination with local community-based organizations including:
 - Airport Area Business Association
 - Bay Area Council
 - Oakland Economic Leadership Forum
 - East Bay Small Business Council
 - Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
 - Oakland Association Of Black Trade and Commerce
 - Economic Development Alliance For Business
 - East Bay Interagency Alliance Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council
 - Oakland Chamber of Commerce
 - Cypress Mandela Partnership

These outreach activities and meetings build on BART's extensive public participation activities that have been conducted for the OAC. These activities include:

21 Public Hearings in Oakland from February, 2009 through May, 2010,:

- 4 Public Hearings before the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA)

- 5 Hearings before the before The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
- 4 Hearings before the BART Board of Directors
- 3 Hearings before Oakland Port Commission
- 2 Hearings before the Port/City Partnership Committee
- 3 Hearings before the Oakland City Council

The following is a complete list of the meetings conducted in 2010 with local communities who live near the proposed project. Meetings were held at a variety of times and locations within the project area. Translated materials and interpretive services were available at the BART-hosted meetings.

Location	Address	Date and Time	Translation Services Made Available
* James Madison Middle School	400 Capistrano Drive Oakland, CA	Wednesday, June 9 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	<i>None requested</i>
East Oakland Multipurpose Senior Center	9255 Edes Avenue Oakland	Monday, June 14 10:30- 11:30 a.m.	Spanish
Paradise Baptist Church	9704 Empire Road Oakland	Saturday, June 19 10:00 -11:30 a.m.	Spanish
Oakland International Airport	Rear Conference Room Oakland International Airport Oakland	Thursday, June 24 8:00-10:00 a.m.	<i>None requested</i>
Oakland International Airport	Rear Conference Room Oakland International Airport Oakland	Thursday, June 24 3:00- 5:00 p.m.	<i>None requested</i>

* The Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council hosted this meeting, and BART was given 30 minutes on the agenda to share information and take comments regarding the OAC.

BART Director Carole Ward Allen and Oakland City Councilman Larry Reid have been involved in the OAC project since its early stages and shared some of the history of the project. They were assisted by BART staff who presented information about the project. An independent facilitator and note taker also provided assistance.

The presenters explained the history of the project, described the OAC and the project benefits and reviewed the current status of funding.

Project benefits include: jobs for local residents; youth employment opportunities; frequent, reliable BART service to the airport for employees; frequent, reliable BART service for people travelling in and out of the Oakland Airport; and environmental benefits.

Since community members have consistently requested information about job opportunities, the presentation included information about employment opportunities and the measures BART has taken to ensure that a high percentage of the jobs created by the project would be directed to East Oakland residents.

The speakers answered questions and provided additional opportunities for comments and questions after the presentation. A graphic recorder took notes and recorded comments and questions on large scale wallgraphic paper. All comments received verbally or in writing in languages other than English were translated and transcribed and included in the comments. Below is a summary of the key questions and comments received at the five meetings.

III. Community Comments - Support

The meetings sought input from local communities on the effects of the project. Many community members expressed support for the OAC and were eager to access the benefits the project would bring: local jobs, improved transit, a reduction in the number of cars on local roads, and improved air quality.

Several participants stated they supported the project; it was approved, and therefore it should be built. They asked why BART was still conducting community meetings and why the project had not yet started. A few participants expressed concern about recent interest in the project taken by community groups from outside the project area. These participants stated that they disliked having their interests represented by people who did not live within the project area.

In response to recent media coverage of the project, several participants suggested communicating to the general public that the BART Board is still committed to building the project.

After hearing about BART's commitment to offer a discounted fare for Oakland Airport employees, several participants supported the idea. (More specific survey results on this topic are listed on page #11.) Similarly, the statements delivered by BART Staff and Director Ward Allen

that all other current discounts offered by BART to riders who are seniors, youth and persons with disabilities would also apply to customers using the new connector were supported by meeting participants. Meeting attendees suggested that the OAC may be more convenient for employees than AirBART and might result in increased usage by employees. Currently, approximately fifty airport employees per day ride AirBART.

Meeting participants suggested that, through this project, BART should strengthen its partnerships with the following entities: the City of Oakland, churches including Paradise Baptist Church, community-based organizations, employment centers, businesses, and trade organizations.

IV a. Community Concerns/Opposition

Job Opportunities

There was a strong sentiment among local residents that jobs be made available to East Oakland residents. Several participants specifically identified residents from the 94603 zip code area. A number of community members expressed concern that jobs generated by the project construction and operation would not be permanent. Some participants questioned the number of jobs projected for the project. They cited lower figures described in the Environmental Impact Report completed in 2002. There were also concerns expressed that BART, in the past, has not offered employment opportunities to all certified contractors and their employees. Suggestions were made to develop a strong local hiring program to ensure that employable residents are hired.

One local business owner who has attended several of the meetings, described the efforts he has taken as an East Oakland business owner to participate in BART contracting opportunities so that he can play a direct role in bringing jobs to his neighborhood. He also identified previous development projects where he has helped to bring job opportunities to East Oakland.

Some meeting participants asked if current AirBART employees would be compensated or provided other jobs when the OAC opens. A suggestion was made to provide compensation, including a different position with BART, severance and/or training for any displaced AirBART employees.

Impacts on Local Residences and Businesses

Several participants expressed concerns and asked questions about the impacts during construction on local homes and businesses. BART staff

described how since few residences or businesses are within the pathway of the project, the impacts would be limited.

Noise

A few participants expressed concerns about noise from the OAC. BART staff explained that the Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) was much quieter than the regular BART trains so the noise impacts would be minimal.

Local Service

Several meeting participants expressed concern that the OAC would not serve both local workers and residents, and travelers. Suggestions were made to consider the working patterns and schedules of employees and residents in schedule and fare decisions. Several participants wanted to know why the two intermediate stations originally proposed in the OAC design were eliminated. Participants interested in these stations suggested that the two additional stations could encourage economic development and make BART accessible for local residents.

BART staff responded to the concern by saying that the locations of two intermediate OAC stations, one at Edgewater Drive and a second at Doolittle Drive, were proposed and evaluated in the original 2002 environmental document. Since 2002 it has been understood that the City would be responsible for funding the design and construction of these stations. The city's decision to allow Wal-Mart to develop the future Edgewater intermediate station site forced BART to relocate the guideway alignment to avoid costly impacts to these businesses. Future development of the Doolittle Intermediate Station continues to be a possibility. BART has required the contractor to design and construct the project to accommodate the addition of a future intermediate station at Doolittle Drive.

Project Cost and Alternatives

Some participants expressed concern regarding the cost of the project and requested that BART consider a lower cost alternative, such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), for connecting to the airport. These participants suggested that funds could then be redirected to BART operations and maintenance and other activities. They also requested that BART participate in a study to update the analysis of the alternatives described in the project EIR which was approved in 2002.

Staff responded to this concern by saying that a Rapid Bus System, called a Quality Bus Alternative, was studied extensively in a detailed environment impact report (FEIR) released in 2002. It was found to be slower and less reliable than the fixed guideway model which will be used by OAC, a model which will be held to a 99.5% on-time performance standard.

Airport travelers want reliability from a system – and a bus alternative will always be subject to traffic and external factors. The OAC trip time will be reliably consistent because it will be on its own guideway, and not be subject to peak traffic conditions, accidents or Coliseum special events.

Safety

Several meeting participants expressed concern about safety at the Coliseum/Oakland Airport Station. Community members suggested increasing safety measures in and around the Station along with the OAC development.

Outreach

Participants encouraged BART staff to form a relationship with the local community, including residents and contractors. Meeting participants asked how BART will follow up with interested attendees. A request was made to mail BART and project-related information to local residences, organizations, and businesses. BART staff agreed to maintain communications with all those who provide contact information including an e-mail or mailing address.

Other Comments

One participant provided a written comment that they were in opposition to the project, but did not provide additional explanation.

Survey

Following the question and comment period, participants were asked to complete a brief survey. Translated copies of the survey were available in Spanish. The survey included questions related to the OAC and outreach efforts. Meeting participants were asked to provide feedback on how well they felt BART staff explained the OAC; for their opinion on whether the proposed OAC fares are fair, too high or too low; and which of the project benefits described are of greatest importance. The survey also provided space for written comments. A total of 82 surveys were completed at the community meetings. A complete summary of the printed survey results is included as Appendix A.

Please note that while the meetings were open to the general public, some meetings included participants from targeted groups. For example, the meeting at the East Oakland Senior Center included mostly senior citizens, with few exceptions. The meetings at the Oakland Airport were attended exclusively by employees of the Port of Oakland and the Oakland Airport. The meetings at the Paradise Baptist Church included members of the general public. No completed surveys were received from the meeting hosted by the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council.

Which Project Benefits Described in the Presentation are of Greatest Importance to You?

The survey solicited participants' opinions on which project benefits are of greatest importance. Participants at the Paradise Baptist Church and East Oakland Senior Center identified jobs for local residents as the most important project benefit (95%).

The following benefits were also very important to participants at these meetings:

- Environmental benefits (90%);
- Youth employment opportunities (88%);
- Frequent reliable BART service to the airport for local residents and employees (76%); and,
- Frequent reliable BART service to the airport for people travelling in and out of the Oakland Airport (61%).

Port of Oakland and Airport employees at the Oakland Airport-hosted meetings identified frequent reliable BART service to the airport for people travelling in and out of the Oakland Airport as the most important project benefit (100%).

The following benefits were also very important to participants at these meetings:

- Frequent reliable BART service to the airport for local residents and employees (91%);
- Jobs for local residents (82%);
- Environmental benefits (64%); and
- Youth employment opportunities (11%).

How satisfied are you with BART's proposed fares for the OAC?

This survey question about the proposed fares for the OAC was asked at the East Oakland Senior Center and Oakland Airport-hosted meetings.

Discounted fare for airport employees

100 % of Airport employees at the Oakland Airport-hosted meetings were very or somewhat satisfied with a proposed fare equal to the AirBART fare for airport employees. 88% of the East Oakland Senior Center meeting participants were either very or somewhat satisfied with the proposed fare for employees.

Estimated fare of \$1.65 to \$2.25 for seniors age 65 and up, persons with disabilities and youth ages 5 to 12

97% of the East Oakland Senior Center meeting participants were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with an estimated fare of \$1.65 to \$2.25 for seniors age 65 and up, persons with disabilities and youth ages 5 to 12. 100% of the participants at the Oakland Airport-hosted meetings were very satisfied with this fare.

Estimated fare of \$4.50 to \$6.00 for the average passenger

Nearly 58% of participants overall were either satisfied or somewhat satisfied with this proposed fare. 52% of the East Oakland Senior Center meeting participants were very or somewhat satisfied with this fare, and 72% of the participants at the Oakland Airport hosted meetings were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

Other Survey Questions

How Well Do You Feel BART Staff Explained the OAC Project?

The print survey at the Paradise Baptist Church meeting asked participants how well they felt BART staff had explained the OAC Project. The majority of respondents (78%) responded that they felt BART staff explained the project fairly well or well, with all or most of their questions answered. Approximately 17% of survey respondents described the explanation as poor, leaving them unclear on some points. Participant surveys at the other meetings did not include this question.