# 3. Planning Process

The planning process for the EBOTS study began in November 2013 with an analysis of existing conditions and the beginning of the community engagement process. From there transit improvement options were identified and analyzed, reviewed with the community and revised based on their input (see **Figure 4**). During the entire process the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provided input and guidance on the project. Below is a thorough description of the process for developing the transportation options and the community engagement process.

**Figure 4: Planning Process**


## Process of Developing Options

On the outset of developing options, it was assumed that future options would complement and support existing transit operations. Initial routes and concepts for transit improvements within the EBOTS study area used a "blank slate" approach, with receptivity to ideas received from the community, as well as existing plans, future land use plans and economic development goals. A wide range of transportation technology options and improvements were screened based on distance, usage and future ridership. Information on technology options is provided in **Appendix A**. Options were evaluated and presented through community meetings, the technical advisory committee, and review by additional local professionals. Several iterations took place before the options and evaluations presented in this document were completed.

The first stage in devising new transit services for the area was to identify those streets with active land uses that would generate transit trips as well as those with potential for future job and population growth. These land uses include multifamily residential buildings, business offices, medical complexes and retail commercial facilities. The streets serving these land uses should be suitable in terms of width and traffic characteristics to be able to accommodate transit vehicles. This first round of service development concentrated on bus and small shuttle vehicles, while also considering the possible implementation of streetcars. Where possible, a series of streets was sought that would form a continuous corridor of travel. Such straight corridors are easier for patrons to understand and allow for more efficient transit operation by reducing the number of turns required.

Several north-south streets were examined as candidates for service. San Pablo Avenue is among the area's busiest thoroughfares, but it lies at the east margin of the study area and has already been the subject of transit service proposals in AC Transit's Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA). Other streets allowing for north-south continuity in the three cities are:

- Adeline Street (southern portion), Mandela Parkway, and Peralta Street in Oakland;

- Hollis Street, Shellmound Street, and West Frontage Road in Emeryville; and
- 6th and 7th Streets in Berkeley.

East-west streets in the study area (and areas further east) include:

- 2nd/3rd Street couplet, 7th/8th Street couplet, West Grand Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland;
- 40th Street, Powell Street/Stanford Avenue, 65th Street in Emeryville and parts of Oakland; and
- Ashby Avenue, Dwight Way and University Avenue in Berkeley.

Connections further north of the study area's border with the City of Albany were examined as well, but discontinuities in the street system made transit routings too circuitous. Moreover, possible termini north of this border, such as the BART stations at El Cerrito Plaza or El Cerrito Del Norte, stretch what can be served by the local transit concepts under consideration in this study. These northern points might, however, be tied to Transbay routes serving the study area. Street connections further west and south of the study area are not possible because the existing street network ends at the freeways and San Francisco Bay shoreline.

Possible terminals and destinations to be served were examined both inside and outside the study area. It is generally desirable to terminate a transit line at a point where significant trips will be generated. Given the emphasis of EBOTS routes as transit collectors and distributors, as well as short-distance connectors, a terminal or way station at a transfer point with other modes or transit lines is especially important. The key transfer points in or close to this study area include:

- Amtrak/Capital Corridor stations at Oakland Jack London Square, Emeryville, and Berkeley;
- BART station at West Oakland, with possible connections to stations outside the study area at 19th Street, MacArthur, Ashby, Downtown Berkeley, and North Berkeley;
- AC Transit Uptown Transit Center at 20th & Broadway; and
- Ferry terminal at Jack London Square (with a possible future terminal in Berkeley).

In addition to these transfer points, transit should serve important destinations in the area. They include numerous employment centers, like Pixar and Bayer, and retail centers such as the Bay Street, Powell Street and East Bay Bridge shopping centers. Major medical facilities are located mostly outside the study area and need to be tied to it, a function now handled largely through independent shuttles from BART stations; these include the Kaiser, Alta Bates Summit, and Children's Hospital complexes in Oakland. Other destinations include schools and parks.

In order to formulate transit service concepts for the EBOTS study area, the study included numerous sources of information. These sources include existing and projected patterns of development, travel desires revealed by those who responded to the study's Community Questionnaires, planning documents from the three jurisdictions, and comments expressed at the three first-round public meetings and three

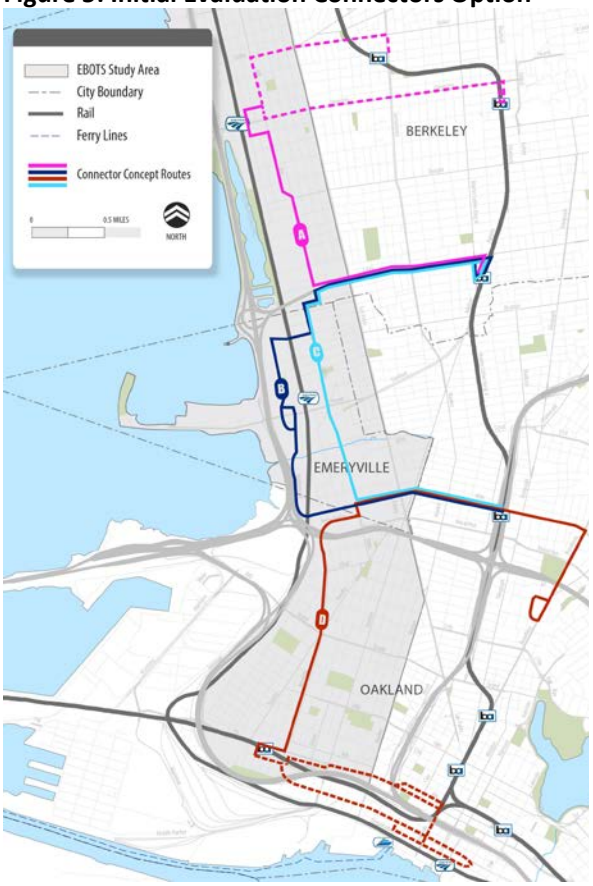
second-round public meetings. Analysis of these data was followed by reconnaissance of the study area through maps, aerial photos, and windshield surveys to better understand its existing street infrastructure and surrounding built environment.

### Concepts Studied

Several alternative routes were evaluated for costs, ridership, and demand and reviewed by the TAC and community outreach. These alternatives helped form the basis of developing the transit routes proposed in this report. A wide range of technology options were initially considered based on community input and compatibility with the study area. These transit technologies were initially screened to narrow the consideration to the best technologies given community input, right-of-way and environmental constraints, and political realities in terms of project funding.

A "Connectors" option, shown in **Figure 5**, was considered and was well-regarded by the community and TAC members. However, these routes were ultimately screened out due to overlapping routes with existing and already planned transit routes to BART stations. For example, within Emeryville, the Emery Go-Round served many of the roadways in the proposed Connector option. Additionally, planned AC Transit routes would be duplicated with nearly all the connector routes within the Study Area. This circumstance would reduce route efficiency and cause too much shift in ridership away from the planned AC Transit routes. Furthermore, the planned AC Transit routes provide more extended coverage into other parts of Berkeley and Oakland.

**Figure 5: Initial Evaluation Connectors Option**




## Community Engagement and Review by Cities and Transit Agencies

### Round 1 Outreach and Community Feedback

*Overview*

Between August 2013 and November 2013, the EBOTS project team conducted a variety of outreach activities to inform stakeholders and the public about the project, and to solicit input on future visions for transit in the study area. This outreach effort was part of Phase 1 of EBOTS, which sought to identify both opportunities and constraints associated with improving transit service in the study corridor, in order to assist the partner cities and agencies involved in the TAC with engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the transit study. Specifically, the objectives of the public process were to inform and collect input from the public on transit services and improvements within the study area.

The outreach activities included three community workshops held across the study area (one in each city) and a bilingual (English and Spanish) questionnaire used to collect information regarding how individuals

travel within the study area (i.e., travel method) and to gather feedback on potential transit improvements. MIG, the public engagement consultant, conducted a robust bilingual outreach effort to publicize the community workshops and survey questionnaire, including targeted postcard and flyer distribution, e-blasts, news media articles, and phone calls to key Emeryville-Berkeley-Oakland partners such as community-based organizations, local churches and established civic groups.

### *Key Findings*

Round 1 of the community meetings identified location-specific access needs and identified many locations that are currently difficult to access and improved service in terms of schedule, reliability, hours of service, and frequency. Participants expressed a desire for shuttle/paratransit service in identifying need for last-mile connections and Emery Go-Round service in West Oakland. Participants also expressed interest in bus transit improvements. Some key opportunities for bus transit service identified include:

1. Connect to key locations in West Oakland, Emeryville, and West Berkeley, including:
    - Jack London Square
    - Oakland Army Base
    - Waterfront areas
    - West Oakland BART
    - Mandela Parkway
    - Berkeley Marina
    - Berkeley Bowl West
    - Fourth Street in Berkeley
    - Frontage Road
    - Emeryville shopping
2. Improve service, including:
    - More evening and weekend service
    - Schedule reliability
    - Schedule predictability
    - Better coordination between transit agencies
    - Better connections to West Oakland BART
    - Local circulation
3. Improve amenities, including:
    - Real-time arrival information
    - Lighting at bus stops
    - Vehicle improvements
    - Increased safety measures
    - Level boarding

Round 1 outreach also involved discussions with the Emeryville Transportation Committee, the Emeryville Planning Commission, the Emeryville Transportation Management Association Board, and the Emeryville City Council on desired trips, problems and ideas.

Detailed description of the workshop format, questionnaire and key findings from Round 1 of the Community Engagement and Outreach can be found in the **Appendix B**.

## Round 2 Outreach and Community Feedback

### *Overview*

Between March 2014 and May 2014, the EBOTS project team conducted the second phase of outreach efforts to evaluate ideas for improving transit in the study area. Based on public input collected during Phase 1 outreach, the project team developed potential options for better transit in these communities.

The outreach activities included three community workshops held across the study area (one in each city) and a questionnaire used to collect information regarding preferences and priorities for travel within the study area. As in Phase 1, the public engagement process included a range of outreach channels, including communication in local media outlets, the City of Emeryville website, e-blasts, social media communications, bilingual postcards and flyers, information distributed through local officials, regular newsletters, and phone calls to key Emeryville-Berkeley-Oakland partners such as community-based organizations, local churches and established civic groups.

### *Key Findings*

The outreach meetings discussed travel patterns of participants, including destinations of interest. The meetings also focused on reasons for trip difficulty in the study area and discussed specific locations that have inadequate access by transit. Participants expressed desires for similar interest categories as in the first round of community engagement, with particular focus on the following:

1. Connect to key locations
    - Jack London Square
    - West Oakland BART
    - Grocery stores
    - Emeryville shopping
    - Berkeley Marina
    - Berkeley Bowl West
    - Fourth Street in Berkeley
    - Frontage Road
2. Improve service
    - Schedule reliability
    - More off-peak service
    - Schedule frequency
    - Faster service
    - Reduce or eliminate need for transfers
    - Expanded overall service
    - Earlier weekday morning service
3. Improve amenities
    - Improved real-time arrival information
    - Level boarding
    - Dual side doors
    - disabled accessibility
    - Safe, pedestrian-friendly stops
    - Well-lit shelters with benches
    - Additional bicycle racks on buses
    - Clearer bus route information

The Emeryville Transportation Management Association Board, the AC Transit Board, the Berkeley Transportation Commission, the Emeryville Transportation Committee, and Emeryville Planning Commission, and the Emeryville city Council reviewed the options. Their comments helped to shape the draft report.

Detailed description of the workshop format, questionnaire and key findings from Round 2 of the Community Engagement and Outreach can be found in the **Appendix C**.

## Round 3 – Review of Preliminary Draft Recommendations and Draft Report

### *Overview*

Between July 2014 and December 2014, the EBOTS project team presented preliminary draft recommendations and the draft report to several groups for review. The groups that discussed the preliminary draft recommendations included the Oakland Community Economic Development Committee, West Oakland Business Alert, West Oakland Neighbors, the Emeryville Economic Development Committee, the Berkeley Transportation Commission, and the Emeryville Transportation Committee. These groups' comments informed the draft report.

Outreach for meetings on the draft report included the City of Emeryville website, e-blasts, and bilingual postcards and flyers. The team discussed the Draft Report with the Emeryville Planning Commission, the Oakland Planning Commission, the Emeryville Transportation Management Association Board, the Emeryville City Council, the Berkeley City Council, a West Oakland Community Meeting attended by several members of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) and others, the AC Transit Board, the Oakland City Council, the West Oakland Business Alert, the BART Board, and the Oakland Council Public Works Committee.

### *Key Findings*

The meetings garnered the following comments:

1. Shuttles

    - The fourth Emery Go-Round route is not yet funded and there was interest in emphasizing a new West Oakland shuttle and an expanded West Berkeley shuttle.
    - Add shuttles and Measure BB to the funding table. Shuttles could compete with AC Transit for operating funding from Measure BB and the FTA.
    - Service between Emeryville and West Oakland BART is top priority, and should go to stores on Shellmound. The route should not impede freight transportation. Encourage partnership with AC Transit.

2. AC Transit

    - Add a Transbay bus from downtown Berkeley through the planned Emeryville bus hub.
    - Restore routes cut in 2010 before investing in enhanced buses or streetcars.
    - A Transbay bus should stop at Treasure Island. It is easier to take BART from West Oakland to San Francisco than to take AC Transit's Line 26 to Emeryville.
    - A route to Maritime Street is needed.
    - More Clipper Card outlets and better hours are needed, especially for setting up new cards with discounts.

3. Demand Response Transit

    - Flexible service at West Oakland BART at night is needed. Some participants would support if service does not require smart phones.

4. Enhanced Bus

    - The Enhanced Bus should jog to the Emeryville Amtrak station.
    - AC Transit could set up a route in the proposed area in two years.
    - Retail stores are on Shellmound, but the proposed route is on Hollis.
    - Go to shops on Shellmound.
    - Do not impede freight transportation (especially on 3rd).
    - Partner with AC Transit (similar to Broadway Shuttle).

5. Streetcars

    - Streetcars would be good for West Oakland and Emeryville.
    - Phase the streetcars, starting with West Oakland BART to Emeryville.
    - Streetcar tracks on bridges could be expensive.
    - Generally streetcars are justified if there is an existing bus route with very high ridership.
    - Streetcars are inflexible and can lead to gentrification.
    - The cost of a streetcar could pay for many buses.
    - Streetcars are dangerous to cyclists and problematic for truck freight movement. Do not recommend metal-rail streetcars; they are costly, inflexible, dangerous to cyclists, and problematic for truck freight transportation.

Detailed description of the workshop format, questionnaire and key findings from Round 3 of the Community Engagement and Outreach can be found in the **Appendix D**.

Bilingual outreach materials for all three rounds of community engagement are shown in **Appendix E**.