

Can Oakland afford a half billion dollar boondoggle?

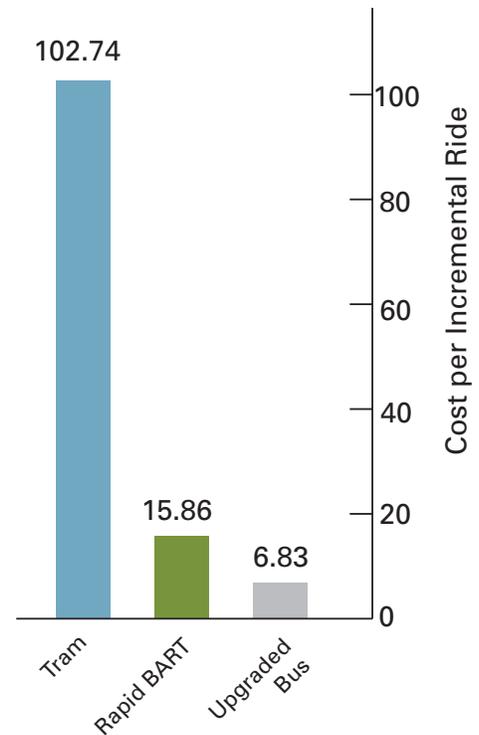
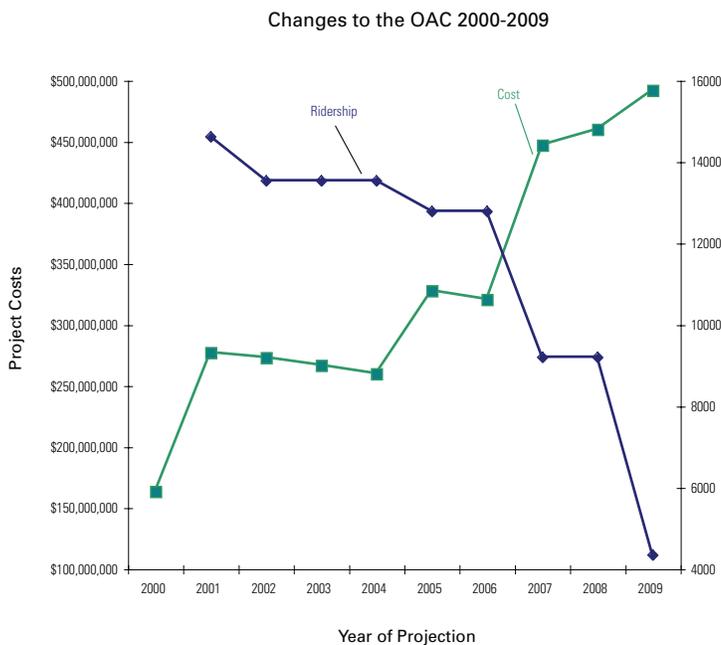
Just a few months ago MTC sounded the alarm about the Bay Area's long-term transit funding crisis, including a \$17 billion shortfall just to maintain our systems! Yet BART is still asking the MTC, other transit agencies, and future taxpayers, to subsidize their half billion dollar project despite new information that shows it's a bad idea:

- Projected capital costs have risen to \$492 million, resulting in a taxpayer subsidy per new trip to the airport of \$102.74!
- A surface alternative, called RapidBART, outperforms the elevated tram at one sixth the cost per ride.¹

Last year several concerned Commissioners asked for a study of alternatives for this corridor. Transform responded with this study, conducted by the highly respected firm Kittelson and Associates. It provides the first "apples to apples" comparison of alternatives for the Oakland airport connector using updated data.

The study, released August 29 2010, compares options for the 3-mile link between the BART and the Oakland airport, and shows that RapidBART:

- is faster,
- attracts more riders ,
- creates more jobs, and more access to jobs ,
- saves more than \$350 million, almost all of which can be reprogrammed for much-needed maintenance and improvements of Bay Area public transit.



More expensive + less attractive = astronomical subsidy.

While the connector's projected costs have tripled since the project was first planned, ridership estimates have plummeted now that its terminus is in the parking lot and its average speed is just 23 mph. This has driven up the per trip subsidy to \$102.74, more than a limo trip to the airport from anywhere in the East Bay.

¹Oakland Airport Connector Options Analysis, August 2010, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

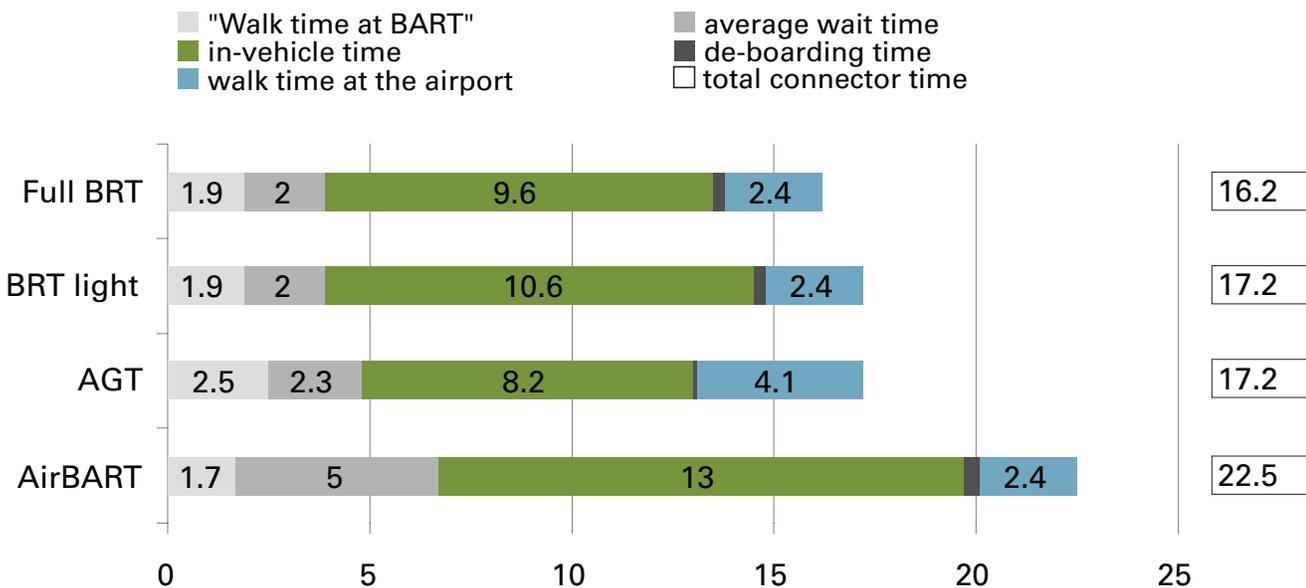


RapidBART at the Coliseum station. The RapidBART alternative, analyzed for the first time in the TransForm-commissioned study, is like a rubber-wheeled surface subway. Vehicles pick up passengers with level boarding, through all doors, at a pre-paid area at the BART station. Vehicles will travel in an exclusive lane along Hegenberger Road and drop passengers closer to the terminal.

Why is RapidBART so much better than the Slow Tram to the Parking Lot?

The slow tram is simply not acceptable

The average speed is now 50% slower than originally planned: a snail-like 23.4 mph. Even worse, it no longer extends all the way to the terminal; the tram will end in the parking lot. The total BART-to-terminal walking distance for passengers going to Southwest Airlines will be more than a quarter-mile (1,410 feet) if this project is approved. This is not a convenient link for people with luggage and an unacceptable burden for people with disabilities.



RapidBART is faster, cheaper, and more convenient option for airport travelers

RapidBART will get passengers to the airport faster, with greater frequency, shorter walks, and a \$3 fare instead of a \$6 fare as BART proposes for the tram. Because of these factors, RapidBART will attract over 60% more riders than the tram, helping to keep Oakland and its airport competitive, enhancing public transit revenues and protecting the environment.



BART’s proposed tram. *BART’s proposed tram would require longer walks at both ends of the line and would use a risky technology. The contractor, Doppelmayr Cable Car, is known mostly for ski-lifts and casino shuttles. Their tram at the Toronto Airport had to be closed for repairs for three straight months last year, and the one proposed for Oakland is even more complicated, the first of its kind for the company. This fails BART’s own “proven technology” requirements. Also, the design makes it impossible to add stations affordably, and only one additional station at Doolittle is possible, at great expense.*

Summary of Study results comparing four options for the Connector

Criteria/Factors	No Action (i.e. continue AirBART)	Rapid Bus	Full BRT - RapidBART	BART’s Automated Guideway Transit (AGT)
Longest walking distance (ft.)	845	810	810	1410
Total Travel Time (2013)	22.5	17.2	16.2	17.2
Fare	\$3	\$3	\$3	\$6
Daily New Riders (2013, base of 2,100 existing)	0	790	980	585
Capital Cost in Millions	0	\$20m	\$125m	\$492m
Cost Per New (Incremental) Rider ¹	n/a	\$6.83	\$15.86	\$102.74
Feasibility of intermediate stops serving community and jobs	0	feasible, inexpensive	feasible, inexpensive	1 feasible, very expensive
Likely Completion Date		2012	2013	2014
Additional BART Debt	0	0	0	>\$105m ²
Permanent jobs created	23	46	46	18

¹ Using FTA cost-effectiveness index: capital plus operating cost amortized over thirty-five years, net of fares, divided by new riders.

² \$105 million assumes receipt of money not yet approved, and no further cost increases beyond the very low amount included in the budget as a contingency. This number is likely to be higher, deepening BART’s debt problem.

What does the Oakland Airport Connector mean for Bay Area residents?

World-Class Transportation for Oakland

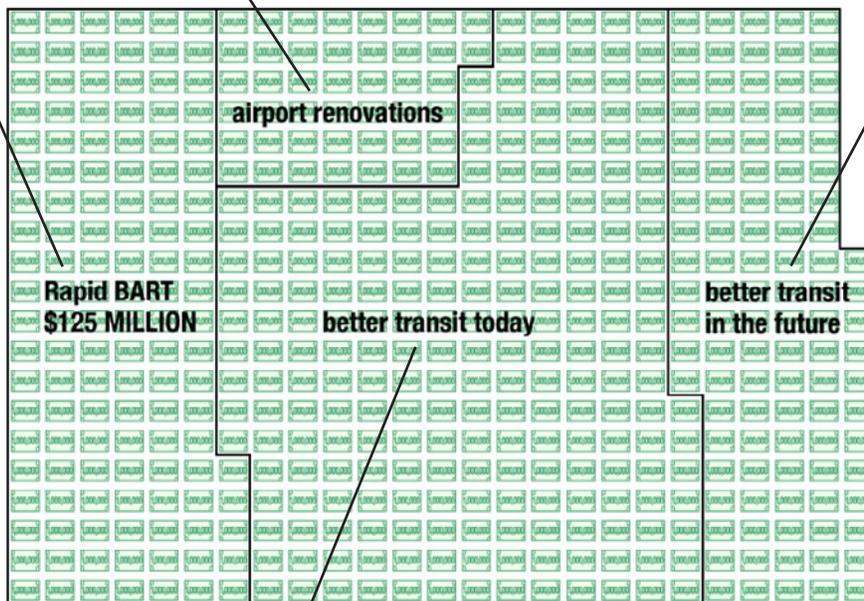
One of the main reasons cited by the Oakland City Council for supporting this project was the inclusion of two intermediate stops that would serve East Oakland residents and businesses along Hegenberger. Those stops have been eliminated from the plan. The elevated tram could conceivably include a station at Doolittle, but at great expense. RapidBART, on the other hand, could easily be expanded to include stations wherever they are necessary, providing access to jobs and improving the prospects for economic development in the corridor.

Better transit for the entire Bay Area

At \$125 million, RapidBART delivers a savings of more than \$350 million that can be used to protect and improve transit options throughout the Bay Area. BART's plan for subsidizing its half-billion dollar tram involves subsidies from about a dozen sources, almost all of which are locally controlled, and all of which will provide local jobs. It also includes taking out at least \$105 million in new BART debt — loans that future BART riders will have to pay back with some combination of higher fares, reduced service, and more poorly maintained systems — and costs which will never equate to jobs for Bay Area resident.

With the savings, the Port would begin \$44 million of critical renovations to the Oakland airport they are currently delaying to pay for this boondoggle.

TransForm's study found that a surface option, called RapidBART, does a better job for much less, just \$125 million.



By avoiding \$105 million in loans, we can protect transit in the future because BART riders won't have to pay back those loans with a combination of higher fares and reduced service.

And, about \$218 million is controlled by regional agencies that could use the funds for better transit today: BART access upgrades at 43 stations, AC Transit rapid bus improvements, and a more reliable Muni.

MTC votes September 8

Fortunately, MTC Commissioners have indicated their willingness to stop subsidizing this half billion dollar slow tram to the Oakland airport and look at alternatives that provide better service at less cost, to protect Bay Area transit. Now, they have the study.

Read the study and take action at transformca.org/OAC