

San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

Scoping Summary Report

BART to Livermore Extension Project EIR

Prepared By the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
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SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) is the lead agency preparing a project-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a proposed BART extension to the City of Livermore. The Proposed Project, which is being developed in partnership with the City of Livermore, would begin at the existing Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and extend east 4.8 miles to a new terminus at the I-580/Isabel Avenue interchange in Livermore. The purpose of the EIR is to identify potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Project, identify mitigation measures to address potentially significant impacts, and examine the advantages or disadvantages of alternatives to the Proposed Project.

A. Project Goals

The Tri-Valley region has one of the most congested highway corridors (Interstate 580) in the San Francisco Bay Area. Regional and inter-regional congestion in this corridor continues to grow. The primary goal of the BART to Livermore Extension Project is to provide an affordable and effective inter-regional and inter-modal link connecting the existing BART system to inter-regional rail service and to Livermore Priority Development Areas (PDAs). This connection was identified as an important inter-regional link in the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Rail Plan (2007). In addition, the Proposed Project is intended to support the regional goals of integrating transit and land use policies to create opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD) around the proposed I-580 Isabel Avenue BART Station, as well as around the inter-regional rail station and express bus satellite transit nodes in Priority Development Areas in Livermore. The Proposed Project also is intended to alleviate traffic congestion on I-580, improve air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas and other emissions associated with automobile use.

B. Proposed Project

The Proposed Project is a 4.8-mile extension of the BART line from the existing Dublin/Pleasanton Station within the I-580 freeway median to a new station in the vicinity of the I-580/Isabel Avenue Interchange. The Proposed Project would incorporate an efficient bus-to-BART transfer utilizing a network of express bus services linking inter-regional rail service, Priority Development Areas in Livermore, and proposed offsite parking facilities to the new station (Figure 1 below). Express bus routes are tentative and a variety of routes may be evaluated during the scoping and EIR process.

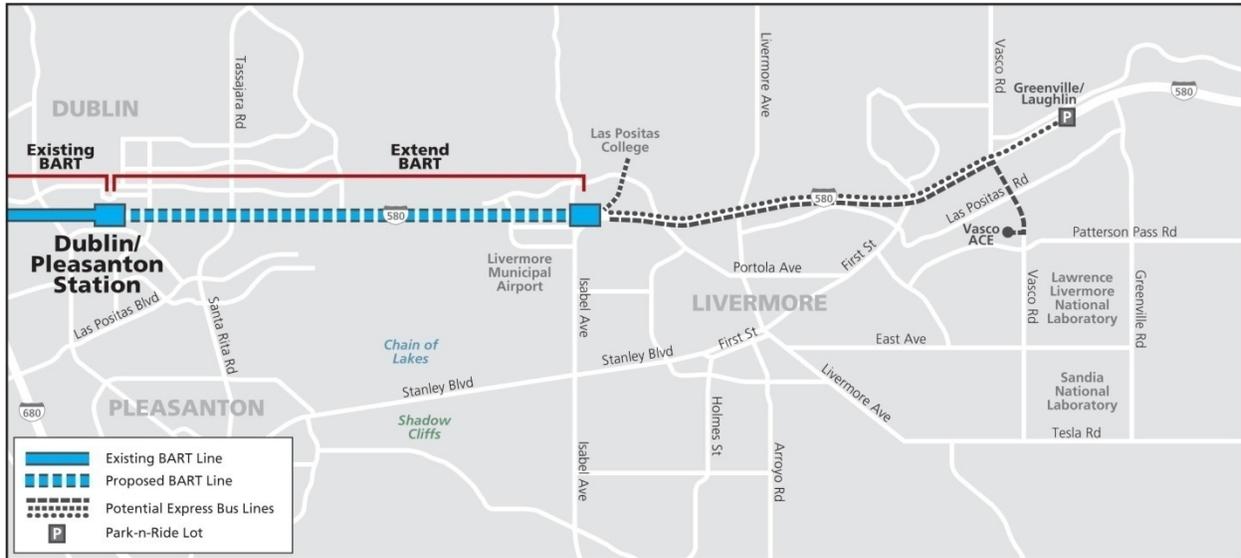


Figure 1: Proposed BART to Livermore Extension Project

C. EIR Background

In June, 2010, BART certified a Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) for the BART to Livermore Extension, analyzing ten alternatives that provided different combinations of alignment, station, and maintenance facility locations. As part of the continuing BART to Livermore planning process, and in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), BART has initiated a second tier, Project-level EIR following the FPEIR. The primary purpose of the Project EIR is to examine the environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Project and to consider mitigation measures and alternatives to avoid or reduce impacts. The preliminary project alternatives identified in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) are a No Build alternative, an Express Bus alternative, and a Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) alternative. Alternatives considered in the EIR may include these three preliminary alternatives, as well as other reasonable and feasible alternatives identified during scoping and EIR development. In accordance with CEQA, the issues that will be analyzed in the EIR include the following areas:

- Transportation
- Air Quality
- Land Use, Housing, and Physical Displacement
- Public Services
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change
- Noise and Vibration
- Geology and Seismicity
- Hazardous Materials
- Water Resources
- Biological Resources
- Visual Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Public Utilities
- Growth-Inducing Impacts

II. SCOPING PERIOD NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

The BART project team developed a notification and outreach plan to increase public awareness of the project and to invite public comment on the scope of the EIR analysis. The primary components of the outreach plan included a Notice of Preparation, scoping meeting notification, a scoping meeting, and a project website. Each of these components is discussed below.

A. Notice of Preparation and Scoping Comment Period

The purpose of the Notice of Preparation is to alert agencies and interested parties regarding the preparation of the Draft EIR; provide information on the Proposed Project and project alternatives; announce that a public scoping meeting would be conducted; and invite participation in the EIR process, including comments on the scope of the EIR.

BART sent the Notice of Preparation for the Project EIR to the State Clearinghouse, and it was received on August 30, 2012. Copies of the NOP were sent to 49 public agencies and approximately 9,200 residents and businesses within one-half mile of the project alignment, remote parking area, and associated express bus routes. The NOP also is available on the BART website at: <http://www.bart.gov/livermore>.

Community members and public agencies that received the NOP had until October 1, 2012 to provide BART with specific comments on significant environmental impacts, mitigation measures for consideration by the lead agency, and the range of alternatives under consideration. A copy of the NOP is also included in Appendix A of this report.

B. Scoping Meeting Notification

BART created outreach materials to notify stakeholders and the larger Tri-Valley community about the Proposed Project and the scoping meeting. Outreach materials included the following items:

Mailer. A scoping meeting notification was mailed to addresses within ½ mile of the proposed project alignment, remote parking location, and associated express bus routes resulting in a 1-mile-wide notification corridor along the alignment. As a result, the meeting notification was sent to approximately 9,200 addresses. A copy of the mailer is included in Appendix B.

Community Flyer. A community flyer describing the NOP and scoping meeting was prepared and distributed at BART stations and other community locations. The flyer provided the scoping notice in four languages in addition to English: Spanish, Korean, simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Newspaper Notices. Newspaper notices of the NOP and scoping meeting were published in the *San Ramon Valley Times*, *Tri-Valley Times*, *Livermore Independent*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*. Translations were also published in foreign language papers including the *Viet Nam, the Daily News*; *SF Kyocharo Korean News*, *Korean Times*, and *Korean Daily News*; *World*

Journal (Chinese) and *Sing Tao* (Chinese); and *El Mundo* (Spanish). Copies of the newspaper notices are included in Appendix C of this report.

BART Website. The NOP and scoping meeting information was provided on the BART website (<http://www.bart.gov/livermore>), including translations of the notice information in Spanish, Korean, simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Email. The NOP and meeting notification were distributed by BART's project partner, the City of Livermore, via email to approximately 850 addressees, including the Livermore City Council, Planning Commission and City staff. The City posted the NOP on their website, and the Livermore Patch (a Livermore news and events internet site) posted it on its news blog.

III. SCOPING MEETING

An EIR scoping meeting was held on September 19, 2012 to provide an opportunity for verbal comment on the scope of the Project EIR. BART staff and members of its project team conducted this meeting to introduce the project to the general public, community leaders, and elected officials and to gather comments and feedback on the scope of the EIR. The scoping meeting was held from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Robert Livermore Community Center, 4444 East Avenue in Livermore. The scoping meeting consisted of an informal open house at 6 p.m. followed by a presentation and public comment session at 7 p.m.

Approximately 85 members of the public attended the meeting. Local elected officials in attendance included BART Directors John McPartland and Tom Blalock, Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, and City of Livermore Mayor John Marchand. All expressed their support for the project and listened to community members speak about specific issues of interest and concern.

A. Open House

The first hour of the meeting was devoted to a project open house. The open house served to introduce attendees to the BART to Livermore Project, the City of Livermore's associated planning efforts on Priority Development Areas, and the funding role played by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) and Alameda County Ballot Measure B1. The open house included a welcome/sign-in table and three information tables staffed by BART, the City of Livermore, and ACTC. Each table had staff available to answer questions, graphic displays, and flyers of the pertinent issues. The purpose of the open house was to provide attendees an opportunity to ask questions and become acquainted with the Proposed Project and related issues in a small informal setting, prior to the formal comment session.

A separate comment table was available for written comments during the open house and throughout the following comment period for participants who preferred not to speak in large-group settings or for participants who wished to give supplemental comment on the scope of the BART to Livermore EIR analysis.

B. Formal Comment Meeting

The formal meeting began with introductions by retired Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge Dan O'Malley, who acted as moderator for the evening. Judge O'Malley introduced meeting attendees to the meeting purpose, the significance of public comment to the Project EIR, and the overall meeting structure. He then acknowledged elected and appointed officials who were in attendance and offered them an opportunity to make welcoming remarks. BART Board Director John McPartland thanked the crowd for being there and stated that this was the next, final step in getting BART to Livermore. He spoke about the benefits that the project would do for the environment by taking cars off the road. Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty spoke about the importance of the BART to Livermore Project and the need to find an alternative way to move people through the I-580 corridor other than the single-occupancy vehicle. He also mentioned that Alameda County Ballot Measure B1 contains funds for the BART to Livermore Project and the need to support it. City of Livermore Mayor John Marchand noted that he sits on the Alameda County Transportation Committee, and this is the first time that funding has been allocated for the construction of the BART to Livermore Project.

Judge O'Malley introduced BART EIR Project Manager Marianne Payne. Ms. Payne welcomed everyone and presented a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the project. The presentation described the project as proposed, the purpose of the Draft EIR, potential impacts, the purpose of the scoping meeting, and how to provide comments. Attendees who did not desire to speak were encouraged to leave their comments on a comment card or to email, fax or mail their comments to BART during the comment period.

C. Scoping Meeting Comments

Following the presentation and the introductory speakers, members of the public had the opportunity to speak for 3 minutes each. Twenty-two speakers made verbal comments at the scoping meeting. A certified shorthand reporter recorded all the verbal comments. The meeting transcript is included as Appendix D of this report. Eighteen people also left comment cards with the staff before the end of the evening. The comment cards are reproduced as part of Appendix E of this report. The scoping meeting comments, which are summarized below, have been grouped according to prevailing themes, which include Key Environmental Issues Raised in Scoping and Alternatives Recommended for Consideration.

Key Environmental Issues Raised in Scoping Meeting

One of the predominant themes of the speakers was the need to provide sufficient parking at the proposed Isabel Station to satisfy the parking demand for both Livermore residents and commuters from east of the Altamont Pass. Other comments included concerns about the frequency and convenience of connecting bus services to BART and the possibility of BART bringing an increase in crime. A sample of the comments and issues suggested for study at the meeting, as well as some additional alternatives to be considered is provided below:

- Provide sufficient parking at the proposed Isabel Station.

- Examine the traffic impacts to Collier Canyon Road.
- Consider the loss of rural quality of life on Collier Canyon Road and loss of scenic views.
- Provide charging stations for electric cars at Isabel Station.
- Provide frequent and convenient bus service connecting to the Isabel Station.
- Provide parking for Livermore residents in Downtown Livermore with an express bus to the Isabel Station.
- BART will bring additional crime to the community.
- Exempt Isabel Station area from TOD requirements.
- Maintain the existing Urban Growth Boundaries.
- Maintain the existing Airport Protection Area.
- Consider consistency with current BART policy, which doesn't support stations in the center of the freeway.

Alternatives Recommended for Consideration

- A full-fledged bus rapid transit (BRT) alternative running from several locations in Livermore, Dublin, and Pleasanton to the existing Dublin/Pleasanton Station.
- A BART extension all the way to the Altamont Pass.
- Increasing ACE commuter train service instead of a BART extension.
- A high-tech alternative such as CyberTran.

IV. SCOPING PERIOD COMMENTS

In addition to the written and verbal scoping comments received at the September 19, 2012 scoping meeting, BART received written comments from 39 commentors by mail and email. A summary all the comments received during the comment period is presented below.

BART System and BART Policies

- Examine consistency of the Proposed Project with the BART System Expansion Policy, which does not support stations in the middle of freeways.
- Will investing in this extension cause future impacts to the BART system due to deferred maintenance?

Transportation

Parking

- Provide abundant auto parking at the proposed Isabel Station.
- Identify full parking need at Isabel station, differentiating between BART passengers and nearby residents and potential TOD.
- Address overflow parking that may affect surrounding areas.
- Consider the feasibility of offsite parking.
- Consider the environmental benefits and impacts of limiting onsite parking at end-of-line stations.
- Address the issue of parking demand by commuters from San Joaquin County and other areas east of the Altamont Pass.
- Reserve parking spaces at Isabel Station for Livermore residents.

- Provide parking for Livermore residents at a downtown location with an express bus to the Isabel Station.
- Investigate a parking policy that allows overnight parking for reverse commuters, who would keep a car in the parking lot at night and move it early the next morning.

Station Design and Operation

- Provide electric charging stations.
- Provide station parking access from Altamont, Vasco Road, and City of Livermore.
- BART trains should run from the proposed Isabel Station directly to both SFO and Richmond.
- What traffic improvements will be needed to Collier Canyon Road, Airway Boulevard, and Portola Avenue to serve the new station?
- What are the details of the off-site parking lots?
- New station should be built to mirror the Dublin-Pleasanton Station and parking structure.
- Tail tracks should extend easterly in the median and not under the eastbound I-580 lanes (which would preclude a future extension downtown).
- Will the station be accessible to pedestrians from adjacent neighborhoods?
- Provide automated parking in a parking garage.

Traffic Impacts

- Identify the impacts of unfulfilled parking demand at the Isabel Station by westbound travelers, including traffic impacts on Stoneridge Drive and at Dublin/Pleasanton Station.
- Traffic impacts to Collier Canyon Road.
- Traffic issues on North Canyons Parkway.

Buses

- What type of buses with what characteristics (fuel, capacity, size, noise levels) would be used and how many miles per year would they be traveling on Tri-Valley roads?
- What are the proposed bus routes and details of operations?
- How would buses affect local traffic conditions and air quality?
- How many local residents are assumed to use the bus rather than drive to the stations?
- Will the buses be available for non-BART patrons?
- Provide a free shuttle to downtown Livermore.
- Provide sufficient buses running at sufficient frequency to accommodate an entire BART train full of passengers.
- What assumptions are made to meet the goal of 21,000 new riders using bus transfers?
- What is the breakdown of BART riders arriving at the Dublin/Pleasanton stations: pedestrian, auto, bus, other?
- How do riders compare the convenience of onsite parking and offsite parking with a bus?
- Provide a dedicated bus lane from the Isabel Station to the Greenville parking lot.
- Who will be responsible for operating and maintaining the buses?

Air Quality

- Examine air quality impacts to sensitive receptors in Pleasanton.

- What would be the traffic levels near the station site, and what effect would ozone, particulates, and carbon monoxide have on residents?

Biology

- Auto traffic on Collier Canyon Road could have impacts to wildlife corridors.

Land Use

- Exempt the Isabel Station from TOD requirements due to infeasibility of housing development in that area.
- Examine impacts to agricultural land.
- An indirect impact of increased auto traffic on Collier Canyon Road will lead to a loss of rural character.
- How do Livermore's Priority Development Areas (PDAs) relate to the BART extension plan?
- What are BART's long-term plans for BART-owned land near the station?
- Maintain the urban growth boundary.
- How much vacant land suitable for development is available within 2,000 feet of the proposed station?
- How do different land uses compare in generating BART ridership (residential, industrial, commercial, and parking)?
- What is the zoning and what are the existing land uses around the station site, and is there sufficient land to accommodate a fully integrated neighborhood?
- Additional sprawl in the Tri-Valley region has a disproportionate environmental and social impact compared to Bay Area infill development.

Noise and Vibration

- Examine the impacts on sensitive receptors in Pleasanton.
- Construct/extend the sound wall along the freeway in Pleasanton.
- What are the cumulative noise impacts of the auto traffic, BART trains, and overflying aircraft?
- Keeping BART in the median will reduce noise impacts.

Visual Quality

- There will be additional light and glare from auto headlights on rural roads.
- Consider the cumulative impacts to scenic resources along I-580 due to the PDAs and developments in Dublin and Pleasanton.

Public Health and Safety

- Will there be any change to the Airport Protection Area and air traffic patterns? Would there be any cumulative impacts on the cities of Dublin, Pleasanton, and Livermore?

Public Services

- Increased auto traffic will increase the wildfire fire hazard along transportation corridors (Collier Canyon Road).
- BART service and low-income housing surrounding BART stations will bring additional crime to Livermore.
- Provide sufficient security at the new station.

Greenhouse Gases

- Will additional traffic and congestion cause a net increase in GHG in spite of GHG reductions due to the BART extension?
- Will new development around the Isabel Station site generate more GHG than if development occurred in existing developed areas?

Recreation

- Examine impacts on Shadow Cliffs to Morgan Regional Trail, which travels along Isabel Avenue.
- The proposed Isabel Station should provide access to the Morgan Regional Trail along Isabel Avenue.
- Evaluate impacts of the remote parking lot to Brushy Peak Regional Preserve, including natural resources, cultural resources, aesthetics, traffic and circulation, noise, light and glare, and air quality, trespass, and vandalism.

Construction Impacts

- Consider both daytime and nighttime construction impacts on the freeway.

Growth inducement

- What new public services, such as schools and recreation, as well as personal services, would be required by intensified development, and where would they be located.

Alternatives

- DMU and Express Bus alternatives have been studied and found lacking.
- Make this project compatible with further extensions to Altamont Pass and further east.
- Study a full-fledged bus rapid transit (BRT) alternative running from several locations in Livermore, Dublin, and Pleasanton to the existing Dublin/Pleasanton Station. Include a direct connection from the HOV lanes into the Dublin/Pleasanton Station. Consider Las Positas College, downtown Livermore, and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for destinations. Assume state-of-the-art technology.
- Consider an express bus alternative with service to the existing Dublin/Pleasanton Station from transit centers at Greenville and Isabel Avenue.
- Consider a multi-line bus rapid transit system like the ones in Brisbane, Australia and Ottawa, Canada.
- The BART extension should go at least as far as Vasco Road.
- BART should be extended to Tracy.
- Use a more innovative system to extend BART, such as CyberTran.
- Locate the new station next to Paragon outlets (southeast quadrant of El Charro Road and I-580).

No Project Alternative

- Building a median station is waste of money.
- Funds should be spent on other uses such as:
 - ✓ Improving the existing BART system rather than extending to a new suburban station.

- ✓ Add infill stations at 30th Street and Geary Boulevard in San Francisco, or Solano Avenue in Albany.
- ✓ Expand ACE train service with a spur to the Dublin/Pleasanton Station or to Union City.
- ✓ Extending BART service to San Jose and providing 24-hour service.

V. TITLE VI CONSIDERATIONS

BART incorporates environmental justice principles into its projects, plans, and activities. As part of the BART to Livermore Extension Project, a Title VI study will be conducted consistent with Federal Transit Administration guidelines. There are low-income, minority, and limited English proficiency communities in or near the project corridor. (See maps provided in Appendix F.) Notification of these communities was taken into consideration during the EIR scoping period, and as outlined in Section II.B. above, notices were made available in a variety of formats and languages.

VI. APPENDICES A-F

Appendix A includes a copy of the Notice of Preparation. Appendix B includes a copy of the scoping meeting announcement that was sent to the direct mailing list (approximately 9,200 addresses) and a map of the mailing area. Appendix C contains the newspaper notifications that were published in three local newspapers, one regional paper, and seven foreign language papers. Appendix D includes a full transcript of the September 19, 2012 scoping meeting. This transcript recorded the introductory remarks by members of the BART team and elected officials, and the verbal comments by community members. Appendix E includes written scoping meeting comments, comment letters, and emails submitted to BART by agencies, organizations, and members of the public. Appendix F provides figures illustrating the low-income, minority, and limited English proficiency communities in the project area.

APPENDIX A

Notice of Preparation

APPENDIX B

**Scoping Meeting Announcement Mailer
Mailer Distribution Map**

APPENDIX C

Newspaper Notices

APPENDIX D

Transcript of September 19, 2012 Scoping Meeting

APPENDIX E

Comment Letters, Emails, and Comment Cards

APPENDIX F

Areas of Low Income, Minority, and Limited English Proficiency in the Project Area