

West Contra Costa High-Capacity Transit Study

Public Outreach Summary Report

Winter/Spring 2017



April 2017


Circlepoint with



Document Review

Date	Updated By	Organization	Description of Revision
3/30/2017	Nguyen Pham	Circlepoint	Initial Draft
4/3/2017	Nguyen Pham	Circlepoint	Revision to Initial Draft per Feedback from Rebecca Kohlstrand on 4/3 (AM)
4/4/2017	Nguyen Pham	Circlepoint	Revision to Revised Draft per Feedback from Rebecca Kohlstrand on 4/3 (PM)
4/10/2017	Nguyen Pham	Circlepoint	Additional Revision per Feedback from Rebecca Kohlstrand on 4/7

Document Sign-off

Name	Date	Signature
Rebecca Kohlstrand	4/4/2017	

Introduction

From February 2017 through March 2017, the West Contra Costa High-Capacity Transit Study project team facilitated a second round of public outreach along the I-80 corridor to share information and solicit community feedback related to a set of high-capacity transit options proposed to help alleviate congestion in West Contra Costa County. As with the first round of public outreach, an online survey was made available to gather input from a broad cross section of current and potential high-capacity transit users. Specifically, the project team sought input to inform which from among the existing alternatives would be selected for further study as preferred alternatives.

Council Presentation Dates

Location	Date/Time
Richmond City Council Chambers 440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond	Tuesday, February 28, 2017 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
San Pablo City Council Chambers 13831 San Pablo Avenue, San Pablo	Monday, March 6, 2017 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Pinole City Council Chambers 2131 Pear Street, Pinole	Tuesday, March 7, 2017 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
El Sobrante Elks' Lodge 3931 San Pablo Dam Road, El Sobrante	Wednesday, March 8, 2017 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Hercules City Council Chambers 111 Civic Drive, Hercules	Tuesday, March 14, 2017 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Council Chambers 10890 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito	Tuesday, March 21, 2017 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Meeting Format

As a follow-on to the previous year's initial round of outreach meetings, the recent series of public meetings enabled Project Team staff to deliver presentations to the El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council and to the City Councils of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, and San Pablo. Each presentation was entered as an official agenda item and delivered during regularly scheduled meetings. Following each formal presentation, a Q&A session provided attendees the platform to ask questions and comment on the proposed alternatives.

The following informational materials were provided at the council meetings:

- **Handouts:** Project fact sheet in English, Spanish, and Traditional Chinese
- **Presentation:** A PowerPoint presentation, delivered by WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, providing an overview of the Study and a summary of the remaining five alternatives

Following the Council meetings, the presentation was made available for download on the Study website (www.WestCountyTransitStudy.com).

RETHINK YOUR COMMUTE!
WEST COUNTY HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT STUDY

WHAT IS HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT?
High-capacity transit provides substantially higher levels of passenger capacity with typically fewer stops and higher speeds than local bus service.

EXPRESS BUS

Express Bus Service: Potential routes and stops

Express bus service makes a few stops to pick up passengers and then travels non-stop to its final destination. The Express Bus alternative would offer service between the Hercules Transit Center and Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland. On its way, the Express Bus would stop at the Richmond Parkway Transit Center and at a potential new transit center near Macdonald Avenue and San Pablo Avenue in Richmond.

Express Bus Benefits:

- » Fast, direct service between West County and San Francisco, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland
- » Buses every 10 to 12 minutes during commute hours and every 30 minutes during non-commute hours
- » New, direct access to carpool lanes to bypass freeway congestion

CAPITOL CORRIDOR FARE SUBSIDY
Commuter rail offers transit between downtown/city centers and areas outside of these cities, such as suburbs or other locations that draw large numbers of daily commuters. Amtrak provides commuter rail service on its Capitol Corridor route serving the Bay Area between San Jose and Sacramento, with stops in Richmond, Martinez, West Berkeley, Emeryville, and Jack London Square. Due to dedicated track, trains can provide a quicker trip than congested roadways, but rail is not currently priced competitively for local travel. This study is looking at a potential three-year pilot to subsidize fares on the Capitol Corridor route. This subsidy would reduce train fares by 50 to 75 percent for West County travelers. For example, with a 75 percent subsidy, one-way travel from Richmond to Martinez could be reduced from \$12.00 to \$3.00.

CONSTRUCTION COST AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINES
Big changes in transportation take time and money. Improvements require making choices that balance trade-offs between various options. The chart below shows (1) how long the alternatives may take to build and (2) cost estimates to build them.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!
We want to know how you would prioritize transit improvements to best suit your current and future travel needs.

- » Take our quick online survey at <http://westcountytransitstudy.com/>
- » Scan the QR code to the right to access the online survey
- » Attend a council presentation*
- » Submit a formal comment at: <http://westcountytransitstudy.com/contact-english/>
- » Visit WestCountyTransitStudy.com to check out what we've learned
- » How West County residents and employees get around
- » What are the most common destinations for West County residents and employees
- » What transit options were studied

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE
If you need language assistance services, please call (510) 464-6752. Si necesita servicios de asistencia de idioma, llame al (510) 464-6752. 如需語言協助服務，請致電 (510) 464-6752。 Kung kailangan mo ang tulong ng mga serbisyo ng wika, pakli tawagan ang (510) 464-6752. Nếu quý vị cần dịch vụ trợ giúp về ngôn ngữ, xin vui lòng gọi số (510) 464-6752. 통역이 필요한 분은, 510-464-6752 로 문의하십시오.

*Check your local council agenda to confirm meeting date and time

WCCTAC is an association of cities and transportation agencies in West County and one of four Regional Transportation Planning Committees in Contra Costa County. WCCTAC serves the residents of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo, and unincorporated areas of West County. Find out more about WCCTAC at WCCTAC.org.

Excerpts from the project fact sheet (Round 2)

Comments

At the Council presentations, attendees were invited to provide comments and express their interests via the following channels:

- Providing input at the meetings
- Completing the online project survey

Key Themes

The team noted a wide range of feedback from the Council meetings. While all comments will not be included in this report, what follows shows the range of comments delivered.



Project team staff speaking at the Hercules City Council Presentation

Members of the city councils expressed general support for the proposed transit improvements as a way to address the growing congestion on I-80 and for the concept of a strengthened high-capacity transit network. Members of the Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) expressed concern that the alternatives did not address congestion on San Pablo Dam Road and members of the El Cerrito City Council indicated they would like to see more benefits for El Cerrito.

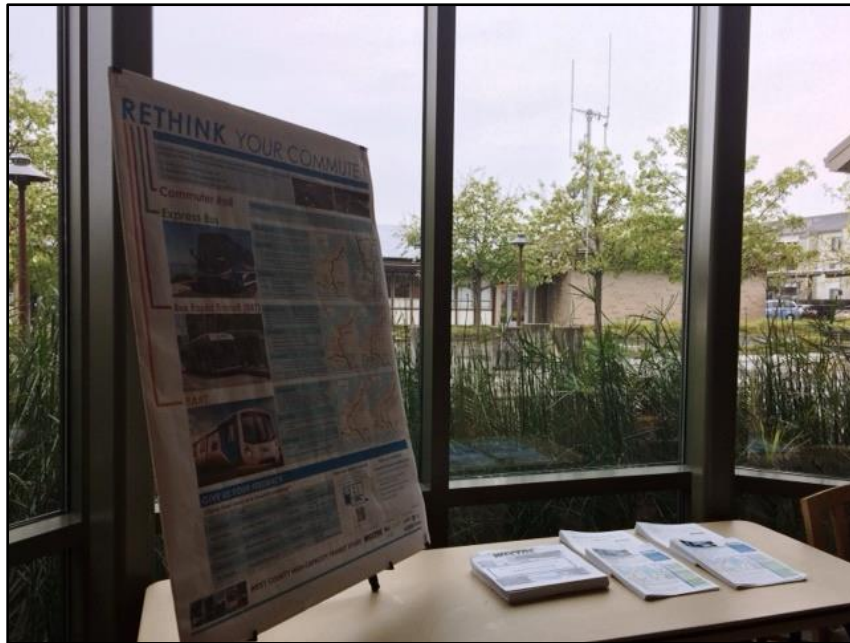
Express Bus/Bus Rapid Transit

- There was universal support for short-term bus improvements that would introduce alternatives to driving on the congested I-80 freeway. Support for the specific options varied by location and there was some concern expressed that the bus improvements were good short-term improvements, but may not be adequate to solve problems in the long-term.
- BRT was noted as holding promise, but concerns were expressed about dedicating a lane to transit, with the potential negative impacts to traffic flow and removal of parking, and the potential impact to small businesses.
- Bus improvements were seen as having potential for attracting more riders for the level of investment than commuter rail.

- City of San Pablo expressed support for the 23rd Street BRT and for improving service to Contra Costa College.

Commuter Rail

- Support for the commuter rail fare subsidies and new station in Hercules were mixed. Support was strong in Hercules and the city noted that a recent telephone town hall conducted by the city indicated strong support for the Regional Intermodal Transit Center at Hercules. However, council members from other jurisdictions indicated that the commuter rail projects were costly for the small return on ridership.



Informational materials on display at the El Cerrito City Council Presentation

BART

- There was general support for BART as long-term solution given its potential ridership and the good connectivity to the rest of the Bay Area, particularly to high demand areas like Oakland and San Francisco.
- The potential to generate economic development and serve high demand centers was also noted as a positive for the BART system.
- The cities of San Pablo and Pinole supported a BART extension with service to Contra Costa College, which is the highest trip generator in the City of San Pablo.
- The City of El Cerrito noted that the addition of BART stations, while relieving demand at the El Cerrito del Norte station would not address the train capacity problems. El Cerrito residents would still be boarding crowded trains.
- The City of Pinole expressed concern about the ability of the Appian Way station site to accommodate BART parking.
- The City of Hercules noted the future potential for ridership at the Hilltop Mall, but expressed

concerns about the ability to fund a BART extension.

- The City of Richmond expressed general support for BART, but expressed concern about increasing fares and the affordability for riders.
- Acknowledgement that BART expansion, while greatly needed, is among the costliest of options.
- Recognition that West County taxpayers have funded BART for half a century and are still awaiting a BART extension into West County.

I-80 Congestion

- There was an expression of opinion that Solano County is a major contributor to traffic congestion on I-80 and that congestion on I-80 is diverting traffic to surface streets, which are experiencing increased congestion. This is particularly true on San Pablo Avenue.
- The El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council expressed concern that the Study does not address traffic congestion at San Pablo Dam Road and suggested that a separate study might be needed specifically for San Pablo Dam Road traffic congestion.
- Concerns were expressed that I-80 congestion is only getting worse, resulting in ever-increasing negative impacts upon the quality-of-life.

Costs/Funding

- There was universal concern about the ability to fund these needed improvements, particularly for the BART extension, which is the most costly.
- Council members expressed interest in better understanding the trade-offs in terms of costs and benefits, such as job creation, environmental mitigation, and quality-of-life.
- It was noted that some cities are “maxed out” on sales taxes making it challenging for local entities to raise significant funds.
- Concerns were expressed that, from a cost perspective, funding for Capitol Corridor would provide an insufficient increase in rider capacity.

Survey Results

The project team developed a Round 2 survey to obtain a deeper understanding of trip patterns, transportation challenges, and transit solution preferences from existing and potential future transit users in West County.

The survey was made available online via the popular SurveyMonkey platform in English, Spanish, and Traditional Chinese. The survey was also linked prominently at the Study website, and the response window spanned from February 16 to March 26, 2017.

At the El Cerrito City Council Presentation meeting, City staff offered paper versions of the online survey in English, Spanish, and Traditional Chinese. Staff then entered responses submitted via the paper survey into the online survey platform to maximize cohesion of response tracking and reporting.

During the survey response window, 622 responses were captured of which 619 were via the English-language survey. Two Spanish surveys and one Traditional Chinese survey were captured.

Below is a snapshot of survey participants' most frequently reported answers. To provide more meaningful insight, the results have been refined into two subsets and are presented side-by-side. On the left, survey metrics represent those respondents whose commutes begin in the Study area (353 respondents); on the right, the metrics represent those respondents whose commutes end in the Study area (98 respondents).

For a complete and unrefined listing of all survey responses, please see the attached Appendix.

COMMUTES THAT BEGIN IN STUDY AREA (353 respondents)	COMMUTES THAT END IN STUDY AREA (98 respondents)
1. Where does your trip to work or school usually START? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22.10% - Richmond • 19.83% - El Cerrito • 15.58% - El Sobrante • 14.16% - Pinole • 13.88% - Hercules • 9.35% - San Pablo • 1.42% - Rodeo • 0.85% - Crockett 	1. Where does your trip to work or school usually START? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19.39% - Richmond • 12.24% - El Cerrito • 11.22% - El Sobrante • 8.16% - Hercules • 7.14% - Pinole • 7.14% - Concord / Pleasant Hill / Pittsburgh / Walnut Creek • 6.12% - Oakland • 5.10% - Berkeley • 4.08% - San Pablo
2. Where does your trip to work or school usually END? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35.23% - San Francisco • 14.20% - Oakland • 13.92% - Berkeley • 6.53% - Richmond • 3.98% - San Pablo • 3.69% - El Cerrito • 3.13% - Emeryville 	2. Where does your trip to work or school usually END? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32.32% - Richmond • 28.28% - San Pablo • 17.17% - El Cerrito • 8.08% - Hercules • 5.05% - Pinole • 3.03% - El Sobrante • 2.02% - Crockett • 1.01% - Rodeo
3. How do you usually make this trip? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40.06% - Drive alone • 31.53% - BART • 7.67% - Bus • 5.68% - Carpool or vanpool • 2.84% - Bike 	3. How do you usually make this trip? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65.98% - Drive alone • 9.28% - BART • 6.19% - Bus • 6.19% - Bike • 2.06% - Carpool or vanpool • 2.06% - Walk
4. Given your transportation needs, how often would you use this subsidy to travel on Capitol Corridor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36.58% - Rarely (Once a month) 	4. Given your transportation needs, how often would you use this subsidy to travel on Capitol Corridor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38.54% - Rarely (Once a month)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32.15% - Never • 16.52% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week) • 14.75% - Occasionally (Less than once a week) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34.38% - Never • 14.58% - Occasionally (Less than once a week) • 12.50% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week)
5. Given your transportation needs, would you use this Express bus service to Alameda County? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37.09% - Never • 36.50% - Rarely (once a month) • 14.24% - Occasionally (less than once a week) • 12.17% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week) 	5. Given your transportation needs, would you use this Express bus service to Alameda County? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44.79% - Rarely (once a month) • 42.71% - Never • 6.25% - Occasionally (less than once a week) • 6.25% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week)
6. Given your transportation needs, would you use Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on San Pablo Avenue and/or Macdonald Avenue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31.93% - Rarely (once a month) • 27.71% - Never • 21.99% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week) • 18.37% - Occasionally (less than once a week) 	6. Given your transportation needs, would you use Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on San Pablo Avenue and/or Macdonald Avenue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31.52% - Never • 31.52% - Occasionally (less than once a week) • 21.74% - Rarely (once a month) • 15.22% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week)
7. Given your transportation needs, would you use this Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on 23rd Street and San Pablo Avenue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37.04% - Never • 31.17% - Rarely (once a month) • 17.28% - Occasionally (less than once a week) • 14.51% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week) 	7. Given your transportation needs, would you use this Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on 23rd Street and San Pablo Avenue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32.97% - Never • 26.37% - Rarely (once a month) • 21.98% - Occasionally (less than once a week) • 18.68% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week)
8. Given your transportation needs, would you use this BART extension (via Rumrill Blvd)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52.16% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week) • 18.21% - Occasionally (less than once a week) • 17.90% - Rarely (once a month) • 11.73% - Never 	8. Given your transportation needs, would you use this BART extension (via Rumrill Blvd)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40.00% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week) • 23.33% - Rarely (once a month) • 20.00% - Occasionally (less than once a week) • 16.67% - Never
9. Given your transportation needs, would you use this BART extension (via Richmond Parkway)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45.65% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week) • 18.63% - Rarely (once a month) • 18.01% - Occasionally (less than once a week) • 17.70% - Never 	9. Given your transportation needs, would you use this BART extension (via Richmond Parkway)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30.68% - Frequently (3 to 5 times a week) • 28.41% - Never • 23.86% - Rarely (once a month) • 17.05% - Occasionally (less than once a week)
10. Given all you know, which option(s) would best fit your transportation needs? Check all that apply. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64.89% - BART Extension from Richmond Station to Hercules • 30.09% - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on San Pablo Avenue (El Cerrito to Hercules) and Macdonald Avenue (Point Richmond to El Cerrito) 	10. Given all you know, which option(s) would best fit your transportation needs? Check all that apply. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60.67% - BART Extension from Richmond Station to Hercules • 38.20% - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on San Pablo Avenue (El Cerrito to Hercules) and Macdonald Avenue (Point Richmond to El Cerrito)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23.51% - Express Bus Service to Berkeley, Emeryville and Oakland • 17.24% - Reduced Fares on Capitol Corridor • 14.11% - None of these • 12.85% - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on 23rd Street and San Pablo Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21.35% - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on 23rd Street and San Pablo Avenue • 21.35% - Reduced Fares on Capitol Corridor • 15.73% - None of these • 7.87% - Express Bus Service to Berkeley, Emeryville and Oakland
<p>11. What are the key reasons for your selection(s) above? Check all that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65.36% - Gets me to my destination without driving • 64.38% - Decreases cars on the road • 57.52% - It's good for the environment • 39.54% - Improves transit services I already use • 38.24% - Saves me time • 34.97% - Allows me to make a transit trip that I couldn't before • 23.53% - Saves me money 	<p>11. What are the key reasons for your selection(s) above? Check all that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63.53% - Gets me to my destination without driving • 58.82% - Decreases cars on the road • 50.59% - It's good for the environment • 35.29% - Allows me to make a transit trip that I couldn't before • 31.76% - Improves transit services I already use • 30.59% - Saves me time • 20.00% - Saves me money

The final question of the survey, **Question 12**, was an optional survey question and posed the following open-ended prompt: **Do you have any other suggestions for improving your commute in West County?** Below is a summary of the most frequently reported responses from the subset of respondents whose commutes begin and/or end in the Study area. While all comments will not be included in this report, what follows shows the range of comments provided.

- BART (51 comments)
 - Respondents were overwhelmingly in favor of extending BART routes and expanding train capacity on existing and new routes.
 - Respondents desired greater parking capacity at BART stations as well as improved cleanliness and reliability of train cars.
- Bus and BRT (32 comments)
 - Respondents showed favorability toward express bus service that provides riders with more seamless connections to BART.
 - Respondents requested reinstatement of AC Transit bus service to and from Orinda BART.
- Bike/Ped (26 comments)
 - Respondents expressed desire for more and improved safe bicycling options, such as dedicated bike lanes and bike paths, particularly along San Pablo Avenue.
- Highway Improvements and Law Enforcement (19 comments)
 - Respondents recommended the expansion of highways in particular areas of West County as well as the addition of toll lanes on existing highway segments.
 - Respondents suggested that high-occupancy vehicle lanes should have expanded hours and that the related vehicle occupancy laws be enforced more rigorously.
- Ferry (9 comments)

- Respondents indicated the desire for ferry service from West County to San Francisco, Marin, and Alameda.
- Rail & General Transit (8 comments)
 - Respondents desired improved access to, and service on, Amtrak and Caltrain Capitol Corridor.

Survey Demographic Information

Survey participants were also prompted for some optional demographic and contact information. The majority of survey respondents who chose to answer these questions were between the ages of 35-64, white (not Hispanic/Latino), and earning moderate to high incomes (\$75,000 or more). Survey participants most popularly indicated that they had heard of the survey through social media outlets, such as Twitter and NextDoor.

Notification Methods

Partner Agency Communications

As with Round 1 of public outreach activities, the project team worked with member agencies and partners to develop compelling messages and utilize their existing communication channels to ensure broad public notification. The project team developed tailored notification materials for the most popular channels of communication among the Study partners (email, social media, flier) to make it as easy as possible for partners to assist with publicizing the Council presentations and online survey.

Study partners who assisted with distributing communications included:

- City of El Cerrito City Manager's Report E-blast
- City of San Pablo City Manager's Report E-blast
- City of Richmond City Manager's Report E-blast
- BART Digital System Signage at West County stations
- BART Twitter
- Contra Costa Transportation Authority newsletter

Press Release

In addition to the notifications disseminated by Study partners, a press release was developed and distributed to media outlets, including West County-focused online and print outlets.

The notification materials for the Council presentations can be found in the appendix to this report.

Press Coverage

The following news media outlets publicized or covered the Council presentation series:

- **Richmond Standard**
 - West County residents asked to weigh in on region's transit future
 - Wednesday, February 22, 2017
 - <http://richmondstandard.com/2017/02/22/west-county-residents-asked-to-weigh-in-on-regions-transit-future/>
- **East Bay Times**
 - West Contra Costa seeks public input on addressing traffic congestion
 - Wednesday, March 1, 2017
 - <http://www.eastbaytimes.com/2017/03/01/west-county-seeks-public-input-on-addressing-traffic-congestion/>
- **East Bay Times**
 - West Contra Costa studying I-80 corridor gridlock solutions

- Tuesday, March 28, 2017
- <http://www.eastbaytimes.com/2017/03/28/west-contra-costa-studying-i-80-corridor-gridlock-solutions/>
- **Univision 14**
 - Television broadcast of interview with Leah Greenblatt in regard to what WCCTAC is doing to address congestion on I-80
 - Thursday, March 30, 2017

Appendix

The following materials are included as an appendix to this public outreach summary report.

- I. Fact Sheet
- II. Notification Content
- III. Online Survey
- IV. Online Survey Summary Reports