Request for Proposals

for a

Transit Service Assessment Study

of

Fremont and Newark

Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District

July 28, 2003
Independent Service Assessment Study Of
Fremont and Newark

Introduction

AC Transit seeks consultant services to work with AC Transit and the communities of Fremont and Newark to identify the transportation needs of the residents of these cities and assess and recommend improvements or changes to the existing transit service that falls within the financial resources prescribed for the area. Fremont and Newark comprise AC Transit's Special Transit District 2, which is a separate and distinct funding sub-area within the overall AC Transit service area. The Consultant will review previous studies and documentation about the area, evaluate AC Transit service, and recommend state of the art alternatives to current service. The Consultant would also prepare a report of best practices regarding flexible service in other areas of the United States geographically and demographically similar to District 2. The consultant will also develop possible service alternatives specifically tailored to the local communities of Fremont and Newark, which may be operated by or brokered by AC Transit. Evaluation of the service should also be based upon stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and public hearings. The consultant would also identify resources needed to implement various alternatives presented and identify tools AC Transit and both municipalities could use to improve bus service.

Background

The Cities of Fremont and Newark are located in the San Francisco Bay Area, in Southern Alameda County. The combined geographic area of both cities is 107 square miles. During the last 20 years the area has been characterized by high growth. From 1980 to 2000 the City of Fremont grew 54.2% from 131,945 to 203,413 people, while Newark population increased 24% from 32,126 to 42,471. In December 2000, partly in response to this rapid population growth and development of new economic centers in this area, AC Transit initiated an 18-month planning process, which included a comprehensive market research study of the area. Based on this study, AC Transit Implemented the Fremont-Newark Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP service was designed to increase service levels in District 2 commensurate with projected increased revenue for the area, while also addressing changes in residential and employment growth, and travel patterns. A key consideration of the TDP was the level of anticipated funding available; at the time, financial projections assumed that revenues would continue to grow above the 2000 levels. Local travel patterns, usage of existing bus system, projected changes in population and employment, and future development were factors that were also taken into consideration in the development of the new route structure, hours of service and frequency of bus routes.
The TDP network is comprised of a route network structured to serve current and projected travel demand in southern Alameda County. The TDP is a multi-layered transportation concept that includes school service, fixed routes, circulators and flexible service. Most local routes in the cities of Fremont and Newark were shifted from residential streets onto principal thoroughfares. Service was also introduced in new neighborhoods and at employment centers that were previously without service. The TDP resulted in a 50% increase in service hours for the cities of Fremont and Newark and improved weekday schedules by providing bus trips every 30 minutes during peak commute periods throughout the basic network and extending service until at least after 9:00 p.m. in the evening. On weekends, bus route frequencies were increased from 60 minutes to 30 minutes. The TDP provided for approximately 1,200 weekday platform equivalent hours (WPEs) per day for the fixed route component and contemplated the use of flexible service, but did not provide a specific description of the type of flexible service suitable for the area.

In order to inform its stakeholders and to adjust schedules and/or routing, a comprehensive ridership and schedule adherence survey was conducted in October of 2002 to determine to what extent the TDP, in its first phase of implementation, had met its project goals. Data on ridership and schedule adherence was used to update the local transit network and schedules, to evaluate whether the new system addressed the increased demand of the industrial sector, and to determine if ridership increased or decreased. The data showed that ridership increased significantly on weekends and for school trips and decreased slightly for weekday trips. It is likely that the decline and subsequent of job losses in the technology sector, a large portion of the South Bay economy, contributed to the loss of weekday ridership. Analysis shows that ridership per hour is comparable to areas with similar demographics, population density and topography. However, net ridership went up only two percent and did not meet the previous ridership estimate of 13 percent as outlined in the TDP.

Based on declining revenue since 2000, and continuing poor economic projections, the service plan must be re-evaluated at lower funding levels now and at even lower funding projections in the near future. Reductions to service levels, which will be implemented in December 2003, reduce service primarily through frequency or route elimination rather than through significant route restructuring. Further service reductions could include route restructuring, flexible service or any other appropriate method to maximize passenger convenience within current and projected financial constraints. Any future service reduction will occur in collaboration with AC Transit and the cities of Fremont and Newark.

**Objectives of the Transit Service Assessment Study of Fremont and Newark**

AC Transit, in collaboration with the Cities of Fremont and Newark, expects the study to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the transit service priorities of the various segments of the community;
2. Recommend transit service changes to develop a relevant system of transit service within existing financial constraints, and with assumptions of projected growth (service level assumptions to be determined by AC Transit and City staffs for Fremont and Newark). Any recommended changes should be evaluated as service operated by or brokered by AC Transit;

3. Recommend options for providing transit service that may include a mix such as traditional grid and flexible transit service suitable to the needs of the community.

Consultant Analysis

- Timeline, with milestones, for completion of Scope of Work
- Summary and findings regarding transit service background information
- Goals and objectives of local ridership, municipalities, and AC Transit based on background information
- Best Practices Summary of Flexible Service with examples from other areas with similar demographic and geographic characteristics that also includes information about the logistics and financial resources needed to apply those best practices to (1) AC Transit service operating in Fremont and Newark and for (2) AC Transit brokering such services.
- Development and management of a public involvement program with reporting methodologies
- Draft report of the public involvement program and findings
- Draft summary and analysis of current transit service
- Draft report of recommended transit service alternatives
- Draft final report
- Final Report

Future AC Transit Analysis

- The final report will be used to measure expected results of the recommended service changes against actual results when implemented.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant will be responsible for completing the following tasks within the project timeline and budget provided below.

The Consultant shall propose an approach to analyze current raw data and summarized reports about District 2 in addition to a methodology for assessing whether the current service meets the needs of bus riders and non-riders. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of AC Transit, City of Fremont and City of Newark staff members shall manage the evaluation, and AC Transit staff shall be the point of contact for the Consultant. All service provided by AC Transit in District 2 must be evaluated, including Transbay and school tripper service. The methodology shall include a public
involvement component soliciting the opinions of riders and non-riders through focus groups and a possible qualitative analysis survey. The research and analysis of the transit system must include service alternatives, an evaluation and recommendation for service priorities, schedule and route enhancements, equipment recommendations, and infrastructure improvements. As part of the recommendations, the Consultant must prepare a best practice report of flexible service currently operated in communities of land use and population density similar to Fremont and Newark. The recommendations must also include information about the logistics and financial resources needed to (1) apply those best practices at AC Transit or (2) via the District brokering the service out to a contracted service provider. Recommendations for each city shall be developed including but not limited to Transit Demand Management (TDM) programs, suggested land use policies, and other tools that can promote transit usage and benefit consumers.

**Project Budget**

All project costs including the labor, time, materials and all other deliverables listed in the scope of work shall not exceed $100,000. In order to ensure that the project stays within budget, the Consultant shall be required to provide AC Transit staff with progress reports for each project milestone, based on completion of tasks, including the % of budget expended. In the event that a budget overage is identified, the TAC will begin considering possible cost cutting measures and/or a contract amendment.

The budget is $100,000. The consultant’s submitted work plan must be completed within this budget.

**Project Time-Line**

This work must be completed within 180 days of AC Transit’s Notice-to-proceed. The Consultant will provide the TAC with a project schedule with milestone dates.

**Description of Project Work Tasks, Deliverables and Budgets**

**Task 1. Project Management**

The Consultant shall manage all aspects of this assessment study. In the role of Project Manager, the Consultant shall attend all TAC and Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings in District 2 as needed. The Consultant will also be responsible for negotiating with all subcontractors or temporary employees that the Consultant deems necessary to complete the remaining tasks as outlined below.

**Task 2. Research Background Information and Provide a Written Summary**

The Consultant shall review previous studies, public documents, and information distributed through local media outlets concerning transit service within District 2. The
Consultant shall provide the TAC with a written, annotated summary of this research. The Consultant will provide a summary and make findings based on this research.

Deliverables

a. Summary and findings document.
b. Restate goals and objectives for transit service in District 2.

Task 3. Flexible Services Best Practices Document and Recommendations Regarding Applicability for Fremont/Newark

The Consultant shall research, identify and document transit agencies that provide non-ADA paratransit (flexible) service to members of the general public, including dial-a-ride, deviated fixed route, and/or any other non-ADA paratransit service that is or is not combined with fixed route service. This report of best practices should also include the cost per passenger and cost per revenue and platform hour to provide service, and the number of riders per weekday, Saturday and Sunday. Additionally, demographic and United States census population data should be provided for the jurisdiction serving each community where flexible service is profiled. All agencies used as examples of flexible service should operate this service in areas that are demographically and geographically similar to District 2. Finally, the document should include an analysis of logistics and cost regarding applying each best practice to AC Transit in Fremont and Newark. The logistics and cost analysis should include consideration of AC Transit's scheduling and operations system capabilities and their compatibility with other systems that may be needed to apply each best practice. This document will be used to provide the residents of Fremont and Newark with options for service changes during the public involvement process.

Deliverables

a. Draft report of best practices in flexible transportation:
   (1) identification of non-ADA paratransit service,
   (2) identification of ridership data and cost per revenue and platform hour for each agency cited, and
   (3) demographic and United States census population data for each agency cited.
   (4) logistics and cost analysis regarding applying each best practice to AC Transit operations or as brokered to a contractor

Task 4. Finalize And Conduct Public Involvement Process

The Consultant shall propose a method of executing a public involvement process ensuring that local community interests are represented from both municipalities. The Consultant shall work with the TAC to tailor the public involvement process proposed to the needs of the community by interviewing city staff and key stakeholders in Fremont.
and Newark. The local populous will be represented through focus groups or any means deemed appropriate by the consultant and agreed to by AC Transit and the Cities of Fremont and Newark. The results of this work must be summarized in a second draft report to be provided to the TAC for review, and those results will inform the remaining tasks within this work scope.

Deliverables

a. Develop public involvement and reporting methodologies.
b. Manage public involvement process.
c. Draft report that summarizes findings.

Task 5. Analysis of Local Service in District 2

The Consultant will be responsible for analyzing local bus service and providing a draft synthesis of findings. The draft document will identify service gaps that have been highlighted by the community. This analysis will be performed following a public involvement process that would identify the interests of all segments of the population in both municipalities represented.

AC Transit will provide the Consultant with all studies conducted by the District to date, public timetables, headway sheets, graphical analyses, and operator paddles. If needed, staff from the cities of Fremont and Newark could provide the Consultant with transit-related data such as policies, land and programmed capital improvement projects.

Deliverables:

a. Draft summary and analysis of current transit service.

Task 6. Develop New Approaches to Providing Transit Service in District 2

The Consultant shall review all data collected within Tasks 1-5 to develop strategies for providing transit service appropriate to District 2. These approaches must be described in a draft report. A summary table arranging each strategy/approach according to funding and sustainability must accompany the draft report. The table should identify which approaches are more or less likely to be implemented within budget, District and municipal constraints.

The Consultant shall also be responsible for researching a cost-effective means of providing demand-response transit service in suitable areas as identified in the above-mentioned tasks. Transportation resources should be identified including, but not limited to, UC Berkeley Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways (PATH) program's research into automated dispatching and Tri-Delta Transit’s ADA semi-automated paratransit dispatching program.
a. Draft report of recommended transit service alternatives.

Task 7. Draft Final Report Summarizing Various Service Alternatives (30 copies)

Following completion of all above-mentioned tasks, the Consultant shall be responsible for identifying and summarizing service alternatives based on input from AC Transit, city staff, key stakeholders, and local communities in the draft report. All deliverables completed for the Work Scope shall be included as chapters in the draft final report. The draft report shall also include recommendations for monitoring the progress of recommended service changes.

Deliverables

a. Draft final report incorporating final versions of all draft summaries and reports submitted in the above-mentioned tasks.

Task 8 Final Report (15 copies)

Once all collaborating entities have reviewed and commented on the draft final report, the Consultant shall be responsible for incorporating any and all final comments and/or corrections into one final transit service assessment study report. The Consultant shall provide 5 copies of this final report to AC Transit, five copies to the City of Fremont, and 5 copies to the city of Newark.

Minimum Qualifications

The Consultant should have proven experience in transit research, service design and schedule analysis similar to those listed in this RFP. The consultant should also provide a minimum of three examples of work products directly related to the requirements of this scope and references related to those three projects. Each work sample should include a client reference.