Volume <mark>2</mark> March.27.2024

Honoring Our Roadeo Champions



AC Transit Resumes Local Bus Roadeo Tradition After 2019, Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Pause



Since our last Local Bus Roadeo in 2019, we mourn the loss of two cherished members of our family who played pivotal roles in our Roadeo success: Bus Operator Jesse Dela Cruz and Master Mechanic and Maintenance Superintendent Eduardo Villarreal.



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High-Volume Hiring Strategies Yielding Positive Results Since January 2022, after AC Transit lifted the...

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Rising Like a Phoenix, Roadeo Showcases Skills in Renewed Showdown

On St. Patrick's Day weekend, March 16, AC Transit hosted Local Bus Roadeo, marking the first event of its kind in five years. This year's Roadeo can be seen not merely as a competition, but rather as a symbolic resurgence for our transit district, akin to the rise of a phoenix.

The phoenix symbolizes a resurgence from the brink with renewed vitality, mirroring the transformation within AC Transit's operations.

Five years ago, St. Patrick's Day marked the beginning of emergency shelter-in-place orders, as the global community grappled with the spread of the then-obscure coronavirus.

However, as much of the world adapted to remote work and altered lifestyles, our courageous frontline workers remained steadfastly on the streets, driving buses to uphold the Bay Area's infrastructure. Thanks to the skilled maintenance of our mechanics, buses continued to operate smoothly, while service employees innovated new methods to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 onboard our fleet.

While our frontline staff kept the Bay Area's frontline moving, they were unwittingly still practicing and perfecting Roadeo's requirements of judgment stops, diminishing clearances, left-hand reverse and offset street maneuvers, and back our bus divisions all manner of pretrip inspections.

One could argue that such dedication is ingrained in AC Transit's DNA. In 1985, our East Oakland Division swept Local Bus Roadeo. By 1986, AC Transit would launch its prominence at the top of the International Bus Roadeo leaderboard.

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The 2024 Bus Rodeo Dela Cruz Memorial Bus Operator Award winner Garner Andres and Dwain Crawley, Director of Transportation.

AC Transit Bus Rodeo Accomplishments

- 2019 Grand Champions (Team), Louisville, Kentucky
- 2018 Third Place Best of the Best (Team), Tampa, Florida
- 2008 First Place Operator, Austin, Texas
- 2006 Second Place Operator & Best of the Best (Team), Anaheim, California
- 2004 Second Place Operator, Atlanta, Georgia
- 2002 Best of the Best (Team), Las Vegas, Nevada
- 2001 Best of the Best (Team), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 2000 First Place Operator & Best of the Best (Team), San Francisco, California
- 1999 First Place Operator & Best of the Best (Team), Orlando, Florida
- 1998 Second Place Operator, New York, New York
- 1991 Third Place Operator, Toronto, Canada
- 1986 First Place Operator, Detroit, Michigan

This year, like the phoenix, AC Transit returned to our Local Bus Roadeo competition with renewed passion. Since our last Roadeo in 2019, we mourn the loss of two cherished members of our family who played pivotal roles in our Roadeo success: Bus Operator Jesse Dela Cruz and former Master Mechanic and Maintenance Superintendent Eduardo Villarreal, both claimed by COVID-19.



The Maintenance Team, including Defending Champions Sean Burr, Miguel Lopez, and Alvin Tan, gears up for Portland, OR, aiming for a second shot at the Grand Champion title.

Transit Employee Appreciation Day

To celebrate Transit Employee Appreciation Day (TEAD) on March 18, Marketing & Communications developed a webpage, eNews blast, and social media campaign, and supported internal celebrations with collateral. The campaign took place over a two-week period.

This year's celebration was expanded to Transit Employee Appreciation Day from the former name, Transit Driver Appreciation Day. While promoting TEAD, the District webpage, social media, and eNews highlighted available positions with AC Transit. This year, the Local Bus Roadeo Awards for top Bus Operator and Maintenance teams were named in honor of Jesse and Eduardo.

The 2024 Local Bus Roadeo Jesse Dela Cruz Memorial Winners: APTA Bus Operator

1st Place: Garner Andres 2nd Place: Kirkland Laws-Carr 3rd Place: Rodney Allen

OPEN (NON-APTA) - Bus Operator

1st Place: Matthew Moeller 2nd Place: Ronald Ruybal 3rd Place: Michael Adams

The 2024 Local Bus Roadeo Eduardo Villarreal Memorial Winners: APTA Maintenance

1st Place: Miguel Lopez, Alvin Tan, Sean Burr 2nd Place: Benjamin Kong, Daniel Flores, Adrian Vega 3rd Place: Jason Regino, Juan Franco, Aman Prasad

Garner Andres, Miguel Lopez, Alvin Tan, and Sean Burr are set to travel to Portland, OR, where they'll vie against transit agencies from across North America. Lopez, Tan, and Burr were integral in securing the 2019 Best of the Best title, and all aspire to return to the Bay Area as the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Grand Champions.



General Manager Michael Hursh Honors Board Director Chris Peeples as 2024 Local Roadeo Grand Marshal with Achievement Plaque.

External communications about TEAD invited riders to show their thanks by submitting commendations for operators. Communications supported Operations, Customer Service, Maintenance, and the General Manager to include thank-you cards and worksite banners as part of the internal celebration of TEAD.





Winners honored for 'Roadeo' skills

East Oakland Division accomplished a clean-sweep on August 24 when it fielded all six winners in the annual Roadeo's test of driving skills and operating knowledge.

Rick Vierra was first among the drivers, with Harold Kurz and Mike Zipser taking second and third, respectively. Larry Holden (Mechanic A) took top honors among Maintenance competitors, followed by Jim Freeman, second; and Dan Dawson, third.

Vierra will represent the District at the October 8 national Roadeo in Los Angeles.





COMPETITION WRAP-UP — When the last competitor had wheeled a coach through its tricky tests and when the last written test had been scored, Rick Vierra (above, with Acting General Manager Nat Gage) had earned the trophy for top driver at the District's 1985 Roadeo. The event was a triumph for Seminary Division, whose entrants took all six of the top awards.



TROPHY TIME — Top three winners among Maintenance personnel who qualified to compete this year were (above, left, receiving congratulations from Director Michael Fajans) Larry Holden, first; Jim Freeman, second; and Dan Dawson, third. Driver Pat McFall (above, right) studied Roadeo paperwork.

Richmond and Hayward Divisions Boast Top Marks in Rigorous Bus Cleanliness Protocols

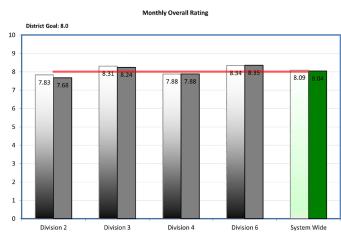
Each month, AC Transit's Quality Assurance team conducts Bus Cleanliness Inspections (BCI) at each bus division to evaluate the cleanliness and appearance of all 625 buses in the District's fleet.

The BCI includes 14 internal and five external inspection criteria with a comprehensive grading system. Ratings range from 1 to 10, with scores of 1-4 deemed Unsatisfactory, 5-7 considered Satisfactory, and 8-10 reflecting Excellent conditions.

Our fleet's meticulous cleaning practices ensure a healthier onboard environment and play a pivotal role in curbing the spread of germs and

bacteria.

The District pioneered advanced sanitizing protocols during the COVID emergency orders, which have now become standard practices within the BCI framework. These practices have evolved and advanced in the wake of the pandemic, ensuring continued onboard safeguards. In addition to health benefits, our advanced cleaning elevates the rider experience, creating a more enjoyable and comfortable commute.



AC Transit received an "Excellent" rating while reaching our district goal of 8.0 system wide.

In February 2024, the systemwide BCI rating scores recorded a slight decrease of 0.64%, yet still achieving an impressive overall rating of 8.04, successfully meeting the District KPI goal of an "Excellent" rating.

When combined with AC Transit's industry-leading engine and propulsion systems maintenance, our protocols have shown that clean, well-maintained buses generally have improved lifespans, leading to cost savings for the District.

In fact, the current bus interior rating across the system narrowly missed excellent with a score of 7.99, while the bus's exterior received an outstanding rating of "Excellent," scoring 8.17.

The dedicated teams at Division 3 in Richmond and Division 6 in Hayward played instrumental roles in achieving this operational milestone, and the District applauds their collective work.

Our fleet's meticulous cleaning practices ensure a healthier onboard environment and play a pivotal role in curbing the spread of germs and bacteria.



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High-Volume Hiring Strategies Yielding Positive Results

Since January 2022, after AC Transit lifted the recruitment freeze imposed by the pandemic, the Human Resources department has been focused on two critical objectives: attracting a consistent stream of highly qualified prospective candidates for Bus Operators and Mechanics and developing strategies to reduce attrition rates among this essential group of employees. The high-volume recruitment team has shortened the application-to-employment processing pipeline from 170 days to an average of 60-90 days.



To address the persistent frontline employee shortage hindering the achievement of 100 percent delivery of service, Human Resources initiated a high-volume talent acquisition team. In essence, this team of five is tasked with quickly and effectively recruiting large numbers of suitable talent.

From the early spring of 2022 through the end of the year, the high-volume recruitment efforts yielded notably consistent progress in hiring and certification.

The start of 2023 marked a typical holiday hiring trend, with potential candidates often taking breaks from job-seeking to enjoy vacations, spend time with family, and participate in religious observances. By February and continuing through late summer, the high-volume recruitment efforts were once again generating impressive results in both hiring and certification numbers.

As 2023 approached year's end, the District's high-volume recruitment surpassed a year and a half of hiring data,

marking a significant achievement and unlike the previous year, the 2023 holiday season saw record-breaking hiring statistics.

The recruitment team also shortened the applicationto-employment processing pipeline from 170 days to an average of 60-90 days. Human Resources also introduced a one-week pre-orientation program preceding the nineweek New Bus Operator (NBO) certification training. As a result, NBO graduation rates have significantly increased.

The total number of hires since January 2022 stands at 274.

The chart also represents additional turnover through color coding to highlight turnover activity.

- Orange = Operators Promoted
- Gray = Operators Resigned (Voluntary)
- Yellow = Operators Terminated (Involuntary)
- Blue = Operators Retired
- Green = Operators Graduated

Neither a Hamlet nor a Town, Its Hydrogen Village

On March 6th, AC Transit participated in Hydrogen Village in Sacramento, an annual event held by the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Partnership aimed at policymaker education, offering a comprehensive showcase of various hydrogen and fuel cell-related technologies. The event brought in hundreds of attendees, including state policy makers, staff from state regulators and funding agencies, and representatives of industry. As with previous years, AC Transit provided a hydrogen fuel cell bus as an exhibit which always garners a great deal of interest looking to us as an industry leader from people looking to learn more about our zero-emission program, our 5X5 study, and workforce development plans.



Director Peeples joins our partners from the California Air Resources Board (CARB), California Energy Commission (CEC), and California DOT (Caltrans).



Director Peeples discussing our zero-emission program with State Senator Anna Caballero from the Central Valley who is very interested in agriculture's role in the hydrogen economy.



Training and Education Center Maintenance Trainer Lucas McClaflin, fields questions from a group of Hydrogen Village attendees.

New Multi-lingual Fare Brochure

The District has recently created an enhanced fare brochure to provide riders with improved fare and payment details. The prior brochures on fares and payments were distributed in 2019 specifically to cover changes in local and Transbay fares.

The new fare brochure describes each fare type, how to qualify for discounted fares, how to get a Clipper card or payment app, and mobile payment options. In addition, the brochure details the pay-as-you-go fares available with mobile payment, which will be available for more fare media with Clipper 2. The brochure is available at the Customer Service Center and onboard buses and is printed in English, Spanish, and Chinese.





League of California Cities – East Bay Delegation Meeting Legislative Dinner



Assemblymember Tim Grayson and new Assembly Transportation Committee Chair Lori Wilson sharing their legislative priorities for the coming legislative session.

eNews Subscriber Acquisition Campaign

More than 32,000 unique email addresses subscribe to eNews email updates, with an average of nine bus lines or topic subscriptions for each profile. In December, AC Transit initiated an eNews acquisition and refresh campaign, which extended through mid-January, aimed at improving the customization of service information for riders and our East Bay communities.

The campaign promoted eNews subscriptions to riders and community members and encouraged current subscribers to review and update their subscriptions. New subscribers and updated subscriptions were entered in a drawing for six \$100 gift cards, three for new subscribers and three for existing subscribers who reviewed their subscriptions.



Over the course of the month-long campaign, there were 18,134 subscription modifications and 166 new subscribers. The month before the campaign saw only 2,862 subscription modifications and 36 new subscribers. Communications plans to continue promoting eNews subscriptions in preparation for Realign implementation. The League of California Cities most recent East Bay Delegation Meeting was held at Contra Costa College in San Pablo, and catered by the college's very own Culinary Academy where food was prepared and served by its students.

At the event, AC Transit's Steven Jones and Ryan Lau engaged with several representatives from municipal partners across the service area, including Lori Wilson, the newly appointed Chair of the Transportation Commission for the California Assembly.

District representatives also seized the opportunity to extend an invitation to Chair Wilson to visit our Emeryville Division 2, providing her with an opportunity to gain deeper insights into AC Transit's pioneering zero-emission fleet, infrastructure, and workforce development initiatives.

A Local High School is Fertile Ground for the Future Green Workforce

AC Transit participated in Tennyson High School's "Go Green" career fair on March 13. During the event, District staff shared insights on employment opportunities, emphasizing that every living-wage career in the District qualifies as a "Green Job." This is because all positions contribute to the conservation of natural resources through the promotion and use of public transit.

As a Title 1 school, Tennyson High receives federal support for low-income students, making the career fair an opportune venue to promote applications for the Clipper START program's 50% discount.



Tennyson High is also Hayward Unified School District's pilot school site for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and its Climate Empowerment Learning Initiative. Its hallways, classrooms, and quad are equipped with three-bin systems to sort and recycle organics and landfill waste, making it an ideal institution to cultivate a future workforce interested in pursuing careers in Green Jobs.

Fiscal Year 2024 January Executive Budget Report

In January, the seventh month of FY 2023-24, AC Transit's total operating expenses remained in line with both the monthly and annual budgets. As of now, the District is 58% through the year, having utilized 56% of the annual labor budget and 51% of the annual non-labor budget.

Budget Summary (Budget vs Actuals as of January End, 2024)

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Non-Labor Total 14,875 14,043 178,500 91,181 87,319 57	19%	49%	6,866	6,610	13,476	1	1,041	1,123	Taxes & Misc		
	51%	51%	87,319	91,181	178,500	3	14,043	14,875	Non-Labor Total		
Grand Total 47,410 50,145 568,924 310,509 258,415 55	5%	55%	258 415	310 500	568 924	5	50 145	47 410	Grand Total		

🛑 areas over budget

Labor Expenses

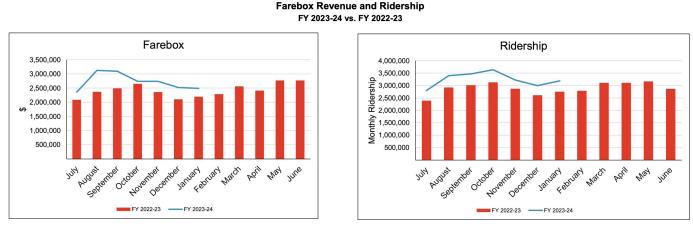
In January, total labor expenses surpassed the budget, with actuals reaching \$36.1 million compared to the allocated budget of \$32.5 million. While expenses in Miscellaneous Wages & Fringe and Healthcare exceeded the budget for January, the projected outlook for these accounts remains on target.

- Operator Premium Time and Maintenance Overtime expenses exceeded the budget for both January and year-to-date, standing at 62% and 66% respectively. This overage is attributed to the necessity of backfilling vacancies within the respective departments.
- Miscellaneous Wages & Fringe expenses have exceeded the monthly budget, yet year-to-date expenses are aligning with the budget at 58%. This category encompasses paid time off (PTO) and benefit accounts such as FICA. The higher monthly expenses are primarily due to January having three payroll payments instead of the usual two, resulting in increased payments for holidays, vacations, and FICA withholdings.
- Health plan expenses exceeded the budget for November, yet year-to-date expenses remain on track at 56%.

Non-Labor Expenses

Total Non-Labor expenses for January are closely aligned with the budget, with actuals at \$14.0 million compared to the allocated budget of \$14.9 million. While Security Services and Vehicle Parts expenses in January surpassed the average monthly budget, all categories are within yearto-date budget thresholds, remaining below 58%.

- Professional & Technical Services and Other Services are notably under budget, primarily due to spending patterns typically being higher towards the end of the fiscal year.
- Security Services expenses surpassed the budget for January due to a "catch-up" in expenses from earlier in the fiscal year. However, year-to-date expenses are on track to remain within budget.
- Vehicle Parts expenses exceeded the budget for January, yet year-to-date expenses remain within a reasonable budget allowance at 59%.
- Utility expenses exceeded the budget slightly
 - for January, but they remain within a reasonable allowance in terms of year-to-date expenses, at 51%.



Farebox Revenue	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FYTD	FY Projection
FY 2023-24	2,302,965	3,066,895	3,094,482	2,739,161	2,735,591	2,521,621	2,490,474						18,951,190	32,487,754
FY 2022-23	2,077,133	2,360,193	2,482,101	2,639,562	2,349,926	2,092,973	2,182,961	2,275,148	2,551,882	2,402,832	2,759,975	2,759,076	16,184,849	28,933,763
Y-Y %	10.9%	29.9%	24.7%	3.8%	16.4%	20.5%	14.1%						17.1%	12.3%
FY 2021-22	1,781,080	2,004,537	1,799,705	2,082,678	1,850,307	1,903,225	1,647,156	1,760,652	2,360,264	2,120,699	2,204,566	2,597,947	13,068,690	24,112,819
FY 2020-21	17,718	171,175	92,141	648,821	1,488,240	1,235,347	1,144,254	1,145,931	1,582,095	1,670,788	1,625,765	1,692,700	4,797,695	12,514,974

NTD Ridership	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FYTD	FY Projection
FY 2023-24	2,805,547	3,397,560	3,464,582	3,637,773	3,223,045	2,994,986	3,190,593						22,714,086	38,938,433
FY 2022-23	2,377,977	2,908,645	3,006,534	3,117,377	2,859,953	2,595,953	2,741,588	2,776,502	3,099,633	3,100,238	3,154,143	2,855,248	14,270,486	34,593,791
Y-Y %	18.0%	16.8%	15.2%	16.7%	12.7%	15.4%	16.4%						59.2%	12.6%
FY 2021-22	1,959,429	2,248,138	2,527,040	2,586,097	2,454,910	2,213,471	2,073,209	2,322,102	2,735,012	2,683,305	2,705,849	2,400,803	16,062,294	28,909,365
FY 2020-21	1,898,801	1,983,119	2,061,177	2,049,363	1,600,234	1,578,052	1,487,300	1,459,316	1,691,534	1,736,424	1,804,277	1,898,801	12,658,046	21,248,398

Note:

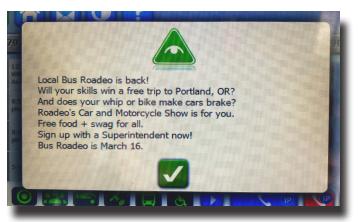
Farebox revenue is for per-boarding payments only; does not include EasyPass agreements or contract services (BART, City of Oakland, etc.)

Bus Operator Log-In Sets New Performance Standard

During the last two weeks of February 2024, AC Transit's Bus Operator log-on rate averaged an impressive 98.15%, surpassing our current Key Performance Indicator (KPI) goal of 95%.

Each bus in the fleet is outfitted with Computer-Aided Dispatch- Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL), which seamlessly connects the bus with the Operations Control Center (OCC). The state-of-the-art software requires Bus Operators to log onto their routes during pre-trip inspections or while relieving another Bus Operator on the road. This log-in process is crucial because once connected to CAD/AVL, the OCC gains access to real-time precise bus locations displayed on a computer map.

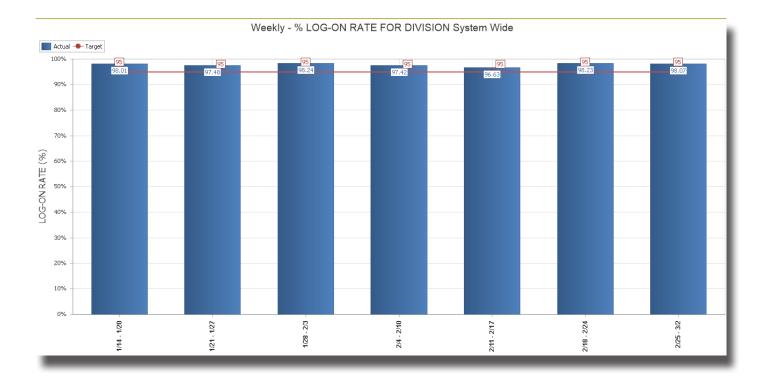
Logging in assists AC Transit in maintaining frequency and on-time performance by continuously monitoring the speed and direction of travel, assessing whether the bus is ahead of or behind schedule, and detecting any deviations from the assigned route. Additionally, the log-in process ensures the roadworthiness of each bus and enables Bus Operators to receive pre-scripted or customized messages as needed.



The log-in process permits Bus Operators to receive pre-scripted or customized messages.

Road Supervisors equally play a pivotal role in achieving this outstanding performance standard by verifying the log-in status of each bus departing from the divisions. This crucial step enables the OCC to continuously track road conditions, vehicle breakdowns, and rider issues, ensuring seamless synchronization with Real-Time alerts.

The impressive 98.15% average log-on rate is a testament to the inspired teamwork of frontline staff of Bus Operators, Road Supervisors, and the OCC.



The log-in process is crucial because once connected to CAD/AVL, the OCC gains access to real-time precise bus locations displayed on a computer map.

Latest Developments on Round 8 of AHSC Program



Tamien Station in San Jose Courtesy: Core Affordable and Republic Urban Properties

The Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program is a granting program that fosters collaborations between affordable housing developers and public transit agencies. AHSC aims to integrate housing and transit projects to reduce CO2 emissions.

Supported by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which uses revenue generated from California's Cap-and-Trade Program, the AHSC program relies on the carbon trading market. Funding levels fluctuate annually, with some years offering a few hundred million dollars statewide, while recent rounds have approached nearly the \$1 billion mark.

AC Transit is unable to proactively initiate or propose projects for this grant. Instead, it relies on collaborations with developers on their proposed projects within our service areas. The District then assesses potential opportunities for bus service enhancements or transit infrastructure projects within proximity of the housing project.

AC Transit did not propose any new service enhancements during this round. Instead, the District offered bus purchases to support the service enhancements outlined in the draft Realign plan.

During Round 7 in 2023, seven developers initiated discussions with AC Transit regarding potential partnerships, but none proceeded to begin the application process.

During Round 8 in 2024, ten developers reached out to the District, and all of them proceeded, at least partially, with the application process, which had a deadline of March 19. AC Transit is engaged in four projects, with the District taking responsibility for a competitive greenhouse gas-reducing project solely in Hayward's Parcel 8. In this instance, our project is defined by service enhancements proposed in Realign, including frequency improvements to Lines 28 and 93 and an extension of Line 10.

In two additional projects, BART assumes the lead transit agency role. In these cases - the El Cerrito Plaza BART Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and North Berkeley BART TOD - AC Transit's role is limited to identifying minor transit improvements as part of the program's "quantitative points" section. These minor enhancements include transit shelters, bus bulbs, and short segments of Transit Signal Priority (TSP).

Oakland takes the lead in the final project - Residences at Liberation Park - situated adjacent to the Eastmont Transit Center, which involves the installation of Transit Signal Priority (TSP) at six intersections along MacArthur Boulevard and Seminary Avenue, providing advantages to Lines 45, 57, and 80.

A	Active Projects Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Grants – Round 8											
Project City	Project Name	Site Address	Developer	# of units	Status							
Hayward	Parcel 8	21502 Foothill Boulevard	Resources for Community Development	89	AC Transit is the transit partner. 2 ZEB purchases, bus shelters, TSP							
Berkeley	North Berkeley BART TOD	North Berkeley BART parking lot	BRIDGE Housing	118	BART is transit partner. Bus improvements for quantitative points only (e.g., bulbs, shelters, TSP)							
El Cerrito	El Cerrito Plaza BART TOD	El Cerrito Plaza BART parking lot	The Related Companies of California, LLC, Satellite Affordable Housing Associates	70	BART is transit partner. Bus improvements for quantitative points only (e.g., bulbs, shelters, TSP)							
Oakland	Liberation Park	Foothill & 73rd Avenue, abutting Eastmont Transit Center	Eden Housing + Black Cultural Zone	113	Oakland installing TSP at 6 intersections to support project.							

The final status of all the AHSC applications, the reasons for projects not advancing in 2024, and AC Transit's involvement.