



Memorandum

Date: 07.13.15 **RE:** Plans and Programs Committee
July 21, 2015

To: Plans and Programs Committee: Commissioners Tang (Chair), Christensen (Vice Chair), Breed, Farrell, Yee and Weiner (Ex Officio)

From: David Uniman – Deputy Director for Planning *DUE*

Through: Tilly Chang – Executive Director *TC*

Subject: **ACTION** – Recommend Adoption of the Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study Final Report

Summary

The Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line is a proposed rapid transit service envisioned to provide existing and future neighborhoods along the San Mateo-San Francisco County line with a bus connection to key regional transit system hubs in the Geneva-Harney Corridor, connecting Balboa Park BART/Muni Station, Bayshore Caltrain Station, Muni T-Third at Sunnysdale and Arleta, and a future transit center in Hunters Point. The Geneva-Harney BRT Feasibility Study focused on determining feasible routing and configuration options for a near-term project that heralds the long-term investment in a major new growth Corridor. This bi-county, multi-agency effort developed three near-term full-feature BRT alternatives that deliver dedicated transit lanes, transit signal priority, and pedestrian access improvements to the Geneva Corridor. Each near-term option would reduce end-to-end travel time by as much as 15 minutes over today (a 30% improvement), increase ridership by as much as 8%, and provide opportunities for improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities, all with little to no reduction in motorist delay. While this demonstrates clear options for a feasible near-term BRT project, there is a fair amount of variation on the character and impacts of alternatives, particularly in the eastern most section of the study area. As such, the study report details the factors that require more detailed design, technical analysis, stakeholder and community engagement, and interagency coordination before recommending a specific alternative for implementation. The pre-environmental phase of work is expected to begin as early as fall 2015, led by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency in coordination with bi-county multi-agency partners.

BACKGROUND

The Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study is the result of a bi-county planning effort along the San Francisco-San Mateo County line. It was funded by a California Department of Transportation Planning grant and the Transportation Authority's Proposition K sales tax program. The technical team, led by the Transportation Authority, was comprised of multiple city and county agencies in both San Mateo and San Francisco counties. A project community advisory committee represented residents, workers, and other interests along the bi-county corridor. The study assessed bus rapid transit feasibility multimodal transportation priorities at the neighborhood scale, prioritizing near-term improvements to improve connectivity across the site and to the broader neighborhood, city, and region. The final recommendations identify feasible near-term alternatives for further study.

DISCUSSION

Project Site and Existing Conditions: The corridor of focus for this study extends from Balboa Park Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)/ Muni Station in the west to Hunters Point Shipyard in the east, including connections to the Bayshore Caltrain Station and Muni T-Third line at Sunnydale and Arleta stations. The Study Corridor was split into three segments for planning and analysis purposes: the Western Segment runs on Geneva Avenue from Balboa Park BART to Santos Street; the Central Segment follows Geneva Avenue from Santos Street to Bayshore Boulevard; and the Eastern Segment includes Bayshore Boulevard, the neighborhood of Little Hollywood and the Brisbane Baylands redevelopment site. Geneva Avenue is a major east-west artery connecting the City of San Francisco, City of Daly City, and City of Brisbane to regional transit, US 101, and I-280. The Corridor is ethnically and socioeconomically diverse. Current land use includes lower density residential neighborhoods and several distinct neighborhood commercial districts.

While the neighborhoods on Geneva Avenue are mature and have already been built out, the Corridor is anticipated to host major new developments at the eastern and western ends. Existing transit service is provided by a host of operators, including Muni, SamTrans, BART, Caltrain, and community-based and first/last mile shuttles. While portions of the Corridor are transit rich, there remains an east-west connectivity gap, which is a primary need for this project. East-west travel demand will increase dramatically above today's levels as major new developments come online. Based on the existing conditions analysis, average transit speed by route varies widely along the Corridor demonstrating that certain segments incur significant congestion that affect operational efficiency and reliability and further the need for BRT.

Public Outreach: The project team based its outreach strategy on the awareness of the extensive outreach already undertaken with many community groups and leaders (including the Hunters Point Citizens Advisory Committee and its subcommittees) that asserted the need for BRT and shaped its eastern segment. Building on this, the team helped create the Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit Community Advisory Committee (GHCAC), with representatives from residents in both San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. Assisted by this GHCAC, the team undertook a robust outreach effort to ensure that the community was notified about the study, that a diverse group of people participated in engagement efforts, and that public comments were incorporated into the final recommendations of the Study. Outreach efforts began in the summer of 2014 with initial stakeholder meetings. A second round of outreach was conducted in October and November 2014, and a final round of outreach was conducted in April 2015. The GHCAC presided over extensive publicly-noticed community discussions and presentations, used as a public forum, and supplemental points of community discussion were provided with the support of the Hunters Point CAC as well as through public meetings led by the project team itself. As the findings and recommendations were presented to various community residents, business, and property owners, and as facilitated through the GHCAC meetings, a consistent set of feedback and concerns were expressed which were considered within the context of this Study and will be taken into account during future stages such as the environmental review and preliminary design. Little Hollywood and Visitation Valley residents, along with many members of the GHCAC, expressed opposition to the baseline and BRT alternatives that route through Little Hollywood on Blanken and Lathrop Avenues due to concerns about bus frequency and related impacts of safety, congestion, and noise, the likelihood that the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) would remove on-street parking to facilitate bus circulation, and the conversion of two-way streets to one-way streets.

Previous Planning Efforts: Geneva Avenue has been routinely identified as a high-priority transit improvement corridor in planning and policy studies by the City/County of San Francisco and partner

agencies in San Mateo County. The following studies identify Geneva-Harney BRT as an essential element of improved transit service in the area and guide the project purpose and bolster the project need: Visitacion Valley/Schlage Lock Plan (San Francisco Planning Department, 2014), Bayview Transportation Improvements Project (San Francisco Public Works, 2013), San Francisco Transportation Plan 2040 (Transportation Authority, 2013), Plan Bay Area (Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 2013), Bi-County Transportation Study (Transportation Authority, 2013), Daly City General Plan (City of Daly City, 2013), Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (City of Daly City, 2013), Bayshore Intermodal Station Access Study (Transportation Authority, 2012), Candlestick Point and Hunters Point Shipyard Phase II Transportation Plan (San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure) and Fehr & Peers 2010), Brisbane Baylands Specific Plan (Universal Paragon Corporation, 2011), Transit Effectiveness Project (SFMTA, 2009), Bayshore Community-Based Transportation Plan (City/County of Associated Governments, 2008), and Countywide Transportation Plan (Transportation Authority, 2004).

Study Findings: The Study found that the proposed Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit project closes a key rapid transit gap in network. The new connection provides a 30-40% travel time reduction over today. Transit improvements lead to increased ridership (6-8% increase over the baseline), and bicycle improvements on the corridor provide a new direct connection for bicyclists. Additional findings include determination that the impact of the lane conversion on Geneva (as part of Muni Forward) are less than expected. While all BRT options are feasible, further refinement is needed before selection, particularly in the eastern segment. Substantial trade-offs between the Blanken Avenue & Beatty Avenue options include direct access to Caltrain versus direct route between east and west of corridor, better transit reliability versus a change in community roadways, substantial community concern with couplet options, the timeline for vacation or replacement of Beatty Avenue in the context of a 15-20 year investment, and the magnitude of heavy truck traffic and potential conflicts between trucks and bus rapid transit.

Study Recommendations: The Study developed and analyzed the near-term alternatives using an evaluation framework approved by the GHCAC. Given the variation on the character and impact of alternatives, particularly in the eastern-most section of the study area, the study report outlines the factors that will require more detailed design, technical analysis, stakeholder and community engagement, and interagency coordination before a specific alternative can be recommended for implementation.

Table 1: Near-Term Alternatives

	Geneva Avenue	Bayshore	Little Hollywood
Alternative 1	4-Lane General Purpose/Side Running BRT	4-Lane General Purpose/Side Running BRT	Blanken/Lathrop Couplet Option 1
Alternative 2	2-Lane General Purpose/Center Running BRT	4-Lane General Purpose/Side Running BRT	Blanken/Lathrop Couplet Option 2
Alternative 3	2-Lane General Purpose/Center Running BRT	4-Lane General Purpose/Side Running BRT	Beatty

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend adoption of the Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study Final Report, as requested.
2. Recommend adoption of the Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study Final Report, with modifications.
3. Defer action, pending additional information or further staff analysis.

CAC POSITION

None. This item was included on the CAC's June 25, 2015 agenda as an information item. The Geneva-Harney BRT CAC met on June 25 and unanimously recommended adoption of the final report.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

None.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend adoption of the Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study Final Report.

Enclosure:

1. Draft Geneva-Harney Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study