



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

Updated 12/11/2020

1. *Why is BART undertaking transit-oriented development (TOD) at El Cerrito Plaza station now?*
  - TOD can increase BART's ridership and bring a diversity of uses, amenities and benefits to the communities surrounding BART stations. By locating housing near BART, TOD also reduces greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion, and helps households lower their transportation costs and connect to economic opportunity. 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. *How is BART going to decide how much BART parking to provide? How are people who park supposed to get to the station?*

Throughout 2019 and early 2020 BART conducted analysis and early engagement among riders who use the El Cerrito Plaza station, including station open houses, a community workshop, and a survey of BART riders. This work will continue throughout 2021 and 2022 through grants that BART received from Caltrans and the Federal Transit Administration. BART and the City will work with the developer team to define an appropriate level of replacement parking for BART patrons, as well as other on- and off-site improvements to improve other ways to access the station beyond park-and-ride.
  
3. *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, BART is in the process of expanding the system's capacity with its 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](#).



4. *Will there be public hearings about the proposed TOD?*
  - There will be multiple opportunities for the public to weigh in. BART will host several virtual engagement opportunities for stakeholders in El Cerrito, Richmond, Kensington, Albany and Berkeley next year, and the developers will be required by BART to prepare and implement their own community engagement plan. The City of El Cerrito previously adopted, after extensive public input, [the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan](#) which covers the majority of the BART parking lots and allows for transit-oriented, mixed use development. As the development is subject to the City's entitlement process, the City will also offer opportunities to engage through its own public hearing processes for review and approval of new developments.
  
5. *When do you expect that construction will begin? When do you expect the project will be completed?*
  - BART, in collaboration with City of El Cerrito staff, has only just selected its development team and there is no actual development proposal at this stage. As such, BART cannot state what the specific timeline is for development. This information will be shared as BART and the developers begin to work together in 2021 and have a greater sense of what the development will entail. Project construction and completion will depend on many factors including the real estate market and availability of subsidy for affordable housing.
  
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. 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.
  
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 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.
  
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?*
  - 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 development, including rents and unit sizes, will be established through the process that will be initiated in 2021.
  
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 intends to negotiate one or more ground leases with the selected development team. In April 2020, BART updated its Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy to incentive projects to provide greater levels of affordable housing in support of BART's goal that 35% of housing on all its land be affordable. 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 BART enters into an exclusive negotiating agreement (ENA) with the selected developers, and 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.

*10. Will the developers pay for better lighting, cameras, and more police protection on the bike path?*

- Once BART and the developers initiate work on a development concept for the site, BART expects 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. BART will also complete a study identifying and prioritizing improvements beyond BART property that can help BART riders more safely and conveniently access the station. Police enforcement outside the BART property is under the City's jurisdiction.

*11. 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 development will look like at El Cerrito Plaza, so this is unknown. However, in 2019 BART hosted numerous engagement efforts to establish community goals for the development, including a survey of BART patrons, two open houses at the station, participation in City meetings, and a community workshop that was attended by over 250 people. One community request was additional protected bicycle parking spaces at the station that could accommodate bicyclists with a wide range of needs. This input, together with future community input to be collected next year, will have bearing on the design of any additional future bicycle parking at the station.
- By early 2021, BART plans to install 24 new bicycle lockers like the existing ones so that when ridership recovers, more cyclists can be accommodated.

*12. If the parking lots are replaced by buildings, 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?*

- Based on the engagement completed in 2019, BART heard from community members about the real barriers to reduced parking, including dropping off and picking up children, topographical constraints and mobility challenges. In 2021, BART will begin work on access strategies to identify realistic ways for riders to get to and from the station when development is built. These strategies will be incorporated into requirements for the development and will help BART and the City of El Cerrito to prioritize its future infrastructure investments.
- BART anticipates replacing some of the customer parking in a future garage and expects that current numbers of ADA parking spaces will be maintained. The access strategies described above will prioritize ensuring continued access for BART users who face various impairments.

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

- To receive El Cerrito Plaza BART station TOD project updates or if you have specific inquiries or comments regarding the TOD at the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station, please email the El Cerrito Plaza BART TOD Team ([ECPlaza@bart.gov](mailto:ECPlaza@bart.gov))



- You may also sign up for email updates from the Real Estate and Property Development Department, by registering for general BART emails and selecting "Transit-Oriented Development Projects."