

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: BART to Livermore DEIR Comments
FROM: Christy Wegener, Director of Planning and Operations
DATE: September 11, 2017

Action Requested

Receive a brief presentation on the BART to Livermore Draft Environmental Impact Report;
Approve LAVTA comments on the BART to Livermore Draft Environmental Impact Report.

Background

BART recently released its BART to Livermore Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and is soliciting comments by October 16, 2017. The DEIR is evaluating four alternatives for the BART to Livermore Project: 1) A full BART extension to Isabel; 2) A diesel or electric multiple unit (DMU/EMU) extension to Isabel; 3) Express-bus service to Dublin/Pleasanton BART; and 4) Enhanced-bus service to Dublin/Pleasanton BART. Because each alternative includes recommendations to the Wheels bus network, LAVTA invited BART staff to give a presentation of the DEIR and the alternatives considered.

Discussion

Per the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), major projects must be evaluated to determine their impact on the environment. CEQA requires that significant impacts be identified and avoided or mitigated, if possible, through the completion of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Currently the proposed BART to Livermore project is going through the CEQA process. The draft EIR was released for public review on July 17, 2017. Staff has reviewed the DEIR and prepared a draft letter summarizing key LAVTA comments (Attachment 1). Any additional comments received during the Board meeting will be included in the final letter.

Next Steps

Once feedback is collected from the Board and the comment letter is approved, staff will submit it to BART.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board of Directors approve LAVTA comments on the BART to Livermore Draft Environmental Impact Report.

Attachment
1 – Draft BART to Livermore DEIR Comment Letter

Approved: _____

September 11, 2017

Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Attention: BART to Livermore Extension Project
300 Lakeside, 21st Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Tang:

Thank you for providing LAVTA with the opportunity to provide comments on the BART to Livermore Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Our staff have reviewed the document thoroughly and offer the following comments:

- 1) According to the DEIR, the full BART extension to Isabel would require both a yard to store trains and a shop to maintain train cars. The yard would be constructed to hold 172 train cars (although only 36 train cards are needed to operate the Isabel extension), and the shop would be constructed to include 10 service bays (although only 3 are needed to support the Isabel extension). The justification for the size of both facilities is that the space would be needed eventually when the system shifts to 12-minute headways and 10-car trains by 2040. Accordingly, BART has assigned 25% of the cost of the new shop to the BART to Livermore project as only 3 of the 10 service bays would be used to directly support the Blue Line trains; however, 100% of the cost of the yard is allocated to the full BART to Livermore scenario even though only 20.9% of the capacity is needed to store trains for the Isabel extension service.

The yard will not just benefit the Livermore riders; it is a core upgrade for BART and the cost should be spread across the system accordingly. Therefore, the full cost of the yard should not be carried by this BART to Livermore project; LAVTA recommends assigning 20.9% of the cost of the yard to the project.

- 2) Table S-4 indicates that the Enhanced Bus alternative would have a negative impact on Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG), as the ridership would be low and the bus would produce more GHG than the riders reduced. However, by the year 2040, shouldn't it be assumed that the fleet of transit buses are fully electric? What impact does this have on the GHG calculation for this alternative?
- 3) For the enhanced and express bus alternatives, the DEIR claims that additional Transit Signal Priority (TSP) would improve overall performance of these services. It remains unclear as to the specific TSP items or locations that are assumed for these two alternatives. For any bus alternative to become competitive and attractive to the rider, the TSP must be a significant upgrade from what exists in the LAVTA system today. LAVTA staff suggests examining bus-only lanes for any alternative that suggests keeping buses on local arterials.
- 4) Regarding the full BART alternative, the estimated ridership (boardings and exits) at the future Isabel BART Station is over 16,000 per day by the year 2040; however, only 3,500 parking spaces are planned. Given that Dublin/Pleasanton parking is full and that spaces rarely turn over throughout the day, what would the other access mode for the riders be?

The 2017 Alameda County Tri-Valley Integrated Park and Ride Study recommends a high-frequency shuttle (every 15-minutes) between the Airway P&R in Livermore and Dublin/Pleasanton BART as a precursor to a full BART to Isabel extension. The study also recommends a shuttle route from a future Laughlin/Greenville Road P&R lot to the Dublin/Pleasanton Station (and then to the future Isabel Station) by the year 2030. A Laughlin/Greenville Road P&R and high frequency shuttle service should be included with the full BART alternative, and also with the DMU/EMU option.

Respectfully,

Michael Tree
Executive Director

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