

News from: **City of Oakland**

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AC Transit and City of Oakland Develop Plan to Help Businesses

More technical assistance possible for BRT Corridor Businesses

Oakland, CA —The City of Oakland and AC Transit are pleased to announce that their staffs have developed a ***Business Sustainability Program for the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project***. As planned, now that we are reaching the 65% design level and have been able to achieve project savings, the agencies are enhancing the BRT Business Impact Mitigation Plan (BIM-P) that will go to the AC Transit Board and Oakland City Council for approval this summer.

Under the staff proposal, AC Transit will underwrite regular construction impact mitigation activities as well as the Technical Assistance piece of the Business Sustainability Program. This would complete AC Transit's financial commitment to the BIM-P, which is anticipated to exceed 10 percent of its overall construction budget. Over the next several weeks, the Business Sustainability Program will be further developed in coordination with community stakeholders all along the BRT corridor.

City Administrator Fred Blackwell says, "I am extremely grateful that the City, AC Transit and community partners are staying the course and coming together to develop a model Business Sustainability Program. The City is stepping up to provide proactive outreach, technical assistance and financing services to merchants and businesses located along the entire BRT route to *prepare* for a new business environment; operate and *survive* during construction; and *thrive* in a new economic environment.

Subject to Council approval, City staffers are proposing to underwrite several Business Sustainability Program elements. This includes creation of a "Thrive" fund to support business expansion and attraction efforts. The City Program will also include limited Business Interruption and Re-Establishment programs to assist the small set of existing business adversely impacted by BRT Construction.

"*TransForm* understands that the shift from an auto-centric corridor to a transit-oriented corridor has raised some concerns by a few businesses along the boulevard," said Joel Ramos of TRANSFORM. "With that in mind, we have been following the process in developing solutions very closely, and are impressed with the creative solutions that the City of Oakland and AC Transit have come up with. There's still much work to be done, but this is a giant step in the right direction".

"I'm pleased that the collaborative efforts between the City of Oakland and AC Transit have yielded some project savings that now can be used to help business along the BRT corridor," said AC Transit General Manager David Armijo. "This highlights the benefits of close agency collaboration in implementing critical infrastructure projects."

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ABOUT EAST BAY BUS RAPID TRANSIT

The East Bay Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project will be a 9.5-mile, high-quality, high-capacity public transit system running from downtown Oakland to the San Leandro BART station primarily along International Blvd and E. 14th St. Approved by the Cities of Oakland and San Leandro, Caltrans and the AC Transit Board in 2012, BRT will provide reliable public transportation access featuring level boarding, pre-payment, dedicated transit lanes, and other features that have led this technology to be described as “light rail on wheels.” Service is expected to begin in late 2017. For more information, go to <http://brt.actransit.org>.

Oakland and AC Transit have agreed to about \$23 million of parking and business impact mitigation measures and design features to minimize the impact of the project and enhance the corridor for the local community, such as \$10 million of curb-to-curb repaving, lighting, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements.

The East Bay BRT project is substantially funded by Alameda County Measure B, Regional Measure 2 Bridge Toll Funds, the State of California and the Federal Transit Administration.

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