



DATE: March 10, 2015

AGENDA ITEM # 4

TO: City Council

FROM: Cedric Novenario, Transportation Services Manager

SUBJECT: El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit Project

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Receive an informational report and status update regarding the Valley Transportation Authority's El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit
- B. Provide feedback to Valley Transportation Authority representatives regarding the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit project

SUMMARY:

Estimated Fiscal Impact:

Amount: None

Budgeted: Not applicable

Public Hearing Notice: Not applicable

Previous Council Consideration: June 14, 2011, October 11, 2011, June 24, 2012, and January 13, 2015

CEQA Status: Not applicable

Attachments: None

BACKGROUND

The Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and the Federal Transit Administration, propose to implement bus rapid transit (BRT) improvements along a 17.6-mile stretch of El Camino Real and portions of The Alameda and West Santa Clara Street. The project will traverse the cities of San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Mountain View, Los Altos and Palo Alto.

In 2007, the Grand Boulevard Initiative vision was adopted to identify the full potential of El Camino Real, which includes “balancing the need for cars, parking and viable options for transit, biking and walking.”

In 2009, VTA prepared the Bus Rapid Transit Strategic Plan which identified El Camino Real as a potential alignment. The BRT project is also identified in the Valley Transportation Plan 2035, which provides a planning and policy framework to deliver future transportation projects of significant nature to Santa Clara County.

Starting in early 2011, the VTA began collecting feedback from cities, organizations and the public regarding the BRT Project. From 2011 to 2014, the project has developed to a total of seven different alignment options, varying from a No Build Option to a Long Dedicated Lane Option from Lafayette Street in Santa Clara to Embarcadero Road in Palo Alto.

The City of Los Altos received presentations regarding the BRT on three separate occasions. At the first meeting on June 14, 2011, VTA staff provided a general overview and framework of the BRT project to the Council. On October 11, 2011, the Council authorized the Mayor to send a letter to the Cities of Mountain View and Palo Alto encouraging them to replace on-street parking with a bike lane if the VTA chooses a mixed flow option to provide continuous bicycle connectivity through three adjacent jurisdictions. On January 24, 2012, the Council was not supportive of the project citing concerns of unintended consequences citing traffic diversion as the primary reason.

Four project alternatives were developed based on the results of the BRT strategic plan, public input and scoping meetings. The four project alternatives are:

Alternative 1 - No Build

No BRT station improvements or dedicated lanes would be implemented.

Alternative 2 - All Mixed Flow from San Jose to Palo Alto

Curbside bulb-out stations would be developed along the entire corridor (one curbside station in Los Altos at El Camino Real and Showers). No dedicated lanes would be implemented.

Alternative 3 - Short Dedicated Lane

- A) Mixed flow lanes from the Arena in San Jose to Lafayette Street in Santa Clara, then a 3-mile dedicated BRT lane from Lafayette Street to Halford Street in Santa Clara. The remaining stretch to Palo Alto would not receive any improvements.
- B) Mixed flow lanes from the Arena in San Jose to Lafayette Street in Santa Clara, then a 3-mile dedicated BRT lane from Lafayette Street to Halford Street in Santa Clara. The remaining stretch to Palo Alto would implement mixed flow lanes with curb side stations (one curbside station in Los Altos at El Camino Real and Showers).

Alternative 4 - Long Dedicated Lane

- A) Mixed flow lanes from the Arena in San Jose to Lafayette Street in Santa Clara, then provide a 7.1-mile dedicated lane segment to SR 85 in Mountain View.

- B) Mixed flow lanes from the Arena in San Jose to Lafayette Street in Santa Clara, then provide a 10.1 - mile dedicated lane segment to Showers Drive in Mountain View/Los Altos
- C) Mixed flow lane from the Arena in San Jose to Lafayette Street in Santa Clara, then provide a 13.9-mile dedicated lane segment to Embarcadero Road in Palo Alto.

The El Camino Real BRT Draft Environmental Impact Report was released for public review on October 29, 2014. The City submitted two comment letters to the VTA on January 7, 2015 and January 14, 2015.

DISCUSSION

Although the final date to submit comments was January 14, 2015, the VTA continues to receive comments from the general public on the El Camino Real BRT. Comments received from the general public, advocacy groups and affected jurisdictions are being considered by the VTA for inclusion in the final environmental impact report. The comments will also aid VTA staff in determining a Locally Preferred Alternative.

The VTA is preparing to present a staff recommendation on a Locally Preferred Alternative to the VTA Board's advisory committees in April. If approved, then the VTA Board will consider the staff recommendations on May 7, 2015.

John Ristow and Steven Fisher of the VTA will present the status of the project and provide detail regarding the VTA's next steps in determining a Locally Preferred Alternative at the March 10, 2015 Council meeting.

Public Correspondence

To date, the Council has received input from residents throughout the region both in support and opposition to the BRT project. Staff will provide more information regarding the City of residence and stance towards the project for all correspondence at the March 10, 2015 Council meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.