The $18 million rehabilitation project was a complete overhaul with 15 new maintenance bays, inspection pits, and tire shop. In fact, representatives from the offices of United States Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, State Senator Nancy Skinner, California Assembly Member Tony Thurmond, City of Richmond Mayor Tom Butt, Vice Mayor Jovanka Beckles, members of organized labor, regional transportation leaders and a host of community advocates all assembled in one of the new cutting edge bays for the grand reopening. “I am incredibly proud that our staff has diligently worked to reengineer service from a yard we affectionately refer to as D3,” said AC Transit General Manager, Michael Hursh. Ultimately, Reopening Division 3 helps alleviate capacity concerns at other bus divisions, makes strides toward meeting our goal to respond to increasing ridership districtwide, and D3 will play a pivotal role in AC Transit’s unprecedented service expansion known as AC Go. Prudent cost controls following the 2011 closure has allowed the Macdonald Avenue landmark bus division to reopen and reconnect the rich history between AC Transit and the Richmond community.

“Much like the mythological Phoenix rose renewed, so has Division 3,” were the words AC Transit Board President Elsa Ortiz used to describe the reimagined 50,000 square foot Division 3 bus division. Division 3 was shuttered in 2011 due to the severe economic downturn in the national economy.

Richmond Division 3 Rises

“The fight has been long and many years have passed but I was determined to restore D3 to this community. And to all the operators, who’ve waited patiently, this is for you. Welcome home!”

AC Transit Board Vice President Joe Wallace

AC Transit Board Vice President Joe Wallace
On January 11, 2017, the East Bay Bus Rapid Transit project broke ground with major roadway construction. For weeks, you may have noticed crews and construction roadway signs dotting the landscape along International Boulevard and East 14th Street. What you may not have noticed as you drove by or watched from the seat of our buses, were construction crews finalizing utility verification, land surveyors marking property lines, or arborist assisted tree removal work. Construction is now in full swing in two of a total of 16 work zones. Each work zone is typically 10 blocks long and crews are working swiftly. By the close of March, the number of work zones under construction will rise to four.

Additionally, AC Transit's outreach representatives continue to meet with business owners, homeowners, and faith leaders along the BRT corridor to minimize disruptions to stores, bus stops, sidewalks and roadway travel throughout the work zones. The construction will generally progress from the South (San Leandro) to North (downtown Oakland) along the 9.5-mile project corridor. Construction is expected to last 22 months and will be transformative. BRT will usher in an entirely new blacktop, new traffic and pedestrian signals, 46 new rider platforms with canopies for level boarding, and an all-new Transit Signal Priority (TSP) system that allows the bus to operate with train-like frequency.
Our operators then safely ferried passengers, non-stop, to a station downstream where riders re-board trains. The bus bridge was activated seven times in 2016, including shutdowns for multiple days during the Memorial Day and Independence Day holidays of 2016. Thanks to the bus bridge thousands of passengers safely travel the East Bay each year. Safety is paramount within AC Transit as well. This year, all bus operators will participate in training meant to prevent car side-swipes and mirror taps. As bus operators leave their respective divisions, they'll navigate obstacles that require the operator to scan their mirrors as well as measure distance. Additionally, from Richmond to Fremont a specially designated safety team will visit bus stops districtwide looking for potential hazards. I want to ensure we’re taking proactive measures to avoid “high” accident visibility areas, passenger falls, accessibility concerns, and a host of other ways to decrease our roadway vulnerabilities.

The bus operator’s union (ATU 192) and a team of District staff are also designing a mentorship program. This will hopefully increase awareness and peer focus on the new bus operator workforce. AC Transit’s commitment to safety is bearing fruit. At our East Oakland Division 4, the maintenance team has worked 312 days without an injury. That creed of safety is proving infectious. At Division 6 in Hayward, maintenance teams have logged 168 days without injury. Emeryville and our Central Maintenance Facility each report 30 and 36 days injury free.

As General Manager, nothing is more important to me than the safety our riders and well-being of our staff. You have my personal commitment that there can be no compromises.

-Michael Hursh, General Manager
Current technology allows you to externally start your car, program your home’s lights, even shutoff running faucets. Now, AC Transit has been given the “green light” to begin installing traffic signals, with similar smart technology that detects when an AC Transit bus is approaching a signal. The technology is called Transit Signal Priority (TSP) equipment.

The $5 million award, from The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), is part of the Transit Performance Initiative (TPI) Investment Program. TPI funds low-cost capital investments that can improve operations and customer experience on major transit corridors, and that can be implemented rapidly. AC Transit bus Lines 72 and 6 will experience upgraded TSP equipment and in some locations bus stop optimization. The $5 million award will also allow AC Transit to install a one-mile red transit lane on the south side of Berkeley.

These improvements are estimated to result in:
- 5% reduction in travel time on Lines 6, 72R, and 72/72M
- Increased reliability
- Reduction in operating costs due to shorter travel times

MTC staff convened an evaluation panel consisting of staff from MTC, transit agencies, and a representative of the MTC Policy Advisory Council. Submissions were scored against program fit, project readiness, project management capacity, travel time savings, operating cost savings, benefits to existing and new riders, service frequency, and passenger volumes.
AC Transit recently became the only Bay Area public transit agency awarded 10 new zero-emission buses under the California Climate Investments Initiative. Along with Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) - the Southern California transit recipient of zero-emission buses - and bus manufacturer New Flyer, the three organizations have formed an unprecedented consortium. The consortium is a comprehensive initiative sponsored by an $8.5 million grant from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) through California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Additionally, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) is providing $1 million for the project, which will deploy 10 zero-emission hydrogen fuel cell electric buses in the AC Transit service area and make upgrades to an existing hydrogen fueling station at AC Transit’s Emeryville operating division. Each of the 40-foot zero-emission buses will be manufactured by New Flyer – a leader in zero-emission bus production in the United States. New Flyer has partnered with Ballard Power Systems in the design and installation of each buses fuel cell power plant.

AC Transit was selected, in large part, based on our groundbreaking HyRoad Program. HyRoad presently consists of 13 zero-emission buses that have more than 1.8 million miles of service and carried more than 15 million passengers. The combined hydrogen fueling stations have produced over 300,000 kg of hydrogen fuel.

The consortium aims to have AC Transit’s and OCTA’s buses delivered and in service for everyday use by December of 2018.