

# Memorandum

To: Chair and Commissioners

Date: March 23, 2005

From: Diane C. Eidam  
Executive Director

File No: Reference # 2.2b.(2)  
ACTION

Ref: **Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Fremont to Warm Springs Extension**

**Issue:** Should the Commission comment on the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) District's Fremont to Warm Springs Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on its proposed \$678 million (in 2004 dollars) 2-station, 5.4-mile extension of the BART system from Fremont to Warm Springs in Alameda County?

**Recommendation:** Commission staff recommends that the Commission not make any comments. The Commission adopted, as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, its findings in September 2003 on the Final Environmental Impact Report.

The Warm Springs Extension (WSX) was originally approved by BART as a state and locally funded project. Recent changes in state transportation priorities have resulted in BART preparing an EIS, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), so that it can become eligible for federal funds. The NEPA environmental phase is expected to be completed in 2005. The Design-build procurement process will begin in 2006. Design-build implementation is expected to be completed in 2010 .

## **Background:**

Only two alternatives are analyzed in the Draft EIS: the No-Build Alternative and the WSX Alternative.

### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative, required by NEPA, allows decision-makers to compare the impacts of the WSX Alternative to the impacts of not approving the action. In the Draft EIS, the No-Build Alternative represents the consequences of deciding not to construct a project. It should be pointed out that the BART Board adopted the WSX Alternative in June 2003 as a state- and locally funded project without federal involvement. If the No-Build Alternative were selected as the outcome of the EIS evaluation, BART could continue with construction of the 2003 Adopted Project, when sufficient state and local funding become available, probably at a substantially later date.

### **Warm Springs Extension (WSX) Alternative**

The WSX Alternative alignment would generally parallel portions of the UP railroad corridor, which contains the former Western Pacific (WP) and former Southern Pacific (SP) railroad tracks, and Interstates 680 and 880 in southern Alameda County (see map). The initial segment would begin on an embankment at the southern end of the existing elevated Fremont BART Station. The alignment would pass over Walnut Avenue on an aerial structure and descend into a cut-and-cover subway north of

Stevenson Boulevard. The alignment would continue southward in the subway structure under Fremont Central Park and the eastern arm of Lake Elizabeth, and surface to grade between the former WP and SP alignments north of Paseo Padre Parkway. The alignment would pass over grade-separated Paseo Padre Parkway, and then continue southward at grade, passing under a grade-separated Washington Boulevard. From Washington Boulevard, the WSX Alternative alignment would continue at grade along the former WP alignment south to a terminus station at Warm Springs and South Grimmer Boulevards in the Warm Springs district.

Under the WSX Alternative, the estimated capital cost is \$678 million and \$8.16 million for an annual operating cost. Estimated new daily ridership on this extension in 2025 is 7,200 riders with a systemwide total net increase of 8,200. With the inclusion of the optional Irvington station, daily ridership on this extension in 2025 would increase to 9,100 with a systemwide total net increase of 10,800. The optional Irvington station would result in additional \$79 million needed for a total of \$757 million and operating costs are estimated to be \$9.49 million.

### **Areas of Known Controversy and Issues to Be Resolved**

In addition to the environmental consequences of a proposed project, Federal regulations direct federal agencies to consider in the environmental process areas of controversy known to the lead agency, including issues raised by other agencies and the public. The following areas of concern were raised:

#### Areas of Controversy

- Whether alternatives previously eliminated under CEQA may be considered reasonable under NEPA.
- Relationship of WSX Alternative to future transit-oriented development.
- Impacts of construction and maintenance dewatering on groundwater and hydrological functions.
- Effects on conservation and restoration efforts in the project area.
- Noise and vibration impacts and location of potential sound walls.
- Effects of subway construction on Fremont Central Park.
- Effects on low-income or minority populations.
- Relationship between the WSX Alternative and the Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority's Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor project.
- Cost effectiveness and funding.
- Need for the optional Irvington Station.

#### Issues to be Resolved

- Selection of a WSX alternative.
- Adoption and funding of the optional Irvington Station.
- Scheduling and coordination with Fremont's grade separations project.
- Location of replacement habitat for biological impacts.
- Land use planning efforts around the proposed Warm Springs and optional Irvington Stations.
- Site-specific implementation of noise control measures.
- Site-specific implementation of vibration control measures.

# BART FREMONT TO WARM SPRINGS EXTENSION Project Location



## Area Location

