



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

Updated 9/20/21

1. *Why is BART undertaking transit-oriented development (TOD) at El Cerrito Plaza station now?*

- 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 is prioritizing 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 the parking lots are replaced by homes, some BART passengers will still need to drive to the station, such as those dropping off kids or who have mobility impairments. How will BART address their needs?*

- Since 2019 BART has been engaging with riders who use the El Cerrito Plaza station and other neighbors, including open houses (both in-person and virtual), a community workshop, and surveys. We've heard concerns from some community members about their ability to continue to use the station without driving and parking such as needing to drop off family members at other stops along the way, topographical constraints, and mobility challenges.
- BART understands that some amount of parking will likely be needed to accommodate those riders with no viable alternatives other than driving and parking. For example, we expect that the current number of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) parking spaces will be maintained in the future parking garage serving riders. Based on an in-depth analysis of pre-COVID commute patterns, community input, trade-offs with other TOD goals, and available funding, BART will determine an appropriate level of on-site replacement parking as well as other on- and off-site improvements to get to/from the station.
- Via the El Cerrito Plaza Station Access Plan, funded by the selected developers, BART is evaluating circulation and infrastructure needs in the immediate station area and on public streets nearby. The goal of the El Cerrito Plaza Station Access Plan is to ensure that when development is built, residents and workers in the surrounding communities can continue to access BART. Some access strategies will be incorporated into requirements for the development and the plan will help BART and the City of El Cerrito to prioritize its future infrastructure investments.
- More information on the topic of improved 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.

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

- BART's access planning work will include recommendations on 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) can still easily and quickly find a parking space near their home.
4. *What new mobility options 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 #2, above), BART has begun interviews with 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 El Cerrito Plaza Station Access Plan (see #2, above) will determine demand and space needs for new mobility options to incorporate in the project design.
5. *If new development is adding 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:
 - o The purchase of additional rail cars (above and beyond the new rail cars currently replacing BART's aging fleet) to run all 10-car trains at rush hour, with more trains per hour;
 - o Train control modernization to allow for more trains per hour through the Transbay Tube;
 - o Upgrades to traction power substations to allow for more frequent and longer trains; and
 - o 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](#).
6. *Will there be public hearings about the proposed TOD?*
- Yes, there will be multiple opportunities for the public to weigh in. BART requires the developers to engage the surrounding communities and there will be opportunities for stakeholders in El Cerrito, Richmond, Kensington, Albany and Berkeley to weigh in. The City of El Cerrito previously adopted, after extensive public input, [the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan](#) which covers the majority of BART's parking lots and allows for transit-oriented, mixed use development; this Plan is now being updated and information on the process can be found [here](#). As the TOD is subject to the City's entitlement process, the City will also offer opportunities to engage through its own public hearing processes for review of new developments, such as at its Design Review Board and Planning Commission.



7. *When do you expect that construction will begin? When do you expect the project will be completed?*
 - It is still very early in the development process. Project construction and completion will depend on many factors including gaining required approvals and permits, the real estate market and availability of subsidy for affordable housing. Currently, the development team expects construction to be phased and for the first phase to break ground in 2024, although this may change. More information will be shared as BART and the developers flesh out the preliminary development concept and have a greater sense of what the TOD will entail.
8. *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. If 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.
9. *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 and believes that 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.
10. *What are the projected rents for the tenants? Approximately how many units by type of rent and size of apartment (in rooms) is expected?*
 - While the developers' concept in their statement of qualifications included between 700 and 800 units, with a very high share of below market-rate housing, the intent of this concept was solely to give a sense of how the developers would approach the site if selected. Actual details of a future TOD, including rents and unit sizes, will be further developed over the coming year.
11. *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 one or more 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 served, typical affordable housing projects qualify for a discount of up to 30% of fair market value, while the maximum land discount is 60% of fair market value. After the developers flesh out a development proposal, the actual discount will be negotiated between BART and the developers as part of the ground lease terms.
12. *Will the developers pay for better lighting, cameras, and more police protection on the bike path?*
 - BART is beginning to work with the developers and the City, taking into account community input, to determine the station access and other improvements that should be prioritized and incorporated in the project. As noted in #2 above, we'll also complete a plan identifying and



prioritizing improvements beyond BART property that can help riders more safely and conveniently access the station. Policing outside BART property is under the City's jurisdiction.

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

- BART is in the very early stages of considering what the development will look like at El Cerrito Plaza, so the specific bike parking solutions are not yet known. Through our extensive community engagement process we did hear the desire for additional protected bicycle parking spaces at the station that could accommodate bicyclists with a wide range of needs including adaptive bicycles and cargo bikes. Community input, the El Cerrito Plaza Station Access Plan process, and BART's commitment to ensure safe efficient bike access to the station will guide the design of any additional future bicycle parking at the station.
- Note also that in early 2021, BART installed 24 new bicycle lockers like the existing ones so that as ridership recovers, more cyclists can be accommodated.

14. 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.

15. 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 can submit input and sign up to receive BART's updates about access planning efforts and opportunities to give input - such as open houses, presentations, local board and commission meetings, and office hours - using this [comment form](#).
- 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."