



September 7, 2010

Scott Haggerty, Chair  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
101 Eighth Street  
Oakland, California 94607

Dear Chair Haggerty and Commissioners,

Last year several Commissioners as well as BART board members expressed concern that BART's proposed tram to the Oakland airport parking lot was not a worthwhile investment of our scarce regional transit dollars. Costs had quadrupled while the number of likely new riders had plummeted by over 80%.

Yet no agency could provide a good alternative; a good "apples-to-apples" comparison using updated data had not been done. That is why I am excited to follow up on my email and provide you a hard copy of a new study of options for the Oakland Airport Connector.

The study was conducted by Kittelson and Associates, a planning firm that has authored several national guidebooks on rail and bus operations for the Transportation Research Board and has planned transit corridors for agencies across the country. This study accurately compares four alternatives for connecting Coliseum BART to the Airport. And the results are astounding.

Back in 2002, using data that MTC has relied upon, the tax subsidy per new rider (the FTA's cost-effectiveness rating) for the project was \$9. Now, using updated data, that subsidy has risen to an astronomical \$102.74.

In other words, if we go ahead with this project, we will be asking taxpayers to pay \$408 for a family of 4 to go 3 miles. This is not a subsidy the region can afford.

The study goes into great detail and identifies reasons for this change. In short, the project has changed dramatically. The average speed of the tram is now supposed to be 23.4 mph (originally it was 50% faster); passengers will be dropped in the parking lot instead of the terminal; and fares have doubled to \$6 each way (on top of the BART fare). Long-term airport use projections are also way down.

The study also looked at alternatives that BART never studied or considered. It found that a fully-featured surface "bus rapid transit" option along Hegenberger will have shorter overall travel time due in part to the shorter walks and fewer escalators. Fares would remain \$3 each way. It will attract 60% more new riders than the tram, due to the lower fare and shorter travel time. And it does all this for \$350 million less than the tram.

A comparison table is provided below. You finally have the ability to make a decision based on clear information. You are aware of the impending \$17 billion shortfall just to maintain our existing transit

system. BART's projected shortfall alone is nearly \$7 billion. This is not the time for BART to take out at least \$105 million of debt and further threaten their core system for this project.

Finally, while jobs were not part of BART's criteria, the study did show that a surface option provides 46 permanent jobs compared to 27 permanent jobs for the tram. And short-term jobs are hard to compare since we'd have to know what MTC and BART would spend all the savings on to do a true comparison. But since BART would be relying on costly loans with significant interest, a true economic analysis – that included the cost of those loans and the BART jobs that will be lost – would likely show BART's AGT providing fewer overall jobs.

You can finally make a decision based on the apples-to-apples comparison many of you asked for. We are hoping to have an open dialogue on the study and are willing to have all of the assumptions checked and cross-checked. The goal should be 100% clarity and transparency for the public. Since the PAC meeting is taking place soon on Sept 8, I am asking you to request that staff work with us and BART to ensure the presentation on that day lays out all the facts, and all of the clear options. What we need on this issue is less heat, and much, much more light.

Please feel free to e-mail me or call 510-543-7419 to discuss the issue. A chart of the basic findings is enclosed, along with a copy of the Oakland Airport Connector Options Analysis report.

Thank You So Much,

Stuart Cohen  
Executive Director

Cc: Steve Heminger

Summary Comparisons from “Oakland Airport Connector Options Analysis”  
Final Report, Kittelson & Associates, August 2010

<b>Criteria/Factors</b>	<b>No Action (i.e. continue AirBART)</b>	<b>Rapid Bus</b>	<b>Full BRT - RapidBART</b>	<b>BART's Automated Guideway Transit (AGT)</b>
Average walking time (minutes)	4.1	4.3	4.3	6.6
Longest walking distance (ft.)	845	810	810	1410
Total Travel Time (2013)	22.5	17.2	16.2	17.2
Total Travel Time (2030)	24.1	17.8	16.7	17.2
Frequency in Minutes	10	4	4	4.6
Fare	\$3	\$3	\$3	\$6
Daily New Riders (2013, base of 2,100 existing)	0	790	980	585
Daily New Riders (2030, low airport projections, AirBART base of 3,440)	0	1140	1670	1025
Daily New Riders (2030, high airport projections, AirBART base of 4,460)	0	1700	2150	1325
Capital Cost in Millions	0	\$20m	\$125m	\$492m
Cost Per New (Incremental) Rider <sup>1</sup> using FTA Cost- Effectiveness Index	--	\$6.83	\$15.86	\$102.74
Feasibility of intermediate stops serving community and jobs	0	feasible, inexpensive	feasible, inexpensive	1 feasible, very expensive
Likely Completion Date		2012	2013	2014
Additional BART Debt	0	0	0	\$105-150 million. <sup>2</sup>
Permanent jobs created	23	46	46	18

<sup>1</sup> Using FTA cost-effectiveness index: Capital + operating cost amortized over thirty-five years, net of fares, divided by new riders.

<sup>2</sup> \$105 million assumes receipt of funding from three sources not yet approved from: the Port of Oakland, MTC and CTC (STIP funds), and from FTA's New Starts program. BART's Board has authorized up to \$150 million.

