



Broadway Transit Urban Circulator Study

PURPOSE & NEED FRAMEWORK

April 30, 2014 version

During the planning stages of a transportation project, it is important to outline the problems to be addressed and the goals set by the community, to develop a purpose and need statement for the project. A project need is the transportation deficiency or problem that is identified, and a project purpose is the set of objectives that will be met to address the transportation deficiency or problem. The purpose and need statement documents the problem to be addressed in the alternatives analysis and environmental review process and serves as the basis for the development of project goals, objectives, and evaluation measures. A well-defined purpose and need statement is critical to project planning because it helps define the scope of a project, guide the development and consideration of alternatives, identify potential environmental mitigation measures, provide legally defensible transportation and environmental decisions, and justify projects for programming. Though refinements may occur during future study, the purpose and need serves as an analytical framework for the project as it moves forward.

Statement of Need

The Broadway Corridor is a multimodal, well-travelled corridor within the city of Oakland stretching from Jack London Square to Interstate 580 (I-580). Two regional transit providers serve the corridor: Alameda – Contra Costa (AC) Transit, and the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART). These services provide mobility for residents of Oakland, communities throughout the East Bay and beyond. Thousands of trips pass through the city of Oakland daily along this corridor. The corridor spans several neighborhoods such as Jack London Square, Old Oakland, City Center, Lake Merritt, Uptown, Koreatown/ Northgate, Valdez Triangle, Piedmont Avenue, Mid-Broadway, and the Kaiser and Alta Bates Medical Centers. These districts are disjointed from one another due, in part, to physical barriers such as I-580 and Interstate 880 (I-880) and stretches of inactivity along Broadway that discourage travel by walking or biking.

In 2004, a feasibility study was undertaken to examine options for improved transit connectivity between Jack London Square (located south of I-880) and the downtown commercial districts north of I-880. The Jack London BART Feasibility Study was initiated to determine the feasibility of constructing an additional BART station near Jack London Square. A variety of transit alternatives were considered and the study identified a streetcar as the preferred mode of transit to connect Jack London Square to Downtown Oakland.

Following the 2004 Jack London BART Feasibility Study, the City of Oakland initiated operation of the Broadway Shuttle (the “B”) in 2010, to connect all of the transit stations





Broadway Transit Urban Circulator Study

and commercial districts between Jack London Square and Grand Avenue/27th Street with frequent circulator bus service. Since 2010, the specially branded shuttle bus has been operated by AC Transit and supported by public grants and private sponsorships, and has proven to be very popular with local residents and riders, carrying approximately 2,440 weekday riders. The “B” was seen both as a way to provide the connections between JLS and the districts along Broadway, and also as a way to provide an interim circulator service that could demonstrate the feasibility and need for the streetcar line recommended in the 2004 study.

While the “B” provides commuter connections and circulation along a portion of Broadway, the “B” currently does not operate the full length of the corridor to 40th St. An expanded transit circulator is needed from 40th St. through to Jack London Square to provide additional direct connectivity between major and emerging destinations to improve access and mobility. As new areas develop, such as the Broadway-Valdez area where the Specific Plan calls for 1,800 new residential units and over 3 million square feet of new office and retail development, additional service will be needed to connect these new destinations and neighborhoods to Downtown Oakland, Jack London Square, existing BART stations, and major AC Transit bus routes. This is a high priority for the City of Oakland.

The need for the urban circulator project is driven by a variety of transportation network deficiencies and land use challenges:

- **Lack of a comprehensive circulator service** - The corridor is well-served by transit services that are oriented to moving people throughout the greater East Bay and the region and which serve portions of the corridor, but there is not a comprehensive circulator service connecting all of the seven major transportation hubs in the study area (Jack London Square Amtrak, Jack London Square Ferry Terminal, AC Transit Uptown Transit Center and four BART stations) with the full Broadway Corridor. AC Transit operates both local (East Bay) and regional (transbay) bus services through and across the corridor, and BART provides regional rail service through the corridor, with two stations along Broadway. The current “B” circulator service covers a portion of the corridor, but does not serve its entire length. Further, the current “B” has different service patterns on weekdays and weekends, and has limited stops closest to the Broadway/Valdez area.
- **Lack of connectivity to emerging development** - Currently, no single regular transit line connects the emerging development in the Jack London Square Area with the emerging development in the Broadway/Valdez portion of Broadway from 27th St. to 40th St, which is a specific focus for the City of Oakland. Local bus Line 51A is the most continuous route through most of the Broadway corridor, however it does not directly tie together the Jack London Square area with the Broadway/Valdez area.





Broadway Transit Urban Circulator Study

- **Traffic congestion impacts on transit** – The current “B” service, as well as many of AC Transit’s routes, are frequently delayed due to traffic congestion, lack of transit priority measures, problems caused by limited rights-of-way, and side friction created by auto parking maneuvers. All this has the potential to adversely affect the reliability of the “B” service and AC Transit bus service and to increase travel time delays, particularly in those segments of the corridor where there is only one lane of traffic in each direction, or in areas such as the Embarcadero, Jack London Square, the MacArthur Transit Village and College Avenue. General traffic delays outside the corridor can also lead to delays in AC Transit service within the corridor, given that many AC Transit lines extend for miles outside of the corridor through other cities and activity centers.
- **Lack of pedestrian and bicycle amenities** – In most segments of the corridor, the streetscape that exists has been in place for at least 40 years, since BART construction in the 1960s and 70s. Bicycle riding has increased since that time, and in a few places bike lanes have been striped within the existing street right-of-way. A comprehensive review and reallocation of streetspace has not been performed, however, taking into account more current thinking about the allocation of space for pedestrian and bicycle amenities. In support of alternative modes and in accordance with City General Plan policies, improvements in safety for pedestrians and cyclists are needed, particularly in the downtown and Chinatown areas, and along the crossing arterial streets.

In addition to addressing Broadway’s transit needs, the city of Oakland desires to further support moderate to high-density mixed use transit-oriented development and stimulate additional pedestrian-friendly business activity along the corridor. The City’s General Plan acknowledges that Oakland is at the convergence of several local and regional routes, and one of downtown Oakland’s major assets is its seven regional transit stations: Jack London Square Amtrak, SF Bay Ferry Terminal, AC Transit Uptown Transit Center and four BART stations (12th Street/City Center; 19th Street, Lake Merritt and MacArthur). Yet despite the existence of these major transit hubs and several vibrant commercial districts, development on Broadway is disjointed and the area is not reaching its potential as a focal point for large-scale mixed-use development and a retail destination. A key General Plan policy goal is to integrate transportation and land use planning. Transit oriented districts are designated around both downtown BART stations, and in the Broadway Valdez Specific Plan area, the transition of the Plan Area from the automobile-centric commercial strip development into a more balanced mix of uses appropriate to the renaissance of Oakland’s Downtown is also a stated goal.





Broadway Transit Urban Circulator Study

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Broadway Transit Urban Circulator Project is to connect residents, employees, and visitors of the full corridor to major employment and commercial districts, downtown neighborhoods, activity centers, tourist destinations, and the regional transit network while promoting economic development and the revitalization of Downtown Oakland. The project has several overarching goals:

- Improve the quality of transit service in general in the corridor.
- Provide convenient, frequent urban circulator service in the corridor.
- Provide safe, multimodal travel options.
- Support economic and community development.
- Support environmental sustainability and enhanced public health.
- Enhance social equity.
- Deliver a project that is cost-effective, feasible, and has community support.

