

# **Final Report Alameda Transit Plan**



**Prepared for the  
City of Alameda**

**Prepared by  
Pacific Transit Management Corporation  
Berkeley, California**

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## **I. Summary**

An extensive year-long process has led to the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in the Alameda Transit Plan. The plan was developed by a team of consultants working with City staff and under the policy guidance of the Public Transit Committee.

### **Findings and Conclusions**

The major findings and conclusions of the study are:

- To enhance quality of life and allow for economic growth, Alameda must increase the mobility of City residents through a meaningful and well used public transit system. Primary transit services should be useful and attractive, with service operating not less than every 15 minutes on weekdays.
- Alameda's transit system must be designed to meet the public's agreed upon land use plan. The Long Range Transit Plan recommends a route network that is consistent regardless of transit mode. Depending on the land use densities adopted in the General Plan, higher capacity modes such as light rail should be considered. However, high capacity rail systems can only be effective and justified if supported by higher density land uses along their corridors.
- To optimize development, by 2005 peak hour cross-estuary capacity must be enhanced through transit services and transit priority measures.
- Additional transit capacity would support the City's and the region's air quality and environmental objectives.
- To improve the capacity of the congested tubes and bridges linking Alameda to the East Bay, the City should commit to an objective of a 30 percent transit modal split in the tubes to provide 400 to 500 additional peak hour person trips; and on the estuary bridges, provide 400 additional peak hour person trips on transit.
- The City should investigate additional transit-only cross estuary capacity, including a dedicated transit tube or a bus barge or ferry. A two-vessel bus barge or ferry would have a capacity of about 500 trips per hour, while a transit only tube could have a capacity of about 3,000 trips per hour.
- The City's modal split objective for San Francisco trips should be 65 percent via transit, including 25 percent on ferries, 20 percent on Transbay buses, and 20 percent on BART. The current modal split for all transit modes is about 45 percent.

## **Specific Service Recommendations**

A restructuring of the transit fixed route system and mode changes are proposed. Enhancements to the water transportation system are recommended, provided sufficient resources and demand exist to support the changes.

- The most significant recommendations extend the Santa Clara Avenue trunk line route eastbound via Santa Clara, south on Park Street, east on Otis and then via Island Drive on Bay Farm Island into Oakland International Airport and then south to BayFair BART. This new and extended route would provide service to Bay Farm at all hours, and link Alameda with the large job market in the Hayward and Fremont areas.
- The Buena Vista/Clement corridor would be provided with all-day frequent transit service connecting to the West Oakland BART station and to Fruitvale BART.
- Lines 50 and 63 would operate every 15 minutes on weekdays, and would be converted to battery buses.
- Longer term recommendations include increasing Estuary capacity with a bus barge or ferry operating from Alameda Point to West Oakland BART.
- An expansion of the Alameda to San Francisco ferry is proposed, and would be relocated to the Seaplane Lagoon at Alameda Point to avoid Estuary marine traffic and provide a better connection with the Mission Bay development area.
- In the longer term, a light rail system operating on the Alameda Belt Line right-of-way is feasible, but only justifiable with increases in land use intensity. However, the right-of-way should be retained for possible use in the future.

## **Cost**

Total operating costs in the first phase are expected to increase by almost \$6 million annually. However existing and projected sources could fund up to \$5 million of this increase, leaving an unfunded service increase of \$1 million. Additional increases beyond this point would require more resources.

## **Benefits**

The proposed system is designed to produce between 7,500 to 12,000 weekday additional transit trips. It is also intended to meet Alameda's development desires, including the redevelopment of the former NAS Alameda, now Alameda Point.

# **1. Introduction**

This report analyzes and recommends various changes and improvements to the public transit system that operates in the City of Alameda. The recommendations are based on a detailed set of goals and objectives that was developed in conjunction with the City's Public Transit Committee (PTC), which was established to supervise and guide this study effort.

This report is the result of an intensive year-long study and community effort, and reflects both economic reality and public desire. The actions included in this report can be accomplished – some of the improvements, such as route changes, are accomplished with a minimum of political capital. Other suggestions, such as mode changes, require political will and public acceptance. All, however, can be achieved.

## **1.1 Study Organization**

This report is organized into seven sections:

- Introduction
- Goals and Objectives
- Travel Patterns and Existing Conditions
- Routing Systems – Principles and Sample Networks
- Recommended System
- Financial Analysis
- Institutional and Implementation Plan

It also includes a Glossary and Appendix with public comments.

## **1.2 Study Purpose**

The City of Alameda, acting through its Public Works Department and in consultation with the PTC, has undertaken the development of a City-specific transit plan for the City of Alameda that would ultimately be adopted in some form as part of the City's General Plan Transportation Element.

The objectives of this analysis are to:

- Assess how public transit can improve the quality of life and improve mobility for Alameda residents, employees and visitors.
- Investigate the feasibility of developing a balanced and inviting multimodal transit system.
- Assess the feasibility of alternative transit modes and electric transit vehicles.
- Develop a public transit plan that is attractive, multi-destinational, multi-purpose, reliable, economical, and can be implemented.

- Assess and prioritize the physical, facility and financial needs of a public transit system, and identify the opportunities to provide for these needs.

The plan includes route and schedule changes that improve the overall transit system in the short-term, and, in the longer term, provide the basis for a focused public consideration of linking land use and transit services. This opportunity comes at a critically important time for Alameda – the redevelopment of Alameda Point and other development in the city will draw more than 15,000 new residents. Transit works best when integrated with land use; the City has a unique opportunity to create neighborhoods that support and are supported by public transit service.

### **1.3 Study Area**

The area studied was the entire City of Alameda and the main commute and travel routes out of the city. As such, the travel patterns play a large role in the definition of the study area.

### **1.4 Public Participation**

The public has been extensively involved in the development of this plan. In addition to monthly public meetings of the Public Transit Committee where the Committee analyzed and reviewed draft chapters of the plan, the staff and consultants presented concepts at two public meetings, and also surveyed Alameda residents through the *Flash* newsletter. More than 900 responses were received from the *Flash* survey.

### **1.5 Coordination with Other Studies**

The Alameda Transit Plan has been designed to become an integral element of the City's new General Plan. It is also consistent with the Webster Renaissance and Park Street Visioning efforts and is sensitive to the overall objectives of the NAS Alameda Reuse Plan. The plan is also consistent with the Service Policies that AC Transit has adopted, and the routing implications of those policies.

## **2. Goals and Objectives**

The following goals, objectives and criteria were developed by the consulting team in conjunction with City staff and individual members of the PTC, and were then reviewed by the entire PTC and adopted by the Committee.

While there are very specific goals, an overriding principle is that:

*Transportation is a means, and not an end.* Transportation does not produce economic benefits to society. Rather it is a service that societies and economies employ to meet other goals. These goals can include access and mobility, economic specialization, and improved quality-of-life. How the transportation system is designed and functions affects society's ability to meet these other goals.

The specific goals of public transit in Alameda are:

### **19. Enhance mobility for Alameda through the provision of a public transit system that is comprehensive, safe, reliable and fully accessible.**

- Objectives:
- A. Transit routes should be direct and logical, without unnecessary diversions, with route spacing broad enough to allow for 80 percent of Alameda residents to walk to a bus stop no more than 1,200 feet (360 meters) from their residence. Routes should serve high demand destinations, such as jobs, schools, medical facilities, and shopping areas.
  - B. Transit service frequency should minimize waiting by providing frequent service throughout the day.
  - C. Transit services should be a seamless system, with easy and convenient connections between buses and to and from regional carriers such as ferries and BART. Alameda residents should be able to access jobs and destinations in Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco and other transit rich areas without using an automobile.
  - D. Transit operators should be courteous and well trained in the safe operation of a transit vehicle. Transit equipment should be well maintained to insure safety and reliability.
  - E. Transit schedules should be realistic, and transit priority measures should be considered when street traffic delays or impedes transit vehicles.
  - F. Transit services must meet environmental justice requirements, including accessibility to the disabled, and availability to low income residents.

- G. Transit services and facilities must be designed to function and operate during a disaster recovery period.
- H. Transit operations should use proven and reliable equipment and operating practices and should employ technology advancements as appropriate.

**Criteria:**

1. *Do transit routes provide two-directional service on main streets without unnecessary deviations?*
2. *Are transit routes spaced to provide service within 1,200 feet of 80 percent of Alameda residents?*
3. *Are transit stops located within 500 feet of major traffic generators such as employment centers, schools, medical facilities, and shopping areas?*
4. *Are transit stops located within 200 feet of transfer points?*
5. *Do transit trunk routes provide at least 15 minute service throughout the day and evening?*
6. *Are there timed transfers at intermodal transit connections such as the ferry terminals?*
7. *Are transfers or passes accepted between various transit operators?*
8. *Is Alameda served by Transbay routes connecting with downtown San Francisco and East Bay trunk routes serving downtown Oakland and Berkeley?*
9. *Do the transit routes on congested corridors operate at speeds that ensure quick and reliable service? Do street operations provide priority for faster transit operations, enabling them to adhere to schedules, not wait in traffic for more than one signal phase, and have a travel time advantage over private vehicles?*
10. *Are wheelchair accessible transit stops located at all important trip generators that serve the disabled?*
11. *Is an emergency operations plan for Alameda prepared for both ferry and bus operations?*

**2. Create a transit option that is an attractive alternative to the automobile to alleviate traffic concerns.**

