



Redevelopment Division
Planning and Development Department

Caltrans District 4- Local Assistance
Tiep Dang, Project Manager
Jo Ann Cullom, Environmental Coordinator
Oakland, CA 94623

December 3, 2002

**Subject: Redevelopment Improvements at the Berkeley Rail Stop (STPL-5057 (009)),
Parking Impacts**

Dear Mr. Dang and Ms. Cullom:

This letter fulfills the parking study requirements of the PES for capital improvements at the Rail Stop (STP-5057 (009)) in West Berkeley. The project consists of a series of capital improvements intended to create a safer and better-utilized rail stop and transit plaza. The basic infrastructure configuration and operational characteristics of the project already exist. The capital improvements described below are required to improve passenger safety and security, provide smooth connections with other transportation modes such as bicycling and walking, and to allow full and equal access for people with disabilities.

Rail Stop

Improvements include additional nighttime safety lighting, access improvements to and from the public streets and sidewalks to the level transit and train platform, and signs showing the location of the train stop and the bus/Para-transit/shuttle stops. The train platform will stretch into a ten-foot wide multi-use path on the north and south ends of the station from Hearst Street to Addison Street. This “trail-alongside-rail” route is to be separated from the train tracks by a six-foot high ornamental fence that may or may not be able to include fifteen bottlebrush trees on the northeastern side of the Union Pacific tracks. This portion of the project is the focus of ongoing discussions with Union Pacific, and is included here a potential project element (with trees, or with replacement trees, or with no trees) for environmental review purposes.

The project will include a Berkeley signboard, or information kiosk, as well as an Amtrak “real time” schedule board with up-to-the-minute train schedules, ticketing, and fare information. The kiosk will give directions to the nearest BART station and AC Transit routes. Posted maps will show the location and routes to nearby public facilities and places of interest.

Transit Plaza

Access to the transit plaza/train stop platform will be improved for passengers from the three AC Transit lines that serve the immediate project area. This includes repaving and striping for the circulation lanes and the on-site parking, widening of existing sidewalks and the creation of ramps to improve disabled access, signs to direct patrons to the transit stop, and other connections for bicyclists with the nearby bike lanes. Also included are pavement and curb

improvements to the public parking for Amtrak patrons, bike parking, bike lockers, and public telephones.

Public Participation

The West Berkeley Project Area Committee (PAC) is charged with assisting the Berkeley Redevelopment Agency in the completion of the West Berkeley Redevelopment Projects. This Committee has served as the lead body for the Berkeley Rail Stop/Transit Plaza project. This group consists of appointed residents, businesspersons, or members of an existing organization within the project area. Additionally, a series of workshops have provided a venue for community members to offer input regarding the scope and design of projects in the area. The Committee has endorsed the rail stop and transit plaza design and has directed the release of all accompanying environmental documents.

Conclusion

The project is designed to encourage and increase both rail and transit use and includes provisions for bicycle racks and other amenities to encourage bike access to the rail stop / transit plaza. The project supports various policies in the Berkeley Bicycle Plan, specifically policies 1.5, 2.1 and 2.5. The project has been designed with the assistance of AC Transit in order to ensure that the needs and policies of AC Transit are supported. The proposed project is consistent with the Berkeley General Plan, Redevelopment Area Plan, and West Berkeley Plan.

There will be no substantial increase in traffic as a consequence of the completion of the proposed project. The basic operational characteristics of the project already exist. Three bus lines and one shuttle currently serve the Rail Stop / Transit Plaza and no increases in the existing transit service are contemplated or necessitated by this project. No additional parking is required.

The proposed project will not generate traffic that will exceed service standards established by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency.

The proposed project will not create or increase hazards due to design features, because the present circulation pattern for busses and cars is unaltered by the proposed project.

The proposed project does not alter existing emergency access that is adequate for emergency vehicle access. The proposed project site plan has been reviewed and approved by the Berkeley Fire and Police Departments.

The planned improvements to the rail stop / transit plaza will decrease the number of former “regular” car parking spaces immediately adjacent to the rail stop from 33 to 24. The City requested and obtained approval of this new design configuration that would include two new American with Disabilities Act (ADA) required spaces for people with disabilities. City engineers, Caltrans, and the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority all approved this change. Overall, the project will increase accessibility to the rail stop by both transit and bicycle by streamlining existing circulation and adding bike racks and amenities that do not presently exist.

Maps and photos of the site are attached for your information. It is our analysis that this project is consistent with all relevant Berkeley plans, and will be of great benefits to the Rail Stop and Transit Plaza itself as well as nearby areas.

I hope this summary provides the necessary information for approval of the project. Please call me at 510/ 981-7520 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Iris Starr, AICP
Redevelopment Coordinator

Date



Accessibility improvements needed in the Transit Plaza and at the Rail Stop

Recent photos of the Rail Stop Project Area.

