



Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL
SUBJECT: BART PHASE II Priorities and Preferred Alternatives

FROM: Vice Mayor Carrasco
DATE: September 14, 2017

Approved

Date

9/14/17

RECOMMENDATION

Support the recommendations in the staff memo on item 6.1 in addition to mandate that VTA develop a robust outreach plan with our local business community, residents and stakeholders in multiple languages and work with the respective Council offices to address concerns.

BACKGROUND

As the Alum Rock Bus Rapid Transit Project is in its final stages I have developed lessons learned from the project. One of the lessons is that we must have honest and open communication about the real impacts of the project to our businesses. Along the Alum Rock Corridor, I have seen too many businesses fail during and after the construction. Even after VTA committed millions of dollars to subsidies for the businesses it was not enough to stop the bleeding of our economic center. There must be coordination between the council districts and VTA. Council offices know their constituents and VTA would benefit from this expertise. VTA must understand the cultural context of the neighborhoods that will be impacted to determine the best way to communicate in these neighborhoods.

Another lesson learned is the need to coordinate with the businesses on the scheduling of construction and not impose upon them. Throughout BRT construction, we repeatedly heard our businesses that the biggest disruption was construction scheduling which did not coincide with the business hours or driveways and doors blocked during business hours making it impossible for clients to access their offices. Our merchants often reported receiving construction scheduled that were inaccurate causing them to close unnecessarily. It is imperative that construction coordination take place with businesses.

Newsletters, and emails do not work. In person, communication with the owners is critical to understand the business schedule including deliveries, holiday season, and high business times such as tax season. The ability to contract with the businesses that will be impacted to offset some of the losses is another great way to work together. It is my hope that we can learn from the BRT project missteps to improve the process for the BART Phase II project.