

*Planning Committee* **STAFF REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** December 01, 2021

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Approval of the East County Integrated Transit Study (Study) Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)</b>
<b>Summary of Issues</b>	In 2018, the Authority received a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Sustainable Communities Planning grant to study the options for high-capacity transit service from Antioch Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) to the planned Brentwood Intermodal Center. The Study team has evaluated six modal alternatives and the highest performing options have been identified for further conceptual design.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Staff seeks approval of Alternative 4 - Express Bus to Antioch as the recommended LPA from the Draft Study to be advanced for cost refinement and conceptual design, and consideration for advancing certain design elements of the higher cost Alternative 1 - Bay Area Rapid Transit Rail Extension, to be included in the Final Study.
<b>Staff Contact</b>	Matt Kelly
<b>Financial Implications</b>	The Study was funded by a \$755,000 Caltrans Sustainable Communities Planning grant, with matching Measure J planning funds.
<b>Options</b>	Revise the LPA.
<b>Attachments (See PC Packet dated 12/1/21)</b>	<b>A.</b> Study - Executive Summary
<b>Changes from Committee</b>	<i>None</i>

## **Background**

In October of 2018, the Authority applied for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning grant to evaluate near-term solutions for providing transit service between the cities of Antioch and Brentwood, as well as considerations for a future long-term solution for a BART extension to the City of Brentwood. The Study also includes development of a conceptual design for the preferred alternative. Caltrans issued a notice in November 2019, which allowed the Authority to commence the consultant retention process. In April 2020, the Authority entered into Agreement No. 542 with a team led by Nelson\Nygaard to conduct the Study. The Nelson\Nygaard team has considerable experience planning new transit services, preparing local active transportation plans, and conducting public outreach to support those plans.

The Study effort was guided by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Steering Committee (SC) composed of the following project stakeholder agency staff:

- BART
- Caltrans, District 4 (Grant Manager)
- City of Antioch
- City of Brentwood
- City of Oakley
- Contra Costa County, Department of Conservation and Development
- Contra Costa County Supervisor, District 3
- Contra Costa Transportation Authority
- East County Transportation Planning Committee (TRANSPLAN)
- Tri-Delta Transit

## **Alternatives Analysis**

The primary focus of the consultant work was to develop and analyze a short list of modal alternatives for high-capacity transit service between Antioch BART Station and the Brentwood Intermodal Center. The scope-of-work identified potential options, including bus, bus-in-median, and rail-in-median; however, the alternatives evaluation would expand on this initial list. Using feedback from the TAC, SC, and the public through online outreach, six alternatives were developed using a set of criteria and metrics to assess their impacts on

project goals. A set of six primary goals were developed by the TAC and SC, and included the following:

- Improve the transit riding experience for the user
- Improve air quality through reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Support economic development in East County
- Respond to equitable transit needs
- Support future transit investment in the area
- Communicate the benefits of transit to residents

In order to assess how each modal alternative performed against the goals, a set of qualitative and quantitative evaluation criteria was developed, including (but not limited to):

- Travel time savings
- Transfers
- Ridership potential
- Cost
- Quality of access
- Emissions reduction
- Flexible service
- Community preference
- Time to implement

The six alternatives selected for evaluation are as follows:

1. Extension of BART from Antioch to the Brentwood Intermodal Center
2. Freeway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the State Route 4 (SR4) median to Antioch BART Station
3. Freeway BRT to the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART Station
4. Express Bus in SR4 travel lanes to the Antioch BART Station
5. Express Bus in SR4 travel lanes to the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART Station
6. Rapid Bus on arterials to the Antioch BART Station
  - a. Via Hillcrest
  - b. Via Slatten Ranch Road (unconstructed)

Based on the goals and criteria listed above and including input on criteria weights and scoring from the TAC, SC and public, the summary scoring from the evaluation of the six modal alternatives are listed on the following page.

Alt	Description	Total Score	Weighted Score	Ranking
1	BART Rail Extension	56	78.8	1
2	Freeway BRT to Antioch	42	60.4	4
3	Freeway BRT to Pittsburg/Bay Pt.	41	59.4	5
4	Express Bus to Antioch	45	67.2	2
5	Express Bus to Pittsburg/Bay Pt.	42	62.8	3
6a	Rapid Bus to Antioch (Hillcrest)	39	57.8	6
6b	Rapid Bus to Antioch (Slatten Ranch)	34	49.2	7

The rail (BART) and Express Bus to Antioch alternatives were the highest two performing modal options. The TAC and SC considered how best to advance one of these projects as the LPA, for which additional cost estimation and initial conceptual design will be performed under the consultant contract. MTC’s Resolution 3434 land use density requirements for regional funding of transit projects was also a consideration in the LPA recommendation. Based on initial cost estimates of less than \$10 million for the Express Bus alternative and greater than \$250 million for the BART extension, the TAC and SC agreed in recommending the lower cost and near-term implementation potential of the Express Bus service to Antioch BART (Alt. 4) as the LPA in the draft Study. The TAC and SC also agreed that it made sense to use some of the conceptual design budget to look at some high-level considerations for the longer-term BART extension (Alt. 1), in addition to the cost refinements and initial design elements for Alt 4.

The Final report will include the refined costs and conceptual design, and will identify funding opportunities for the LPA.

### **Public Outreach**

The original study scope included extensive in-person outreach in the East County communities. Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shelter-in-place, the outreach plan was revised to include an online and social media presence. A website was developed for the Study to host all public outreach materials ([www.eastcountytransit.com](http://www.eastcountytransit.com)). A series of online open houses were used to engage with the public during this Study. Through these events, we gathered survey feedback from participants about a variety of topics, including mobility needs, the framework of the Study, and community preferences on the six proposed alternatives. The online open house materials were available in over 108 languages in print or other formats upon request. The third round of the online open house is currently active on the Study's website, sharing the results of the evaluation, and all outreach information will reside on the Authority's website once the Study is complete.

### **Recommendation**

Staff seeks approval of Alternative 4 - Express Bus to Antioch as the recommended LPA from the Draft Study to be advanced for cost refinement and conceptual design, and advancing certain design elements of the higher cost Alternative 1 - Bay Area Rapid Transit Rail Extension, to be included in the Final Study.

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