

**NEW # 522**

AC Transit

Policy No. 520

**BOARD POLICY****Subject Category: Board & General****Administrative Matters****POLICY ENCOURAGING THE PROMOTION OF  
PUBLIC TRANSIT IN LAND USE DEVELOPMENTS  
WITHIN AC TRANSIT'S SERVICE AREA****I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is twofold: (1) to identify positions that AC Transit will **advocate** when local governments are considering development proposals; and (2) to inform the cities and counties AC Transit serves of land use concepts that will encourage the use of mass transit. These positions and guidelines are intended to maximize public transit usage by ensuring that land use decisions are made with full awareness of their impact on public transit.

It is not the intent of the policy to suggest that AC Transit will advocate for or against particular developments. Rather, AC Transit's role will be to inform local governments of the basic principles that will result in improved public transit service and ridership, and to comment on the extent to which developments under consideration by local government meet those principles. This policy document is intended to provide the framework by which comments are prepared and submitted to local governments as part of environmental analyses and other land use permit processes.

**II. RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

AC Transit is committed to working cooperatively with local governments to encourage and promote the use of public transit. AC Transit also will work with communities to encourage development that is accessible by transit and that maximizes the potential for transit use, particularly by bus. Measures that promote transit include:

- making public transportation safer, more convenient, and comfortable;
- increasing the efficiency, speed and frequency of transit services;
- improving transit infrastructure; and

- removing barriers to convenient access to transit vehicles.

### **III. GENERAL PLANS AND ZONING ORDINANCES.**

Local agencies within AC Transit's service area can promote and assist the use of **mass** transit through their general plans and zoning ordinances. These decisions determine if a project will encourage or discourage the use of AC Transit's services.

AC Transit should actively solicit the assistance of the cities and counties it serves to include in their general plans and zoning ordinances the land development principles identified in this policy. District staff should review general plan amendments and zoning changes, as well as environmental documents, to ensure that the District's land use principles are being considered and included in new developments.

### **IV. DESIGN ISSUES.**

**General Principle:** New development should be designed to be as accessible by transit as by automobile.

A. Buildings should have their main entrances facing the street, not a rear or side parking lot. Rear and side entrances are inconvenient for transit users, generally result in blank walls and dead spaces along the street frontage which discourage pedestrian activity, and often result in awkward and/or unsafe access to building entrances for pedestrians.

B. Commercial and retail buildings should be placed as close to the street as possible, exclusive of appropriate landscaping. Pedestrians and transit users should never have to travel through parking lots or along the length of driveways to get into a building. Excessive setbacks also tend to make sidewalks less safe by removing the "eyes and ears" of the street which are provided by store owners and other employees.

C. Blank walls along sidewalks should not be permitted. Blank walls are discouraging to pedestrians in the same manner that excessive building setbacks are. Blank walls also often contribute to safety and security problems, also similar to excessive building setbacks.

D. Developments should always contain a complete pedestrian and wheelchair accessible circulation system, that provides direct, attractive and safe connections between all activity centers.

E. The location of building amenities, street lights and signs, **traffic** signal poles, fire hydrants, on-street parking and parking meters, and other facilities should consider the location of bus stops and bus shelters to provide convenient, safe and unimpeded access to and from bus stops for buses and passengers.

F. Regulations controlling the location of newspaper racks should be adopted. News racks tend to be located near bus stops and bus shelters, making it more difficult for people to use the bus because they must negotiate around these obstacles.

G. In general, new development should incorporate the following design concepts into projects, as appropriate:

1. bus signal preemption system;
2. strengthen existing street poles and require new street poles to be of sufficient strength to handle overhead wires for potential light rail or trolley use;
3. require street improvements to meet standards capable of handling buses or trolleys;
4. provide bus bays or turnouts, as requested by the District, to accommodate the loading/unloading of passengers;
5. require cathodic protection for underground utility and other lines, whether in the public right-of-way or on private property; and
6. in East 14th Street, San **Pablo** Avenue and Telegraph Avenue provide an appropriate median for light rail use.

#### V. LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS.

A. The cities and counties served by the District should be encouraged to review and amend, where appropriate, the circulation and land use elements of **their general plans** to require new development (including remodeling of an existing facility) to include and incorporate transit-related issues and design concepts in the planning, design and improvement, and development of a project.

B. The cities and counties served by the District should be encouraged to include in any Specific Plan that is developed or amended transit improvements which enhance the use of transit to the developments within the Specific Plan.

C. The cities and counties served by the District should be encouraged to review their zoning regulations and encouraged to amend those regulations to conform with the provisions of this policy.

D. The District should be included in the review of environmental documents for projects throughout the District. The District should request that mitigation measures for projects include specific transit improvements required by the project, with all construction and maintenance costs to be borne by the project.

E. Development agreements should be encouraged, to provide the greatest flexibility in securing and financing transit improvements and mitigation measures for District use and to meet the District's needs.

## VI. LOCATION AND TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT.

General Principle: New development should be located in a manner that maximizes the potential for transit use.

A. Encourage mixed-use development. Mixed-use developments can enhance the attractiveness of public transit by permitting multiple-trip purposes to be accomplished simultaneously. Automobile usage increases when people must take numerous **single-purpose** trips. Further, mixed-use developments can improve the efficiency of public transit by providing more even travel over the course of each day between week days and weekends and by season.

B. Stand-alone, large retail outlets should be discouraged. Such developments are inherently automobile-oriented. To the extent stand-alone, large retail outlets are constructed, the adverse impacts should be mitigated through their site design and agreements to supplement transit **service**, as discussed above in Design Issues.

C. Public buildings and activities with substantial public usage should only be located where good public transit exists or will be provided.

D. Projects located where there is a high level of transit service should have lower parking requirements. At the same time, adequate protection is needed to ensure that reduced parking requirements do not result in parking demand spilling over into nearby areas. These protections should be contained in Transportation Demand Management agreements that run for the life of the development.

E. Consolidated parking facilities are preferable to each individual business providing separate off-street parking. This can reduce the amount of land required for a

certain quantity of parking. More important, it will reduce the number of driveways in a commercial area, thus creating a more pedestrian friendly environment, reducing **auto-pedestrian** conflicts and reduce potential bus-auto conflicts.

## VII. **ECONOMIC POLICIES.**

**General Principle:** New developments should pay their fair share of the cost of providing public transit, and automobile users should not be subsidized at a greater level than transit riders.

A. Free parking should not be provided unless an equivalent subsidy is provided for people who use public transit. In typical East Bay locations, the true cost of providing parking at present is on the order of \$4.00 to \$5.00 per day per space.

B. If new or expanded transit service is needed as a result of a development the capital and on-going operational costs of the transit service should be paid by the development.

C. When mitigating **traffic** impacts of new non-residential developments, the preferred first step is to reduce automobile traffic as much as is practical through adopting **a** Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program. TDM programs should include elements such as providing transit information to employees and customers, issuing employee transit passes on-site without charge or at a discount, offering discounts to retail customers using transit (similar to the parking validation concept), charging for parking separately from rent, requiring employers to charge employees for parking spaces, etc.

TDM programs should be incorporated as part of the mitigation in the environmental document approved for the project and the conditions of approval for land use permits (including, but not limited to, specific plans, rezonings, use permits, variances and subdivision maps). TDM programs should have clear performance goals, monitoring mechanism, and penalties for non-compliance. TDM programs should be required for the life of the project, regardless of changes in ownership.

D. In large multi-unit residential projects, off-street parking spaces should be rented separately and not included in the unit rental or sale price. Mitigation measures similar to those stated in **#3** above should be applied to prevent spillover parking on nearby residential streets. Off-street parking requirements should be reduced if the developer agrees to offer rebates or lower rents to tenants who sign an affidavit that they will not own a car while residing in the development.

## **VIII. REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.**

Redevelopment projects should be reviewed to determine their fiscal impacts upon the District, and what improvements/developments contemplated by the plan can and should include transit-related facilities, e.g., bus shelters, bus stops, turn-ins, etc. (See list in item #7, Design Issues.) The District should be held harmless from any short or long term advance financial impact as a result of the establishment of a redeveloped area. In addition, the costs for any transit required facilities, as well as opportunities for additional bus service to **serve** the area, should be included in the redevelopment plan with the costs of the additional service being funded by individual projects or by redevelopment funds.

## **IX. LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSIONS.**

Notify Local Agency Formation Commissions (**LAFCOs**) in Alameda and Contra Costa counties of the District's interest in receiving notice of annexations affecting the District's boundaries. Ensure that any annexations which affect the District's boundary are brought to the attention of the Board of Directors.