

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Programming and Allocations Committee

June 8, 2011

Item Number 3c

Dumbarton Rail Project Update

Subject: Dumbarton Rail Project Update

Background: In March 2011, the Committee received an update on three at-risk Regional Measure 2 projects including the Dumbarton Rail project. The project is currently in the environmental phase and has an estimated capital cost of \$700 - \$820 million. The funding plan for the project totals approximately \$350 million; moreover, roughly half of these funding sources are not available in the near to medium-term.

This update outlines several near-term efforts to support transit improvements in the Dumbarton corridor and establish a stronger foundation for potential rail service in the future. The two recommendations below are consistent with the 2008 Strategic Plan that was prepared to help guide transit expansion investments in MTC Resolution 3434.

1. Support steps toward the purchase of Right-of-Way in the ACE, Capitol, and Dumbarton Corridors
2. Support expanded cost-effective express bus service in the corridor to build transit ridership in the corridor

Specific actions recommended to support these efforts are detailed below.

Right of Way Purchase

In October 2008, the Dumbarton Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) requested that Capitol Corridor staff take the lead on negotiations with Union Pacific for purchase of rail right of way that could be used on the Dumbarton Rail project (East Bay side). These efforts have stalled. Therefore, staff is recommending that the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) take the lead in developing a right-of-way acquisition plan, and proposed strategy for the negotiations. This effort is estimated to cost \$300,000. MTC and ACTC staff recommends that this effort be funded equally by Regional Measure 2 funds and ACTC funds.

Interim Bus Service

The Dumbarton Bus Consortium has developed a plan for an "interim bus service" that would provide expanded express bus service between the east and west bay across the Dumbarton auto bridge. The service would be designed to build transit ridership in the corridor. This plan, an estimated annual budget, and a proposed schedule for implementation of an interim bus service will be presented to the Dumbarton PAC on June 24th.

Concurrently, the Dumbarton Consortium is in the procurement phase for a private contractor to run the existing bus service. The procurement allows for expanded bus service, and once a provider is selected, annual cost figures can be refined. With a cost proposal and service plan, MTC could consider a request from the project sponsors and Dumbarton PAC to hold a public hearing to consider redirecting a portion of the RM2 operating funds set-aside for the Dumbarton Rail project to interim expanded bus service in the

corridor. The timeline for such a hearing has not yet been established, but is likely to occur toward the end of 2011. Within this effort, MTC staff recommends funding up to \$100,000 to support additional service development for expanded bus service in the corridor.

For both efforts, staff recommends that funding support be approved under the Executive Director's Delegated Authority once the scope and funding amounts are finalized, and appropriate sponsor approvals are in place. Staff will coordinate these efforts with the discussion and any direction provided by the Dumbarton PAC.

Issues:

- (1) Dumbarton Rail EIR: MTC has continued to provide funding support for the Dumbarton Rail environmental document. Caltrain staff are currently working on technical studies and other elements needed for development of a draft. Publication of a final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), however, is unlikely until a full funding plan is developed.
- (2) RM2 Required Finding: For MTC to proceed with a public hearing to redirect RM2 operating funding from the Dumbarton Rail project to interim bus service in the corridor, there would need to be a determination that the Dumbarton Rail project could not continue "due to delivery or financing obstacles making the completion or continuation of the project unrealistic," as required by Streets and Highway Code Section 30914(f). It is possible that this finding could be made conditional on the absence of rail service, so that if rail service were to begin in the corridor, the funds would revert back to support the rail service (and would then no longer be available to support bus service.)

Recommendation: Information only.

Attachments: None