



**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 15, 2022  
**TO:** Christine Daniel, City Manager  
**FROM:** Mohamed Alaoui, Public Works Director  
**SUBJECT:** **Letters of Support, Update, and Review of the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Multimodal Improvement Project**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Council receive a status update on the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Multimodal Improvement Project (“Project”). Additionally, staff recommends that the Council reviews proposed changes to the corridor, provides comments, authorizes Mayor Bauters to sign a letter of support for the Project to be sent to ACTC and project partners, and authorizes Mayor Bauters to sign a second letter of support directly to ACTC outlining additional project design considerations.

**BACKGROUND**

Alameda County Transportation Commission (“Alameda CTC”), in cooperation with California Department of Transportation (“Caltrans”) and the cities of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, and Albany (Cities), proposes to implement improvements to make San Pablo Avenue function better and more safely for people who walk, bike, drive and take the bus. Improvements along San Pablo Avenue are planned to include transit priority treatments such as dedicated bus lanes to improve travel time and reliability, transit signal priority, signal modernization and coordination, and enhanced bus stops or stations. In addition, pedestrian safety improvements, such as pedestrian bulbs, crosswalk improvements, and curb ramps, as well as bicycle safety improvements and improved bicycle infrastructure are planned for implementation. These improvements collectively are hereafter referred to as the “Project.”

San Pablo Avenue is an interjurisdictional roadway that traverses multiple cities in northern Alameda County and western Contra Costa County. It is the spine of a critical multimodal travel corridor that connects tens of thousands of people every day between residential communities, employment centers, schools, centers of public life and other activity hubs.

San Pablo Avenue provides north-south connections parallel to the BART Richmond Line and Interstate 80 (I-80) and is a reliever route for freeway traffic during incidents on I-80. It carries local, rapid and express/ Transbay buses, includes many high-activity pedestrian areas and is designated as a bicycle route in many local jurisdiction plans. Demand for travel on San Pablo Avenue is projected to increase as jurisdictions concentrate growth along the corridor in several Priority Development Areas, with several higher-density, mixed-use developments recently completed and numerous others under consideration.

### ***Purpose, Need and Goals for Project***

The purpose of the San Pablo Avenue Corridor Project is to improve multimodal mobility, efficiency, and safety to sustainably meet current and future transportation needs and support a strong local economy and growth along the corridor while respecting local contexts.

#### Goals:

- Enhance safety for all travel modes
- Improve comfort and quality of trips for transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians
- Support a strong local economy and efficiently accommodate growth along the corridor while respecting local contexts
- Promote equitable transportation and design solutions for diverse communities throughout corridor

#### Need:

- **Safety:** San Pablo Avenue has one of the highest incidents of injury collisions in Alameda County. We need to improve safety for all users now, especially the most vulnerable: people walking and biking, seniors, and children.
- **Transit Performance:** San Pablo Avenue is one of the highest-ridership bus corridors in the East Bay. However, due to congestion, buses are often slow and unreliable because they are stuck in traffic. Reliable, attractive bus service is critical to efficiently move more people, while minimizing our environmental impacts.
- **Growth:** San Pablo Avenue also serves as a main commercial street for many diverse communities. The street needs to support a strong local economy and accommodate growth along the corridor.

### ***Projected Project Benefits and Impacts***

Analysis conducted in Summer – Fall 2021 revealed the following key benefits that are projected to result from project implementation

#### Benefits:

- **Less speeding:** Reducing the number of traffic lanes is expected to reduce speeding on San Pablo Avenue, increasing safety for everyone.
- **Safer crossings:** Upgraded crosswalks, lighting, and new signals and beacons enhance safety for people walking and biking along and across San Pablo Ave.
- **Safer bike route:** New protected bike lanes on San Pablo Avenue provide safer, more comfortable, and direct bicycling routes to key destinations.
- **Faster bus service:** Dedicated bus lanes on San Pablo Avenue in Oakland and Emeryville are expected to reduce bus travel times in that segment by 10%-20%.

- More reliable buses: The dedicated bus lanes and in-lane stops improve travel time reliability and reduce average wait times for passengers.

Impacts:

- Slower car trips: Converting a traffic lane to a bus lane in each direction is projected to increase auto travel times on San Pablo Avenue by up to 10% during the busiest times of day. Some drivers will switch to driving at off-peak times, taking different routes, or riding the bus or a bike for their trips.
- Relocated parking and loading activity: Constructing bus and bike lanes will require relocating nearly all parking and loading from San Pablo Avenue to side streets. Location-specific strategies to address loading needs throughout the corridor are being coordinated with input from storefront businesses and residents.

### ***Equity Implications***

Alameda CTC is conducting an Equity Analysis for this near-term project in Oakland and Emeryville. This analysis will seek to answer qualitative questions using Oakland's Equity Analysis approach that considers:

- Demographics
- Safety data
- Bike/ped activity levels
- Bus service quality
- Access to transit
- Parking usage
- Auto usage

### **DISCUSSION**

The Alameda CTC Project team presented a project update to the Emeryville Transportation Committee at its November 4, 2021 Meeting. The Transportation Committee approved a motion to forward a letter of support for the Project to the Emeryville City Council with the following Project design considerations:

1. Recommend the Project move forward with "Option A" for the near-term pilot including:
  - a) Side-running bus lanes
  - b) Protected micro-mobility / bike lanes
  - c) Design development at intersections, driveways, limited loading areas, and bus stops with consideration for all modes of transportation
  - d) Robust public outreach/engagement along San Pablo Avenue
2. Recommend the Project identify areas where limited loading areas shall be considered with the following criteria:
  - a) Mid-block parcels with no off-street parking/loading options within a reasonable distance of the parcel

3. Recommend the Project consider additional design efforts for the 40<sup>th</sup> Street / San Pablo Avenue Transit Hub Area including:
  - a) Curb changes
  - b) Paratransit/ADA Access
  - c) Caltrans Design Exceptions (Queuing, Signal Timing, and Lane Widths)
  - d) Diversion Analysis
  - e) Utility Relocations

Since the November Transportation Committee Meeting, the Alameda CTC Project team along with staff from each of the Cities has conducted public outreach to community members and local businesses along the San Pablo Avenue corridor. The preliminary results of this public outreach (outreach is still on-going) will be shared in the City Council presentation on this item.

The above design considerations are not included in the first letter of support for the sake of brevity and to emphasize overall support by Emeryville for the Project especially to project partners included in the cc list. However, these design considerations are included in the second letter of support for the benefit of the ACTC project team.

Alameda CTC seeks a final decision on the scope of the Project to take into Preliminary Engineering by Spring 2022 to ensure eligibility for key funding sources during 2022 grant application cycles and to advance the Project into the Caltrans process.

Upon confirmation of the scope of the Project from all project partners, Alameda CTC will commence Preliminary Engineering in Spring 2022 and will conduct more in-depth engagement with the community during this process to determine exact configuration of the project block-by-block.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Project is eligible for federal, state, and regional funding. Beginning in March 2022, Alameda CTC plans to submit for various grant sources for the Future Phases of the Project. The letter of support from City of Emeryville, if approved, will be used to help strengthen grant applications.

Besides continued City Staff time for outreach and project coordination efforts, there is no additional fiscal impact to the City of Emeryville at this time.

### **STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC**

The Project team has been engaging with the general public, business owners, store fronts, and property managers along the corridor. The team has also met with local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups throughout the project development process. Alameda CTC and other Project stakeholders, including the City staff, will continue public outreach to address and accommodate local community/business needs.

City staff attends regular meetings for the Project to ensure the City's interests are addressed.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Not applicable.

### **CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends that the Council receive a status update on the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue Multimodal Improvement Project ("Project"). Additionally, staff recommends that the Council reviews proposed changes to the corridor, provides comments, authorizes Mayor Bauters to sign a letter of support for the Project sent to ACTC and project partners, and authorizes Mayor Bauters to sign a second letter of support directly to ACTC outlining additional project design considerations.

**PREPARED BY:** Ryan O'Connell, Senior Civil Engineer and Mohamed Alaoui, Public Works Director

### **APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EMERYVILLE:**



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Christine Daniel, City Manager

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Exhibit A – Project Information and Map
2. Presentation
3. Letter of Support
4. Second Letter of Support to ACTC with additional project design considerations