



El Cerrito Transit-Oriented Development Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated:
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1. *Why is BART undertaking transit-oriented development (TOD) at El Cerrito Plaza station?*
 - TOD increases BART's ridership and brings a diversity of uses, amenities, and benefits to the communities surrounding BART stations. By locating housing near BART, TOD reduces greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion, helps households lower their transportation costs and connect to economic opportunity, and helps address our region's housing crisis.
 - In 2014, after extensive community engagement, the City of El Cerrito adopted the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, which supports development of the BART parking lots at both El Cerrito stations. BART prioritized development in El Cerrito because of the City's extensive support and collaboration, and readiness of the market to support development. In November 2020, BART selected a development team that is tasked with delivering a mixed-income, mixed-use project on the lots currently used for customer parking at El Cerrito Plaza.

2. *If new development adds more riders, how will BART deal with crowding issues, assuming ridership recovers after the pandemic?*
 - As the region recovers and grows, BART expects that people will eventually ride the trains again at similar levels as pre-COVID. Without a reliable and welcoming regional transit system, the Bay Area will face worse traffic congestion and reduced economic competitiveness. Thus, we are in the process of expanding BART's capacity with our Transbay Core Capacity project, which includes four elements:
 - The purchase of additional rail cars (above and beyond the new rail cars currently replacing BART's aging fleet) to eventually run all 10-car trains at rush hour, with more trains per hour;
 - Train control modernization to allow for more trains per hour through the Transbay Tube;
 - Upgrades to traction power substations to allow for more frequent and longer trains; and
 - A new railcar storage yard at the Hayward Maintenance Complex to accommodate the additional railcars needed for longer trains and more frequent service.
 - The Transbay Core Capacity project will allow for an increase in train frequencies between San Francisco and Oakland by more than 30%, and overall capacity by approximately 45%. More detail can be found [here](#).

3. *How is the public being consulted about the proposed TOD?*
 - There will be and have been multiple opportunities for the public to weigh in on this master planned, multi-building project and the public amenities that will come with it. BART requires the developers to engage the surrounding communities and there have been opportunities for stakeholders in El Cerrito, Richmond, Kensington, Albany and Berkeley to weigh in. Please see our [project website](#) for a list of prior community meetings and links to the materials presented then.
 - The project itself is eligible for staff-level approval, but the master plan and each building will also



come before the City of El Cerrito's Design Review Board. The developer will take comments and provide an update to the community. The master plan is expected to come before the Design Review Board in early 2024. The master plan will define the general features of the development, such as the height, footprint, and uses of all six buildings.

- The City of El Cerrito also previously adopted, after extensive public input, [the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan](#), which covers BART's parking lots and allows for transit-oriented, mixed-use development; this Plan has been updated and information on the update can be found [here](#).
- Additionally, BART led extensive community engagement together with the City of El Cerrito from 2019-2022 to solicit feedback and determine how people would get to/from the station in the future with reduced BART rider parking – a critical piece of the TOD planning puzzle. The culmination of this effort and documented community engagement is included in the Berkeley-El Cerrito Corridor Access Plan which can be accessed on the [project website](#).

4. *When do you expect that construction will begin? When do you expect the project will be completed?*

- Project construction and completion will depend on many factors including the state of the local real estate market and the availability of subsidy for affordable housing. Currently, the development team expects construction to be phased in six phases (one for each residential building) and for the first phase to break ground in 2025, although this may change. Please see BART's [project website](#) for the latest development timeline.

5. *What's the latest proposal for what will be built as part of the TOD?*

Please see [BART's project website](#) for the latest information. As of November 2023, the development consists of a mix of about 750 affordable and market rate homes in six different buildings, as well as a public park and ground floor commercial space that includes a café and a space for a new public library. For riders to better access the BART station, the plans also include a new busway with improved bus stops, an expanded Ohlone Greenway segment, a bike station, new vehicle loading and drop-off areas, and a new BART parking garage. The City of El Cerrito is also planning for new bike lanes going east/west to the station.

6. *What will be the increase in property tax collections that El Cerrito will gain from the potential construction? How will that amount of money compare to the amount it would receive from a standard project that is not owned by a public entity?*

- Currently, the properties are not taxed at all. When this project is completed, market-rate development will generate property tax revenue for El Cerrito, and the taxes paid on those buildings would be the same as comparable buildings on private land.

7. *What will be the increased cost to the city for infrastructure, police, fire, recreational services, and other costs?*

- The City will evaluate this as the project is defined. They expect that additional costs will likely be offset by revenue from the new property taxes and impact fees paid by the project as well as sales taxes paid by its new residents. Please see the Environmental Impact Reports for the [San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan](#) for more information.

8. *What are the projected rents for the tenants? Approximately how many units by type of rent and size of apartment (in rooms) is expected?*



- Currently, the developer’s master plan calls for 743 homes, of which 142 are studios, 347 are one-bedrooms, 179 are two-bedrooms, and 75 are three-bedroom apartments. About 392 of the total homes will rent at market rates. The rest will rent at varying levels of affordability. About 118 will be restricted to households with low incomes, below 80% of area median income (AMI), while about 233 will be restricted to those with income below 60% AMI or less.
9. *How much of a discount are the developers getting for use of the land? Will BART continue to own the land?*
- BART will continue to own the land and we intend to negotiate ground leases with the selected development team. Our goal is that 35% of all housing built on BART land be affordable. In support of that goal, in 2020, BART updated our Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy to incentivize projects to provide greater levels of affordable housing. Based on the percentage of affordable units provided and depth of incomes (AMI levels) served, typical mixed-income housing such as this qualify for a discount of up to 30% of fair market value, while the maximum land discount is 60% of fair market value. The actual discount will be negotiated between BART and the developers as part of the ground lease terms. Please see BART’s [financial return framework](#) for more information.
10. *Will the developers pay for better lighting, cameras, and more police protection on the bike path?*
- BART has been working with the developers and the City, taking into account community input, to develop the plan for station access and other improvements that will be incorporated in the project. For instance, a lighting study is currently underway to make recommendations for lighting improvements near the station, so that it feels safer to walk to the station. Policing outside BART property is under the City’s jurisdiction. The City also maintains the Ohlone Greenway, under a license agreement with BART.
11. *What is AB 2923 and how does it affect El Cerrito Plaza?*
- AB 2923, a bill signed into law in 2018, changed state law in several ways. It affects zoning requirements on existing BART owned property within ½ mile of BART stations in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties. It allows developers of most TOD projects on those same properties to apply for expedited approval from their local city.
 - The state law specifies baseline zoning for TOD that vary by place type. There are 3 place types and El Cerrito Plaza is classified as an “Urban Neighborhood / City Center” place type. This is because it is near jobs, is denser than many places within the BART system, is located within a walkable street network with a mix of land uses, and includes frequent BART and bus service.
 - Based on its place type, AB 2923 requires that on BART-owned land El Cerrito must allow at least 75 dwelling units per acre, heights of at least seven stories, and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of at least 4.2. Vehicle parking is capped at 0.5 spaces per residential unit, and at least one bicycle parking space must be provided per unit. More information can be found at www.bart.gov/ab2923.
12. *What will the ownership structure of the new buildings be? Will BART continue to own the land?*
- BART will retain ownership of all the land being developed. The developers will have “ground leases” with BART. The City would have a ground lease for the ground floor space that the library would occupy. A simple way to understand a ground lease is that it provides a multi-



decade lease temporarily allowing a building to be owned and constructed on the land. At the end of the term the lease could be extended, or the land could be returned to BART. BART will also retain control of some of the land and not lease it to either the developers or the City, including the station itself and the new busway immediately to the west of the station and tracks.

13. Will BART be doing any of the TOD construction itself?

- BART is not constructing anything ourselves. Our development partners (Related, Holliday Development, and Satellite Affordable Housing Associates or SAHA) will be coordinating the construction work. BART and the City of El Cerrito will review and approve their architectural plans and monitor construction for compliance.

City Library

14. In which phase will the new City of El Cerrito library be built? Where will it be?

- A new El Cerrito library is planned for the ground floor of the residential building in what is being calling "Parcel C-West," which is currently planned to be the fourth building constructed. Parcel C-West is estimated to start construction in 2026, but the phasing and exact timing are subject to change. This building will be located at the corner of Fairmount and Liberty Streets, in what is now a BART rider parking lot. The inclusion of the new El Cerrito library in the TOD is dependent on City funding.

15. What would happen to the library if BART goes bankrupt or needs to do some sort of restructuring?

- The library would be constructed in a building owned and operated by Related, a private developer. Events such as a transit agency bankruptcy or restructuring are rare and complex. It is impossible to anticipate how that would impact every aspect of BART operations. Should this worst-case scenario occur, BART would need to honor our legal obligations to the TOD project that exist at the time of any restructuring.

16. Can BART share any further information about the plans for the City library?

- The City of El Cerrito is managing the development of the library and is the best source of information for questions about its financing or design. The latest public materials on the library are posted on the City's website, [here](#).

Parking & Station Access

17. How many BART rider parking spaces will be provided at El Cerrito Plaza when the parking lots are replaced by homes? Some BART passengers will still need to drive to the station.

- On October 28, 2021, the BART Board of Directors approved the El Cerrito-BART Goals & Objectives that included a parking maximum of up to 250 stalls with at least as many accessible stalls as currently provided.
- Based on an updated analysis nearly a year after the Board vote, BART staff defined a narrower range of BART rider parking of 100-150 with the goal of providing as close to 150 parking spaces as possible. This information was shared with the Community at public



meetings that took place in July and September of 2022.

- The range provides flexibility for changes during design of the project. This updated analysis considered the following factors:
 - BART Ridership Recovery Trends: Since the October 2021 Board approval of the BART rider parking maximum¹, more data from the Bay Area Council has become available showing that surveyed Bay Area companies anticipate that 70% of employees will return three days a week or less with only 30% returning four or five days a week.² BART ridership projections have been revised downward accordingly and now assume that ridership will reach only 70% of pre-pandemic levels over the next ten years.³
 - City Management of On-Street Parking: Since the BART Board approval of the parking maximums, the City of El Cerrito has confirmed support to advance plans and worked with BART to secure grant funding to better manage on-street parking within about a ten-minute walk of the station.
 - Funding: In July 2022, BART secured a significant portion of the funding for 150 garage spaces as part of a package of other multimodal access improvements from the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP).
 - Design: The Developer advanced site design alternatives which indicated that providing 100-150 spaces would allow for more open space, optimize the residential neighborhood, provide more active uses at the street level, allow for more secure and direct pedestrian access, and provide better wayfinding.

18. With fewer BART rider parking spaces at this station, won't improvements be needed to non-driving ways of getting to BART?

- Yes. A plan to improve access to stations along BART's Richmond line, including an FAQ, can be found at BART's Berkeley-El Cerrito Corridor Access Plan (Corridor Access Plan) project website: www.bart.gov/beccap. Furthermore, the development team funded the El Cerrito Plaza Station Access Plan, through which BART evaluated circulation and infrastructure needs in the immediate station area and on public streets nearby.
- The El Cerrito Plaza Station Access Plan aims to ensure that when development is built, residents and workers in the surrounding communities can continue to access BART. Specific station access strategies are being incorporated into the project design, and the plan will help BART and the City of El Cerrito to prioritize their future infrastructure investments. For instance, the plan addresses the parking, loading, biking, transit and pedestrian connections on each block that the TOD project impacts. It also provides design parameters for the project's major infrastructure investments, such as the BART rider garage, the expanded Ohlone Greenway, the bike parking station, and the new busway next to the station.

19. Will new bicycle parking be provided? What will it look like and how many bikes it will hold?

¹ BART, "October 28, 2021, Board of Directors Regular Meeting," 2021, <https://bart.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=900827&GUID=22E5A5C2-66E1-42F8-863BE169D1F4CAFF&Options=info&Search=>. ⁴⁴ BART, "February 10, 2022, Board of Directors Regular Meeting", 2022, https://bart.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=17&clip_id=1301.

² Bay Area Council, "Return to Transit Track Poll", 2022, <https://www.bayareacouncil.org/employer-survey-results/>. The survey respondents are across sectors and across all nine Bay Area counties, although not intended to be representative of all employers in the Bay Area.

³ BART, "February 10, 2022, Board of Directors Regular Meeting", 2022, https://bart.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=17&clip_id=1301.



- Additional protected bicycle parking spaces at the station that could accommodate bicyclists with a wide range of needs including adaptive bicycles and cargo bikes was a strong desire that we heard from residents and riders. Current plans include a new bike parking station that will significantly expand capacity for bike parking at the station. Its exact configuration and capacity will be determined as project plans are further developed. Funding has been secured to construct it.

20. *Will there be dedicated BART parking spaces for motorcycles and mopeds?*

- Yes. The Access Plan has recommendations on the appropriate amount of motorcycle and moped BART parking spaces that will be included in the future development.

21. *How will impacts to on-street parking be addressed?*

- The City of El Cerrito and BART have been working together to develop a parking management concept for how to balance neighborhood street parking for residents with the station's parking demand.
- As identified in the [El Cerrito City Council-adopted Goals & Objectives](#), BART and the City are exploring the concept of the City changing how it manages on-street parking around the stations so that non-residents, including BART riders, could pay to park on-street, and to do that in a way that ensures that residents with Residential Preferential Parking permits (RPP permits) and those who work and shop at commercial and educational establishments in the area can still easily and quickly find a parking space near their home.
- This [document](#) provides more details on the background, concept considered, and next steps for on-street parking management around the El Cerrito Plaza station.

22. *Where will TOD residents park?*

- See Developer FAQ #10 on the Developer's [El Cerrito Plaza TOD website](#) for information on the number of anticipated residential parking spaces within the Development.
- Consistent with the City's [San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan](#) and community-vetted [City-BART shared goals and objectives](#) to increase sustainable modes and reduce car traffic, the Development will not include residential parking permits for the residents.

23. *What new mobility options – like electric bike share, shared scooters or mopeds - are being considered to serve those who won't be able to park at the station?*

- New mobility options may provide a significant opportunity to improve access to the station, especially considering electric-assist options that can help overcome topographic barriers.
- Through the Berkeley - El Cerrito Corridor Access Plan (see #18 above), BART interviewed new mobility providers including electric bike share, scooter and moped providers, car-share and transit-on-demand providers to discuss potential for El Cerrito Plaza. The team included an assessment of feasibility for funding and implementation of different options to in the Berkeley El Cerrito Corridor Access Plan (see #18 above).
- The El Cerrito Plaza Station Access Plan (see #18 above) will determine demand and space needs for new mobility options to incorporate in the project design.

24. *How do I receive updates and/or provide comments about the El Cerrito Plaza TOD project?*

- To receive El Cerrito Plaza TOD updates from BART or if you have specific inquiries or comments regarding the project, please email the El Cerrito Plaza BART TOD Team at



ECPTOD@bart.gov.

- To contact the developers, email contact@up-partners.com, or sign up for their mailing list on their website at www.elcerritoplazadevelopment.com to be notified of upcoming events.
- You may also sign up for email updates from BART's Real Estate and Property Development Department by registering in the Profile Center and selecting "Other" then "Transit-Oriented Development Projects" under "Manage Subscriptions."
- Finally, you may also sign up for email updates about BART TODs by visiting <https://cloud.info.bart.gov/signup> and selecting "Transit-Oriented Development Projects" under Step 3: "Manage Subscriptions."