

BART OUTLINES ROADMAP TO BOOST SMALL BUSINESSES

BART is looking to give small businesses a boost in these uncertain economic times by increasing contracting opportunities within the transit District. At today's Board of Directors meeting, BART's Office of Civil Rights outlined a comprehensive strategy to change the agency's processes in awarding contracts to small businesses, especially socially and economically disadvantaged businesses and those who employ disabled veterans. The plan was met with enthusiasm from the community during today's meeting with one observer calling it a model for the Bay Area and even the nation.

"Many of the initiatives presented today came directly from the public," BART Board member Lynette Sweet said. "There are prime opportunities in areas such as electrical, plumbing, and concrete where small businesses ought to be playing a larger role at BART."

The initiatives presented to the Board of Directors on July 26, 2012, include:

- Implementing a Small Business Bonding Program
- Developing guidelines for unbundling large construction, professional services and procurement contracts and issue multiple contracts where possible
- Exploring the feasibility of an on-call pre-qualified list of small business contractors
- Expanding technical support for small businesses during the pre and post bidding process
- Expanding community outreach to maximize opportunity

Various business advocacy groups applauded BART's leadership efforts when speaking in support of the Small Business Opportunity Plan during the Board meeting, calling it a "bold approach."

BART leadership will continue to refine these initiatives moving forward and will continue to engage a variety of local business groups for their input. For more on contracting and procurement opportunities at BART, visit www.bart.gov/business.