

GEARY BUS RAPID TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS



SFMTA



LIGHT RAIL ROADMAP
Geary BRT Citizens Advisory Committee
April 30, 2009

- ❖ 2003 Transportation Sales Tax (Prop K) Expenditure Plan neither supports nor precludes light rail on Geary
 - identifies bus rapid transit as the city's preferred transit expansion strategy
 - requires that a bus rapid transit project on Geary be “rail-ready”
 - considers funding to study light rail on Geary in Priority 3
- ❖ BRT designs will accommodate the physical dimensions of a light rail vehicle in order to reduce disruption
 - vertical clearance and lane-widths
 - curves and tangent lines
 - superelevation and slope of roadway and platforms
- ❖ Purpose and Need for BRT cannot be met by waiting for LRT
 - better serve *existing* transit riders
 - address *current* service conditions (characterized by poor reliability, long travel times, shorter span of service)



GOALS of the LIGHT RAIL ROADMAP

- ❖ Describe **range of past analyses** conducted with respect to rail on Geary
- ❖ Outline **policy and funding prerequisites** in developing a rail line on Geary, without suggesting or prohibiting its implementation
- ❖ Outline **required analysis areas and project phases** for developing a rail line on Geary, without suggesting or prohibiting its implementation
- ❖ Describe **range of potential benefits and impacts** of a rail line on Geary
- ❖ Update the **relative costs and transit projections** of rail in comparison to BRT



PAST CORRIDOR STUDIES and EFFORTS

- ❖ Geary Transit Task Force, 1987-89
 - led to rail advocacy in Proposition B Expenditure Plan, 1989
- ❖ Geary Corridor System Planning Study, 1993-95
 - evaluated multiple options (31) for transit improvement on Geary
 - recommended environmental review, including two LRT alternatives, which was not advanced By the Public Transportation Commission due to lack of a viable funding plan
 - BRT not yet widely implemented internationally & not yet recognized in the US
- ❖ Four Corridor Plan, 1994-95
 - evaluated potential rail development on 4 corridors citywide, at cost of \$2 billion (in 1995\$)
- ❖ Prop K Expenditure Plan, 2003
 - requires that a bus rapid transit project on Geary be “rail-ready”
 - considers funding to study light rail on Geary in Priority 3
 - recommends development of multiple BRT lines and other multi-modal investments citywide rather than a single rail line on Geary



PRIORITIZING FUNDS—federal & local

❖ Federal

- FTA's New Starts program offers best option for leveraging project costs
- few projects receive more than 50% of capital costs due to high competition
- New Starts program currently has a significant backlog of rail projects awaiting funding
- New Starts project approval and funding process is lengthy (e.g. Central Subway)
- to be eligible for federal funding, projects must be included in adopted, financially-constrained long-range regional transportation plan

❖ Local

- Prop K transportation sales tax revenues are most common source of local funds to leverage for capital improvements
- Prop K NEP (2003) considers \$55 million for studying rail on Geary *in Priority 3*
- Priority 3 projects receive funding if/when all Priority 1 AND 2 projects are implemented, or implemented at lower costs or are cancelled
- SFMTA SRTP (2008) already identifies rail on Geary as a priority for long-term development (would need to develop a viable funding plan)

- ❖ MTC's Regional Rail Plan (2007, 2050 horizon)
 - takes long-term vision of potential rail projects in the Bay Area
 - contemplates \$50 billion array of rail projects over 40 years on major regional corridors

- ❖ MTC's Regional Transit Expansion Program, Resolution 3434 (first adopted in 2001)
 - sets priorities for seeking federal transit funds for Bay Area projects
 - Central Subway project is the only Muni rail network expansion described
 - costs of regional program over 25-yrs total \$17.4B; \$3.8B funding shortfall
 - significant progress is required on existing projects
 - substantial new revenue sources are necessary to advance projects

- ❖ Regional Transportation Plan (2009, 2035 horizon)
 - describes regional growth and investment program for Bay Area
 - next update in 2012/13

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

- ❖ Environmental impact analysis – state and federal
 - separate environmental clearance would be required in order to secure funding
- ❖ Design & alignment
 - surface-to-subway is most likely alignment, but not clear without more detailed analysis
 - location of subway portal unclear, though likely somewhere between Buchanan & Gough
 - if underground, route is unclear (under Market Street to TBT? SOMA to TBT?)
- ❖ Cost benefit analysis
 - rail service could generate more ridership on Geary lines
 - impacts of rail would be more substantial than BRT, and would last longer
 - benefits to other modes would be reduced with an underground project, or would require greater funding, design attention
 - timeline for development must be weighed against the need for near-term improvement in Geary service
- ❖ Corridor-wide service plan
 - rail service would require reorganization of transit services in the corridor

CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ timeline for development must be weighed against the need for near-term improvement in Geary service
- ❖ future project development would have to address key public concerns and build corridor & citywide consensus
- ❖ project would have to compete with other local and regional priorities for major transit expansion
- ❖ realistic funding plan would need to be developed:
 - new local funds for project development
 - new local and regional funds to fulfill existing capital needs and backlog
 - new local and federal funds for project implementation
 - new local funds for increased operating and maintenance costs; system impacts could be substantial

CONCLUSIONS, continued

- ❖ several policy actions would need to be pursued:
 - prioritization at the local level (Countywide Transportation Plan, SRTP)
 - add Geary LRT to Resolution 3434
 - add Geary LRT to Regional Transportation Plan
 - local actions to support potential funding plan approach

- ❖ separate analysis would need to define:
 - potential design & alignment
 - full range of costs, benefits, impacts and mitigations
 - potential service plan for LRT and local/express services in the corridor

QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?



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