



Memorandum

Date: September 17, 2019

To: Transportation Agency for Monterey County, Rail Policy Committee

From: Lisa Rheinheimer, Assistant General Manager, Monterey-Salinas Transit

Subject: **Status Update on Bus Rapid Transit Phase II – SURF!**

MST concluded a study in 2018 which reviewed potential options to operate buses along the congested Highway 1 corridor between Marina and Monterey. The study considered alternatives of operating buses on the highway shoulder or along the parallel Monterey Branch Rail Line. The study was entitled: Monterey Bay Area Feasibility Study of Bus Operations on State Route 1 Shoulders and Monterey Branch Line and can be viewed in its entirety on the MST website at: <https://mst.org/wp-content/media/Final-Bus-on-Shoulder-Branch-Line-Feasibility-Report-062718.pdf>

Some of the key findings of the Feasibility Study are described here:

1. There is significant Highway 1 traffic congestion in the morning and afternoon
 - a. Between 7:15 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. from Del Monte/Reservation in Marina to Del Monte in Monterey
 - b. Between 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. from Carpenter in Carmel to Fremont/California in Seaside/Sand City
2. Traffic congestion delays MST bus travel time and degrades reliability
 - a. Without traffic congestion, bus travel time between Marina and Seaside/Sand City should only take 9 minutes
 - b. Actual bus travel time ranges from 11-30 minutes in the morning and from 12-27 minutes in the evening
3. Traffic congestion will worsen with the ongoing redevelopment of the former Fort Ord and surrounding areas.
4. Highway 1 shoulders lack the width and structural section to support bus-on-shoulder operations without significant construction.
5. A busway on the Monterey Branch Line shows promise in terms of transit performance.

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- a. Segment I – Option I-B could be a good initial busway project – yielding the greatest time savings benefits as well as acceptable cost-to-benefit evaluations.

Using this study as a stepping stone, MST identified \$100,000 in State Local Partnership Program funding combined with TAMC's Measure X funding to move forward and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for environmental and preliminary design services. The RFP defined the project limits as generally between Palm Avenue in Marina and Contra Costa in Seaside/Sand City along the TAMC-owned rail line right-of-way. Working with TAMC staff, the project also considers environmental review of the intersection at Fremont-Del Monte-California-Monterey Road.

The below visualization was prepared as a part of the Feasibility Study:



MST received one proposal from a qualified consulting team. MST staff is checking references and conducting an independent cost estimate to verify that the cost proposal is in line with current market conditions. The proposal has also been reviewed by several MST staff as well as TAMC staff. The State funds come with a timely-use-of-funds condition and MST will be required to award a contract by December 2019.

During the environmental and preliminary engineering phase, MST and TAMC will conduct extensive outreach to the community and local jurisdictions so that everyone has an opportunity to have their voice heard about this important project.

Additionally, MST and TAMC will work together to ensure that the project is designed in a way which limits damage of rail infrastructure, enhances bicycle infrastructure connectivity, and delivers a key project in the Measure X program.